

Collin College Course Syllabus  
Fall 2017

Course Number: GOVT 2305

Course Title: Federal Government (Federal Constitution and Topics)

Instructor's Information:

Name: Tiffany Cartwright, Ph.D.

Office: B305H

Office Hours: MWF 9:00-9:50 AM

TR 8:00-8:20 and 10:00-10:55 AM

MW 1:30-2:00 (*online only*)

and by appointment

Office Phone: 214-491-6224

Email: [tcartwright@collin.edu](mailto:tcartwright@collin.edu)

Website: <http://faculty.collin.edu/tcartwright>

In case of emergency, please contact Office of Academic Affairs, B122G, 214-491-6270

Class Information:

Section: C05

Meeting Times: MWF 11:00-11:50 AM

Meeting Location: Central Park Campus, room C106 Pike Hall

Course Description: Origin and development of the U.S. Constitution, structure and powers of the national government including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public policy, civil liberties and civil rights

Course Credit Hours: 3    Lecture Hours: 3

Placement Assessment(s): Meet the TSI college-readiness standard for Reading and Writing; or equivalent. *Consult the Testing Center Director if you have questions about an assessment level.*

Course Resources: (**Optional**) Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, Caroline Tolbert, and Robert J. Spitzer. *We the People: An Introduction to American Politics*, 11<sup>th</sup> Essentials Edition, W. W. Norton & Co., ISBN: 978-0-393-28364-8

*Note that the ISBN given above is for the paperback edition. There is also an ebook (978-0-393-63058-9) edition that you can purchase instead if you prefer – much less expensive! Copies of the book are on reserve at the Central Park Campus Library.*

Supplies: Students will need at least three 882-E scantron forms for exams. Other supplies will be announced as needed.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States. (Communication Skills)
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system. (Communication Skills)
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice. (Social Responsibility)
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government. (Communication Skills; Personal Responsibility)
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system. (Critical Thinking; Personal Responsibility)
6. Analyze the election process. (Critical Thinking)
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens. (Personal Responsibility; Social Responsibility)
8. Analyze issues and policies in the U.S. politics. (Critical Thinking; Social Responsibility)

Methods of Evaluation:

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Exam 3	20%
Four Assignment Options, worth 10% each	40%
Total	100%

*Exams:* Exams will cover information presented in class. You will receive a study guide in class as we go along of what you should know from each section of the course. This information is a broad check list that will help you study for the exams. These exams are not cumulative, meaning they'll only cover the information we've gone over since the last exam. The final exam (Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM) will be an optional cumulative exam covering information from the whole semester. If you choose to take this exam and you do better on it, this grade will replace your lowest exam score. You must let me know by Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup> if you plan to take the optional final exam. All of these exams will be of the multiple choice and true/false variety.

*Make-Up Exams:* Make-up exams will only be given for valid and documented reasons (illness, funerals, etc. – not vacations or sleeping in) as determined by the professor. Should you miss an exam, bring in your documentation to me first, and then we can proceed from there. Please keep in mind that all make-up exams, if granted, will be written exams and will be much harder. All make-up exams must be completed on or before December 8, 2017.

*Assignment Options:* Students must complete at least 4 of the following assignment options, each worth 10% of your final course grade. It is up to you to decide which 4 of the following assignments you choose to do. If you choose to do more than 4, then only the 4 highest grades will be counted toward your final grade for the class. The details of each assignment and deadlines for each assignment are listed below.

*Assignment Option #1 – Attendance and Participation:* Yes, you can get points just for showing up to class and being an engaged student! This assignment has two parts:

1. **Class Participation, 75%:** You are expected to participate in class every day, which means you need to contribute and join in with the class by asking questions, answering questions, and contributing your own constructive thoughts and comments. Participation affects how well you remember, understand, and apply information. This means that full participation credit will only be given if you participate in class discussions, group activities, etc. If you show up to class but do not ever participate, then you will have a grade of zero for participation, so raise your hand and speak up! You will have two “freebie” days for participation, so if you have some sort of emergency one day and cannot be in class to participate, don’t worry – it won’t count against you. There is no participation grade given for exam days.
2. **Attendance, 25%:** Attendance will be taken every class period, and please keep in mind that full credit will only be given to students who arrive on time and do not leave early. You will have two “freebie” days for your attendance, so if you have some sort of emergency one day and cannot attend, don’t worry – it won’t count against you. Do not waste your freebie days. You will not get more for any reason! There are no excused absences except for religious holidays and for official college business. There is no attendance grade given for exam days.

