

Colonnade Program Course Proposal: Explorations Category

1. What course does the department plan to offer in Explorations? Which subcategory are you proposing for this course? (Arts and Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Natural and Physical Sciences)

PS 110: American National Government

Social and Behavioral Science, Subcategory B

2. How will this course meet the specific learning objectives of the appropriate subcategory. Please address **all** of the learning outcomes listed for the appropriate subcategory.

Learning Objective 1: Demonstrate knowledge of at least one area of the social or behavioral sciences.

This course will provide students the opportunity to examine human behavior in the context of American national government. Students will analyze the operation of the American national government and how the choices made in the political system affect both individuals within society and society as a whole. By studying the relationship between the individual and the state, students will be exposed to many of the fundamental principles of both social and behavioral science.

Learning Objective 2: Apply knowledge, theories, and research methods, including ethical conduct, to analyze problems pertinent to at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences.

This course uses theories, concepts and tools of the social and behavioral sciences to examine the relationship between the individual and the state. Students enrolled in the course will analyze theories of political behavior by using research methodology common to the political science discipline to test the applicability of such theories on contemporary political problems. By doing so, students will both enhance their knowledge of political problems facing society and demonstrate an ability to critically assess theoretical development and research methodology.

Learning Objective 3: Understand and demonstrate how at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences conceptualizes diversity and the ways it shapes human experience.

This course will consider many of the most important issues facing the study of politics today. Among these issues are race, gender, religion, political ideology, regionalism, etc. – all of which are fundamentally shaped by society's view of diversity and the role diversity plays in shaping our collective human experience. By investigating these questions through the lens of political discourse, students will be able to demonstrate

how diversity affects how the political system allocates power and resources to different groups and identities.

Learning Objective 4: Integrate knowledge of at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences into issues of personal or public importance.

As a discipline, political science is primarily concerned with the study of the individual and his/her relationship with the state. As a result, a course pertaining to American National Government will by definition confront a substantial number of issues related to public importance. These issues include, but are not limited to, the allocation of good and services, national elections, the legal standing of competing groups within a political community, etc.

Learning Objective 5: Communicate effectively using the language and terminology germane to at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences.

This course introduces students to key terms such as “democracy,” “republic,” “constitutionalism,” “Liberal” and “Conservative.” Students identify and examine the components and meanings of such terms so that they can utilize them in their analysis of American national government and apply them appropriately to policies and processes within the political system.

3. Syllabus statement of learning outcomes for course. NOTE: In multi-section courses, the same statement of learning outcomes must appear on every section’s syllabus.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to describe the historical context and development of the American political system and Constitution.
- Students will be able to identify the key institutions of the American political system.
- Students will be able to explain the processes and functions of the American political system.
- Students will be able to describe American political behavior by using knowledge of how people organize and use political information.
- Students will be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system.
- Students will be able to critically evaluate the ability of the American political system to serve its citizens.

4. Brief description of how the department will assess the course for these learning objectives.

The Department of Political Science will establish an assessment committee to evaluate the effectiveness of PS110 in meeting the stated learning objectives. Each academic year, the committee will collect a random selection of research papers and examinations

with all identifying student information removed. The committee will assess these samples following the course outcomes:

- 4 = outstanding (far exceeds expectations)
- 3 = good (exceeds expectations)
- 2 = average (meets basic expectations)
- 1 = poor (does not meet basic expectations)

The committee's targets are:

- 70% of the work will score 2 or higher.
- 30% of the work will score 3 or higher.

5. How many sections of this course will your department offer each semester?

8 to 12

6. Please attach sample syllabus for the course. See below.

PS 110-003

American National Government

Spring 2013

MWF 9:10 am to 10:05 am, GH 340

Professor: Jeffrey Kash

Office: GH, Rm. 307

Office Hours: Mon 1:35 pm - 2:35 pm, Wed 1:35 pm - 2:35 pm, Friday 1:35 pm - 2:35 pm, and by appointment

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Course Description:

The goals of this course are threefold. First, it provides students with basic knowledge about the structure of the American political system. Second, it explains the complex nature of political interactions among the formal and the informal institutions that constitute American government. Finally, it supplies students with a set of theoretical categories for critically thinking about politics. To support this final goal, the class will frequently discuss how current political events relate to topics in class. These discussions will include highlighting the relationship between class topics and WKU events such as Constitution week and Debate watch.

