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Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College

10809122 Introduction to American Government

Course Outcome Summary

Course Information

Description	Introduces American political processes and Institutions. Focuses on rights and responsibilities of citizens and the process of participatory democracy. Learners examine the complexity of the separation of powers and checks and balances. Explores the role of the media, interest groups, political parties and public opinion in the political process. Also explores the role of state and national government in our federal system.
Instructional Level	Associate Degree
Total Credits	3.00
Total Hours	48.00

Types of Instruction

Instruction Type	Credits/Hours
Presentation (Lecture/Demonstration/Discussion)	3/48

Course History

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Last Approval Date	1/14/2014

Purpose/Goals

This course outcome summary includes competencies and performance standards for Introduction to American Government. This course is part of the General Studies Core offered throughout the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). The course competencies are consistent among the colleges and are at baccalaureate level to accommodate student success in transfer to four-year colleges.

Course Competencies

- Explore American political culture**
Status Active

Assessment Strategies

- 1.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 1.1. characteristics of American political culture are specified
- 1.2. sources and influences of political socialization are described

Learning Objectives

- 1.a. Define politics
- 1.b. Define political culture
- 1.c. Identify sources of political socialization
- 1.d. Explore agents of political socialization

2. Explore citizenship responsibilities

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

- 2.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 2.1. types of political participation are described
- 2.2. self-assessment indicates learner's level of participation
- 2.3. patterns of voting behavior are described
- 2.4. procedures used to vote are identified

Learning Objectives

- 2.a. Discuss ways individuals can participate in the political process
- 2.b. Explain the rights and responsibilities of citizens
- 2.c. Describe typical patterns of voting behavior
- 2.d. Identify procedures used to vote
- 2.e. Identify offices or positions in which individuals can directly participate at the local, municipal, county, state and national level

3. Analyze types of governments

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

- 3.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 3.1. totalitarian, authoritarian and democratic forms of government are compared
- 3.2. types of government are characterized by the degree of governmental control, individual liberty, and equality

Learning Objectives

- 3.a. Define various types of governments
- 3.b. Identify individual roles in various governments
- 3.c. Identify ways individuals can participate in various governments
- 3.d. Discuss trade-off of protection and liberty in various governments

4. Examine Democratic principles

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

- 4.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 4.1. characteristics of direct and representative democracy are compared

- 4.2. examples of present day direct democratic principles are identified: referendum, recall, and citizen initiatives
- 4.3. limitations of democratic government are described
- 4.4. relationship between majority rule and minority rights is compared
- 4.5. theory of social contract is applied to the American political system

Learning Objectives

- 4.a. Compare and contrast democratic and republican forms of government
- 4.b. Compare characteristics of direct and representative democracy
- 4.c. Describe what happens in a referendum, a recall, and a citizen initiative
- 4.d. Discuss limitations of democratic government
- 4.e. Define "social contract" as applied to the American political system

5. Identify functions and purpose of government

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

- 5.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 5.1. government activities are classified according to: regulatory, distributive, or redistributive
- 5.2. sources of political legitimacy are identified

Learning Objectives

- 5.a. Describe the regulatory, distributive, and redistributive functions of government
- 5.b. Differentiate government from such social institutions as family and religion

6. Explore the philosophers and documents that influence the development of the Constitution

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

- 6.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 6.1. core documents are linked to political philosophies and principles
- 6.2. principle of natural rights is explained

Learning Objectives

- 6.a. Define "natural rights"
- 6.b. Identify political philosophers and their respective philosophies
- 6.c. Examine significant documents relating to social contracts including, but not limited to, Magna Carta, Mayflower Compact, Declaration of Independence, and the U.S. Constitution

7. Explore the principles of separation of powers and checks and balances

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

- 7.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 7.1. Constitutional powers are categorized as delegated, implied, and reserved
- 7.2. Examples of checks and balances are provided
- 7.3. Examples of separation of powers (federal and state, state, and local) are identified

Learning Objectives

- 7.a. List which powers are identified in the constitution as belonging to citizens, federal government, state government, and local government
- 7.b. Define federalism

- 7.c. Compare and contrast implied versus reserved powers
- 7.d. Differentiate between political checks and balances
- 7.e. Explain decentralization of powers

8. Analyze civil liberties

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

- 8.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 8.1. civil rights and civil liberties are differentiated
- 8.2. amendments and landmark Supreme Court cases relating to civil liberties are analyzed
- 8.3. current issues related to civil liberties are analyzed

Learning Objectives

- 8.a. Differentiate between civil rights and civil liberties
- 8.b. Explain the four freedoms guaranteed by the first amendment
- 8.c. Explain the apparent intent of the writers of the "establishment clause" of the first amendment
- 8.d. Explain the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and Amendments

9. Trace the development of Civil Rights

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

- 9.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 9.1. historical development of civil rights is outlined
- 9.2. amendments and landmark Supreme Court cases relating to civil rights are analyzed
- 9.3. current issues related to civil rights are analyzed

