

NORTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Title: American Government

Course #: POL 111

Course Description: 3 Credits

This course is a survey of our national American political system. Although the bulk of the course will focus on the current political landscape, students will also investigate the historical context that created many of the systems, policies, and traditions that the American government follows today. The course will emphasize the differences between the myth and reality in American political life

Pre-requisite: Eligibility for ENG 101

Goals: The overall goals of this course include:

- acquainting students with the social, economic, and historical movements that shaped our political culture.
- developing an appreciation for the perspective of different cultural groups with attention to race, gender, ethnic, and class issues.
- recognizing the complexity and changing nature of American political life.
- developing valuable critical thinking skills.

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

- Analyze primary and secondary sources.
- Define and evaluate historical events that have defined political eras
- Compare and contrast different political systems
- Discuss the similarities and differences between economic and political systems
- Examine the development of an independent American political system with an emphasis on:
 - the colonial background
 - British political traditions
 - the role of the American Revolution
- Identify and evaluate the development of the U.S. Constitution with special emphasis on the Bill of Rights
- Assess the role of federalism
- Describe and evaluate the roles of the three major branches of the federal government
 - the executive branch
 - the legislative branch
 - the judicial branch
- Evaluate the success and failure of such concepts as “the separation of powers”, “checks and balances”, and “the social contract theory.”
- Outline and interpret the roles of political parties and how these powerful organizations have evolved since their inception