*Assignment Option #2 – Founding and US Constitution Worksheet:* The United States had a complicated Founding, but the framers of the Constitution knew why good government mattered so much. For this assignment, you’ll need to print out and complete [this worksheet](#). Your completed worksheet must be turned in by the beginning of class on **Monday, September 11<sup>th</sup>**. Only hard copies (on paper!) will be accepted. No late submissions will be accepted.

*Assignment Option #3 – Letter to your Member of Congress:* This assignment should help you get to know your own member of Congress! This assignment is broken down into two parts:

1. **Current Event Article, 10%:** You’ll need to pick a current event about U.S. politics in the news to write about. Choose any news article about your current event (dated August 28, 2017 or later) from a newspaper, magazine, or other reputable news outlet. Print out that article and turn it in with your letter. You must note on there where and when the article is from, for example, “From CNN, published August 28, 2017.”
2. **Letter, 90%:** You’ll need to write a letter about the current event you’ve chosen – yes, it should actually be formatted as a letter. Your letter should...
  - be addressed to the correct U.S. Representative or U.S. Senator who represents you,
  - explain that you are their [constituent](#),
  - describe the current event chosen with some detail,
  - explain your position on the issue,
  - ask for their opinion,
  - use language suitable for communicating with a member of Congress,
  - be typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman size 12 font, with 1 inch margins on all sides,
  - and the body of your letter should be a minimum of 1 page in length.

You’ll need to turn in your letter and current event article (on paper!) to me by the beginning of class on **Wednesday, September 27<sup>th</sup>**. Only hard copies will be accepted. No late submissions will be accepted.

*Assignment Option #4 – State of the Union Address Analysis:* In his State of the Union Address to Congress on January 8, 1964, LBJ outlined his plan to fight poverty through new programs and tax cuts. He hoped to create a “great society” to benefit all Americans. Go to this website to view President Lyndon Johnson’s [1964 State of the Union Address](#), and then answer each question below, numbering each of your responses. Responses must be typed (Times New Roman, size 12 font). All work should be your own. Answers will be graded for completeness and accuracy. You must turn in your responses to me (on paper!) at the beginning of class on **Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>**. No late submissions will be accepted.

1. In memory of President Kennedy, who had been assassinated only months prior to this address, President Johnson asks members of Congress “to put your country ahead of your party, and to always debate principles; never debate personalities.” What do you think he meant by that? Explain.
2. What does LBJ name as the cause of poverty?
3. Name at least five programs that he recommends to cure and prevent poverty.
4. Who does President Johnson believe will benefit from his proposals to cure and prevent poverty? Why does he believe that?
5. Name at least five of the ways he proposes to achieve his goal of “a world without war, a world made safe for diversity, in which all men, goods, and ideas can freely move across every border and every boundary.”
6. In your own personal opinion, did President Johnson persuade you to believe in any of his proposals? Why or why not?

*Assignment Option #5 – Issues and Controversies:* Protest movements have always been a part of American political life, and the First Amendment provides the constitutional basis for this right. Read over this [Issues and Controversies](#) article about protest movements and possible ways to bring about political change. Then answer each question below, numbering each of your responses. Responses must be typed (Times New Roman, size 12 font). All work should be your own. Answers will be graded for completeness and accuracy. You must turn in your responses to me (on paper!) at the beginning of class on **Monday, November 20<sup>th</sup>**. No late submissions will be accepted.

1. In your own words, define what a protest movement is.
2. Identify one example of a protest movement in U.S. history. Include information on when this movement occurred, what the protesters hoped to accomplish, and whether they achieved their goal.
3. Identify one example of a foreign protest movement (i.e. one not in the U.S.). Include information on when this movement occurred, what the protesters hoped to accomplish, and whether they achieved their goal.
4. In your own words, explain three reasons why supporters believe protests are an effective way to promote political change.
5. In your own words, explain three reasons why critics believe protests are not the best way to promote political change.
6. Which side (the supporters or the critics) do you think has the better argument? Why?

