POLS 1010—American National Government
Three Semester Hours

PREREQUISITES:
None

COURSE OVERVIEW:
This course explores four topics related to American national government. The topics are: 1) the philosophical and constitutional foundations of our governmental system; 2) various factors that link citizens to their government (i.e. media, public opinion, campaigns and elections, political parties, and interest groups); 3) governmental institutions—each branch is studied with respect to its functions, membership, and the relationships it engages in with the other branches of government; and 4) public policy (domestic/social welfare policy, and foreign policy/national security).

METHODS OF COURSE INSTRUCTION:
All material for this course is print-based. Instructor and students communicate and exchange materials through postal mail. You may submit your assignments as e-mail attachments, but your graded assignments will be returned to you by postal mail.

TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPLIES:

NUMBER OF LESSONS:
The course has 12 lessons, including a midcourse examination and final examination. These lessons include:
- Lesson 1: Introduction: Citizens, the Government, and the Constitution
- Lesson 2: Federalism
- Lesson 3: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights
- Lesson 4: Public Opinion
- Lesson 5: The Media
- Lesson 6: Political Parties and Elections; Interest Groups
- Lesson 7: Midcourse Examination Information
- Lesson 8: Congress
- Lesson 9: The Presidency and the Bureaucracy
- Lesson 10: The Federal Courts
- Lesson 11: Domestic and Foreign Policy
- Lesson 12: Final Examination Information
TYPES OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

The writing assignments consist of both essay questions and concepts to identify. With regard to the essay questions, you are given a choice of three regular essay questions from which you’ll choose two to write essays about. Also, you’ll be asked to write an additional essay question drawing upon an article or editorial found in the supplemental reading that you choose. With regard to the identification concepts, there will be three terms and/or phrases, all of which must be identified. Concerning the writing assignments, I expect you to demonstrate an understanding of the content of the chapter(s). Essay questions are designed to allow you to demonstrate your understanding. Your responses to the essay questions are expected to be well conceived and well written. Some of the essay questions are critical in nature. If the question asks for a critical analysis of an issue, be sure to discuss both sides of the issue. Do not simply explain why your position is correct or the opposite position is incorrect. Instead you should comprehensively evaluate both sides of an issue.

GRADING CRITERIA:

On each writing assignment and exam, the essay questions that you answer cumulatively account for 67% of that lesson’s grade and the identification concepts cumulatively account for 33% of that lesson’s grade. With regard to your final grade, the ten writing assignments cumulatively account for 60% and the two exams cumulatively account for 40%.