Learning Objectives

- 9.a. Identify amendments important in the development of civil rights
- 9.b. Explain the impact of Plessy versus Ferguson, and Brown versus the Board of Education
- 9.c. Analyze Supreme Court cases relating to civil rights
- 9.d. Discuss current and relevant issues in civil rights

10. Explain the election process in the United States

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

- 10.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 10.1. nomination process is explained
- 10.2. role of the electoral college is explained
- 10.3. general election process is explained
- 10.4. role of the citizen in the election processes is identified
- 10.5. campaign process is described

Learning Objectives

- 10.a. Describe the two-tiered process of presidential elections
- 10.b. Compare and contrast primary versus general elections
- 10.c. Explain the origins and current rationale for the Electoral College
- 10.d. Describe the process of a political campaign
- 10.e. Differentiate between partisan and non-partisan elections

11. Explore the two-party system and the role of third parties in the United States

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

11.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 11.1. reasons for the entrenched two-party system are provided
- 11.2. roles of third/minor parties are described
- 11.3. characteristics of the Democratic and Republican parties are compared

Learning Objectives

- 11.a. Describe the party system and its functions
- 11.b. Describe the role of third or minor parties
- 11.c. Compare and contrast the current Democratic and Republican parties

12. Analyze the influence of media in the political process

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

12.1. through a test, written assignment, or group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 12.1. examples of how the media sets the agenda are provided
- 12.2. examples of political "spin" are identified

Learning Objectives

- 12.a. Differentiate between public versus privately-owned media
- 12.b. Describe the role of media in campaigns
- 12.c. Define "politicians' spin"
- 12.d. Describe the agenda-setting function of media
- 12.e. Explain "media bias"

13. Explore the role of interest groups

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

13.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 13.1. pluralist and power elite theories are compared
- 13.2. types of interest groups are identified
- 13.3. interest group actions to influence policy and election campaigns are identified
- 13.4. citizens' roles in interest groups are explained

Learning Objectives

- 13.a. Define "pluralist theory"
- 13.b. Define "power elite theory"
- 13.c. Describe how interest groups influence campaigns and government policy
- 13.d. Discuss the role of citizens in special interest groups

14. Differentiate the types of public opinion in the American political process

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

14.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 14.1. types of public opinion polls are identified
- 14.2. characteristics of a push poll are described
- 14.3. examples of measures of public opinion polls are described
- 14.4. public opinion polls are interpreted

Learning Objectives

- 14.a. Identify two or more types of public opinion polls
- 14.b. Describe a push poll
- 14.c. Give examples of biased and unbiased poll questions
- 14.d. Explain the process of poll interpretation
- 14.e. Compare and contrast various parties' interpretations of the same poll data

15. Summarize the structure, functions, and responsibilities of Congress

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

- 15.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 15.1. structure of Congress is analyzed
- 15.2. how a Bill becomes law is traced
- 15.3. examples of differences between the Senate and House are identified
- 15.4. types of representation are described

Learning Objectives

- 15.a. Differentiate between the Senate and House
- 15.b. Explain the types of representation
- 15.c. Describe the structure of Congress
- 15.d. Explain the political process within Congress

16. Summarize the organization, functions, and responsibilities of the Executive Branch

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

- 16.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 16.1. powers and responsibilities of the President are summarized
- 16.2. organizational structure of the Executive Branch is described
- 16.3. expansion of presidential powers is described

Learning Objectives

- 16.a. Differentiate among Presidential roles
- 16.b. Summarize the powers and responsibilities of the President
- 16.c. Trace the expansion of presidential powers
- 16.d. Explore the organizational structure of the Executive Branch
- 16.e. Explore the expansion of bureaucracy
- 16.f. Discuss Presidents' interpretations of Constitutional powers (strict versus loose constructionists)

17. Summarize the organization, functions, and responsibilities of the federal judiciary

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

- 17.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 17.1. structure of the Federal court System is described
- 17.2. nature and historical evolution of judicial review are described
- 17.3. process of federal judicial appointment is explained
- 17.4. judicial process is analyzed

Learning Objectives

- 17.a. Explore the nature and history of judiciary review
- 17.b. Explain the process of judicial appointment
- 17.c. Identify the structure of the federal court system
- 17.d. Explain the judicial process

18. Differentiate among federal, state, and local government functions and responsibilities

Status Active

Assessment Strategies

- 18.1. through a test, written assignment, or a group project

Criteria

Your performance will be successful when:

- 18.1. dual aspect of American Government (federal and state) is described
- 18.2. examples of federal powers vs. state's rights are identified
- 18.3. characteristics of Wisconsin State Government are described
- 18.4. examples of collection and distribution of funding sources are identified

Learning Objectives

- 18.a. Describe the dual aspect of American Government: Federal & State
- 18.b. Compare federal powers vs. state's rights
- 18.c. Explore the characteristics of Wisconsin State Government
- 18.d. Examine the collection and distribution of funding sources
- 18.e. Identify your elected officials in state, federal, and local government
- 18.f. Identify the polling place for your location