*Assignment Option #6 – Current Events Journal:* For each section of the course we cover (there are 6 sections listed below in the course calendar), you’ll be following current events! Your current events journal must be turned in by the beginning of class on **Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>**.

Only hard copies (on paper!) will be accepted. No late submissions will be accepted. Here are the details of how this project grade is broken down:

1. **Find Articles, 50%:** Print/cut out 6 articles – one that relates to each section of the class listed below in the [Course Calendar](#). Each article should...

- be from a newspaper, magazine, or other reputable news outlet;
- be current, meaning it should be dated August 28, 2017 or later; and
- clearly say where and when the article is from, or, if not, please note it on there, for example, “From CNN, published August 28, 2017.”

If an article does not meet these three criteria, you will not receive points for that article.

2. **Summary Paragraphs, 50%:** For each article you’ve selected, you should...

- write a few sentences to summarize each article and
- explain the direct and specific connection to the section of the course that the article corresponds to.

Each article summary should be one short paragraph, for a total of 6 short paragraphs (one for each article). Responses must be typed (Times New Roman, size 12 font).

*Extra Credit:* There may be extra credit opportunities announced periodically during the course. Alternative extra credit assignments will not be given out if you cannot or choose not to participate in the given assignment. Why? All extra credit assignments are optional and are not required in order to succeed in the course.

Grades are not curved. Letter grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A	90-100%	
B	80-89.9%	If at any point during the semester you have concerns about your final grade, please come see me in person to figure out what you can do to improve.
C	70-79.9%	
D	60-69.9%	
F	59.9% and under	

Withdrawal Policy: See the current [Collin Registration Guide](#) for the last day to withdraw.

Dropping a class means that you remove yourself from the class up to the census date. Dropped classes do not appear on your official transcript. You may now drop online up to the census date. That last date to drop is Monday, September 11, 2017. Withdrawal from a class means that you remove yourself from the class after the census date. Withdrawn classes appear as a W on your official transcript but are not calculated in your grade point average. Withdrawals are not permitted online. Please read the Fall 2017 Registration Guide or contact the admissions office for information on how to withdraw. That last date to withdraw from this class is Friday, October 20, 2017. It is the *student’s responsibility* to drop the course; I cannot do it for you. Students who fail to drop the course and remain on the roll after the drop date will receive a performance grade!

Americans with Disabilities Act: Collin College will adhere to all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal opportunity. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the ACCESS office, CPC-D118-I or 972.548.6816 (V/TTD: 972.881.5950) to arrange for appropriate accommodations. See the current [Collin Student Handbook](#) for additional information.

Collin College Academic Policies: See the current [Collin Student Handbook](#).

Scholastic Dishonesty & Academic Ethics: 7-2.2 Scholastic Dishonesty Every member of the Collin College community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted for credit is expected to be the student's own work. Collin College may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty. While specific examples are listed below, this is not an exhaustive list and scholastic dishonesty may encompass other conduct, including any conduct through electronic or computerized means. Scholastic dishonesty shall involve, but is not limited to, one or more of the following acts:

**General Scholastic Dishonesty** includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts, or omissions related to applications for enrollment, credit or class work, research, and/or the award of a degree; falsifying academic records; using annotated texts or teacher's editions; using information about exams posted on the Internet or other electronic medium; leaving a test site without authority; failing to secure test materials; and/or submitting work that is not one's own. Students are expected to record honestly and accurately the results of all their research. Falsification of research results shall include misrepresentations, distortions, or omissions in data or reports on research.

**Plagiarism** is the use of an author's words or ideas as if they were one's own without giving credit to the source, including, but not limited to, failure to acknowledge a direct quotation or patchwriting. In the preparation of all papers and other written work, students must distinguish their own ideas and knowledge from information derived from other sources. The term "sources" includes not only published primary and secondary materials, but also information and opinions gained directly from other people. Whenever ideas or facts are derived from a source, the source must be indicated by the student.

