Department:

Political Science

Course Description:

This course focuses on the political arena and public affairs of the national government of the United States. The course will examine the development of constitutional principles and issues, such as civil liberties, the role of political parties, and the structure and function of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the United States government.

Course Competencies:

The learning outcomes and competencies detailed in this syllabus meet or exceed the learning outcomes and competencies specified by the Kansas Core Outcomes Groups for this course as approved by the Kansas Board of Regents. (Kansas Regents Shared Number Course and Title: KRSN Course POL 1020 American Government.)

Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Analyze and describe the roles, powers, and relationships of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of the United States national government.
2. Identify forms of political participation, identify and differentiate between organizations engaged in election processes, and analyze participation in the United States system of democracy.
3. Analyze and describe how policy decisions are made and explain the impact of policy on the American public.
4. Summarize the origins and evolution of United States constitutional democracy.

Course Content:

A. The American Political System
   1. The study of American government
   2. The Constitution
      a. The evolution of the Constitution
      b. The importance of liberty
      c. Motives of the Framers
      d. Constitutional reform
   3. Federalism
      a. Federal government structure
      b. The structure of government
      c. Federal-State relations
   4. The American political culture
   5. Civil liberties and civil rights
B. Opinions, Interests, and Organizations
   1. Public opinion
   2. Political participation
   3. Political parties
      a. The formation of American political parties
      b. The two-party system today
      c. The function of the political parties in the political process
   4. Elections and campaigns
   5. Interest groups
   6. The media
C. Institutions of Government
   1. Congress
      a. Evolution of Congress
      b. Organization of Congress
      c. How a bill becomes a law
      d. Agencies of Congress
   2. The Presidency
      a. Evolution of the Presidency
      b. Powers of the President
      c. Office of the President
      d. Presidential transition
   3. The Bureaucracy
      a. Growth of the bureaucracy
      b. The federal bureaucracy today
      c. Congressional oversight
   4. The Judiciary
      a. Development of Federal Courts
      b. Structure of the Federal Courts
      c. The Supreme Court
      d. Powers of the Federal Courts
D. The Politics of Public Policy
   1. The policy making process
   2. Economic policy
   3. Social welfare policy
   4. Foreign and military policy
   5. Environmental policy

Learning Assessments:

Course competencies will be assessed by regular examinations and written reviews of books on governmental topics. Other assessment methods, such as a research paper, may be used as well.
Instructional Materials:


Guidelines for Requesting Accommodations Based on Documented Disability or Medical Condition

It is the intention of Highland Community College to work toward full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, to make instructional programs accessible to all people, and to provide reasonable accommodations according to the law.

Students should understand that it is their responsibility to self-identify their need(s) for accommodation and that they must provide current, comprehensive diagnosis of a specific disability or medical condition from a qualified professional in order to receive services. Documentation must include specific recommendations for accommodation(s). Documentation should be provided in a timely manner prior to or early in the semester so that the requested accommodation can be considered and, if warranted, arranged.

In order to begin the process all students must complete the “Disabilities Self-Identification Form” at this link: https://highlandcc.edu/pages/disability-services.

This form can also be accessed at the Highland Community College homepage under Students Services/Student Resources/Disability Service or by contacting the Disabilities Coordinator.