Learning Outcomes:

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- Students will be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system.
- Students will be able to critically evaluate the ability of the American political system to serve its citizens.

Textbooks:

Squire, Peverill, Lindsay, James M., Covington, Cary R., and Smith, Eric R.A.N. 2004 *Dynamics of Democracy* (Third Edition) or more recent editions.

Grading Policy:

Students' grades are calculated on the basis of their participation in class and their performance on three examinations. Each component of the grade is weighted as follows:

Participation 25 points

Exam 1 25 points

Exam 2 25 points

Exam 3 25 points

Total 100 points

1 Each student is responsible for all announcements made and material covered in class as well as the material assigned for reading in the text.

Participation – Students are expected to participate actively in class. Participation requires that you attend class, read the readings, perform any in-class writing assignments or quizzes, participate in any blackboard discussion boards or assignments, turn in any homework assignments, and get involved in discussion. It also requires that you listen to your classmates. Attendance will be taken throughout the semester and factored into the overall participation grade. If students come in late, it is their responsibility to make sure I know they were in class. If students miss class, it is their responsibility to e-mail me to explain the absence. If you miss a participation assignment because of an unexcused absence you cannot make up the assignment. Please contact me if you have any questions about participation.

Excused absences: Acceptable excuses for missing classes, quizzes, or assignments are formal notifications from persons in authority. Examples of such people include: doctors, faculty members, and administrators. If you are missing classes for any other reason please inform me, I like to know why students are missing classes. Please send me an email explaining the absence.

Exams – The class will have three exams. The format of the exams is all written. They will consist of short-answer questions as well as short essays based on the readings and class lectures.

Exam Rules:

- 1) No electronic devices (cell phones, MP3 players, Ipods, tablets, laptops, etc...) are allowed to be turned on or accessible during the exams.
- 2) Students will not be allowed to leave the room during the exam. I will make exceptions for emergency or special situations.
- 3) Please let me know before the exam if special circumstances affect your ability to comply with these rules.

****The due dates for the exams and assignments will be announced in class. If students miss class, it is their responsibility to find out the due dates from myself or a fellow classmate.****

Arrangements for Students with Disabilities: In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in DUC A-200 of the Student Success Center in Downing University Center. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Academic Dishonesty: “ Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the coursework in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal. The faculty member may also present the case to the Office of Student life for disciplinary sanctions. A student who believes that a faculty member has dealt unfairly with him/her in a course involving academic dishonesty may seek relief through the Student Complaint Procedure.”

"Student work may be checked using plagiarism detection software.”

Course and Readings Schedule:

*****Note*** Each topic will take approximately one week**

Overview of American Government

Squire et al, Chapter 1.

Constitutional Origins: Political and Philosophical Foundations.

Squire et al, Chapter 2.

The Individual in Politics: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Squire et al, Chapters 4 and 5.

*****First Exam*****

The Individual in Politics: Forms and Rates of Participation

Squire et al, Chapter 7.

Political Interest Groups: Organizing and Mobilizing on Issues

Squire et al, Chapter 10.

Political Parties: Organizing and Mobilizing Across Issues

Squire et al, Chapter 9.

*****Second Exam*****

Congress: The Legislative Function

Squire et al, Chapter 11.

The Presidency: The Executive Function

Squire et al, Chapter 12.

The Courts: The Adjudicative Function

Squire et al, Chapter 14

*****Exam 3 - Monday, May 6, 2013 at 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.*****

PS 110 – American National Government fulfills General Education Requirements for Social and Behavioral Sciences section “C.” The course supports the goals of Western’s general education program by developing the following academic skills:

- 1. The course develops the student’s capacity for critical thinking by providing a theoretical context for analyzing politics.**
- 2. The course provides a historical perspective that identifies connections between past and present through discussions of the US Constitution, US political institutions, and current events.**
- 3. The course provides an understanding of society and human behavior through explanations of how individuals process political information as well as why political issues gain public attention. The course addresses this goal through the exploration of empirical evidence on voter turnout, public opinion, and electoral politics.**

*****Although not anticipated, the organization of the course is subject to change based on new circumstances. If there are any such changes, I will let you know about them in a timely manner.*****