**Cheating** is the willful giving or receiving of information in an unauthorized manner during an examination or to complete an assignment; collaborating with another student during an examination without authority; using, buying, selling, soliciting, stealing, or otherwise obtaining course assignments and/or examination questions in advance; unauthorized copying of computer or Internet files; using someone else's work for assignments as if it were one's own; submitting or resubmitting an assignment in whole or in part (i.e. recycling an assignment) for more than one (1) class or institution without permission from each of the professors; or any other dishonest means of attempting to fulfill the requirements of a course.

**Collusion** is intentionally or unintentionally aiding or attempting to aid another in an act of scholastic dishonesty, including but not limited to, failing to secure academic work; providing a paper or project to another student; providing an inappropriate level of assistance or unauthorized collaboration; communicating answers to a classmate about an examination or any other course assignment; removing tests or answer sheets from a test site; and allowing a classmate to copy answers.

In cases where an incident report has been filed for an alleged violation of scholastic dishonesty, the faculty member is requested to delay posting a grade for the academic work in question until the case is final. Students found responsible for scholastic dishonesty offenses will receive an authorized disciplinary penalty or penalties from the Dean of Students Office. The student may also receive an academic penalty in the course where the scholastic dishonesty took place. The faculty member will determine the appropriate academic penalty.

Academic Penalty: Any student who has been found by the Dean of Students Office to have been academically dishonest due to plagiarism, cheating, or collusion on an assignment will receive a

grade of zero for the assignment. In addition, students may not submit assignments for this class that students are planning to submit or have already submitted for another course without first obtaining express written consent from me *and* the professor(s) of the other course(s). Doing so without obtaining this permission from me and the professor(s) of the other course(s) will result in a grade of zero for the assignment.

Course Calendar: (subject to change with appropriate notice)

The readings listed below are optional and refer to the *We the People* textbook.

Dates	Topic	Readings
August 28-30	Syllabus and Course Introduction	
September 1-15	Section 1: The Founding and the U.S. Constitution	Chapter 2
September 11	Founding and US Constitution Worksheet (Assignment #2)	
September 18-29	Section 2: Congress	Chapter 9
September 27	Letter to your Member of Congress Due (Assignment #3)	
October 2	Exam #1	
October 4-16	Section 3: The Presidency & Bureaucracy	Chapters 10 & 11
October 11	State of the Union Address Analysis Due (Assignment #4)	
October 18-30	Section 4: Political Behavior: Public Opinion, the Media, Political Parties, and Political Participation	Chapters 5-8
November 1	Exam #2	
November 3-15	Section 5: The Federal Courts	Chapter 12
November 17- December 4	Section 6: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights	Chapter 4
November 20	Issues and Controversies (Assignment #5)	
December 6	Exam #3	
December 8	Current Events Journal Due (Assignment #6)	
December 13	Optional Final Exam @ 11:00 AM	

Religious Holidays: Please refer to the [Collin Student Handbook](#).

Classroom Behavior: No, my notes from class will not be posted anywhere, so it would be a good idea to take notes during class. Why? You'll remember things better if you have to write them down. Should you miss a day of class, it's advised that you look over the assigned readings and try to get notes from a study partner. During class, please turn off all cell phones, pagers, mp3 players, tablets, laptops, and anything else electronic. Setting your phone to vibrate does not count as being turned off. The [student handbook](#) (7-2.4S) specifically bars the use of media or telecommunications devices during class. Laptops/phones/tablets/any other electronic devices are not allowed in class unless you need it for ADA purposes and have appropriate documentation from the ACCESS office. During class, please do not text, read the newspaper, do homework for this or any other class, or partake in any other inappropriate behavior, as you may have points deducted, be asked to leave the classroom, or be reported to the Dean of Students for a code of conduct violation. If you have a valid reason for needing your phone on during class, please let me know before class, and we will work out appropriate accommodations for you. On

exam days, baseball caps and watches will not be allowed to be worn by students. Disruptive behavior will be reported to the Dean of Students.

Note: The professor reserves the right to make changes or modifications, if necessary, to this syllabus. Any major changes or modifications will be provided to the students in printed form.