

# PSC 100 American Government

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## Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain the distinctive and “unusual” features of America’s democracy.
2. Explain the importance of the Constitution as a foundation for the system.
3. Analyze the voting trends and participation in our elections.
4. Discuss the roles of our informal linkage institutions (parties, interest groups and the mass media) in our democracy.
5. Describe the legislative process.
6. Discuss the importance of the courts in America’s system. .

These goals will be accomplished through the class reading, discussion forums, Politics in Action activities and three tests. The tests will be 50 multiple choice and one essay question.

## Required Text:

The online Learning Area, accessed through canvas. (Textbooks have just gotten too expensive.) It is possible that additional readings will be posted throughout the semester.

## General Description of Course Activities

**Discussion forums.** Discussion Forms will provide a major part of the class. Students are expected to answer questions and respond to the posts of other students. Each discussion forum will be worth 10 points. You will be expected to thoughtfully and thoroughly answer the discussion forum prompts. Don’t just parrot what someone else has posted. You may also get credit for replying to another post. To find your group, click on the People tab in canvas.

**Politics in Action activities:** Some of these will require you to go through an interactive activity and respond thoughtfully. Others will give you articles or weblinks to read and respond. All of these answers need to be longer and more detailed than your discussion forum posts. Each is worth 40 points. They will be submitted through the Assignments tab in canvas.

Submission of your first assignment is acknowledgement that you have read, understood and abided by the UNCG Academic Integrity Pledge, which is available here: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/violation/>

Adherence to the Academic Integrity Policy will be expected and enforced on ALL assignments.

**Exams.** There will be three tests which will be part essay and part multiple choice (50 multiple choice questions and one essay). Students will be expected to take the information they have gained and apply it in a thoughtful manner. Essays will be graded on content, thought and clarity. There is a **60 minute** timer applied to each exam. Once you begin, the timer starts. If you log out, the timer will continue to run so be sure you have enough time set aside to take your exam. It is your responsibility to keep up with the time. **ANY EXAM THAT GOES OVER THIS TIME LIMIT WILL RECEIVE AN AUTOMATIC ZERO. IF YOU HAVE TECHNICAL PROBLEMS, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO NOTIFY ME IMMEDIATELY.** You may email or send a text if necessary.

### **Grades**

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Discussion Forums	10 points each	110 points
Politics in Action	40 points each	440
3 tests	150 points each	450

Each test has 50 multiple choice worth 2 points each plus one essay worth 50 points

**Total** **1,000 points**

The grading scale will be as follows:

900-1000 points A-, A, A+

800-900 points B-, B, B+

700-800 points C-, C, C+

600-700 points D-, D, D+

Below 600 F

### **Late Penalties**

Exams must be completed at the scheduled time unless you have notified me ahead of time or you can document a medical or family emergency—NO Exceptions!

Politics in Action assignments and Discussion Forums that are not completed on time will lose 10% of the grade for each day the assignment is late. Assignments cannot be turned in more

than one week late—any assignment turned in more than a week (7 days) late will receive a 0. Unless otherwise noted, if an assignment is due on May 1, anything that is posted after 11:59PM that day is late.

Consider all writing submitted for the class as formal writing. This is not texting. If you have grammatical errors or misspelled words do NOT expect full credit for any assignment. The Writing Center is there to help you and they do online consultations as well. See: <http://www.uncg.edu/eng/writingcenter/default.php>

If you use outside resources for any assignment, make sure that you use good, credible sources and that everything that needs a citation gets one: <http://library.uncg.edu/info/help/#cite>

### **Technical Help**

While I am familiar with the course content, I am not as familiar with the technology as our Help Desk counterparts. If you encounter technical issues, you should contact the Help Desk immediately. They should be your first point of contact if you have technical issues and other Canvas course management questions. The number is 336-256-TECH, or 256-8324.