

**Common Course Outline**  
**POLS 101**  
**American Government and Politics**  
**3 Credits**

**Community College of Baltimore County**

**Description**

**POLS 101 - 3 credits- American Government and Politics** introduces students to the historical foundation of the American political system and United States Constitution and their impact upon citizens. Students examine the workings, processes and organizations inside and outside government, interest groups, political parties and media, along with the making of public policy and foreign policy.

**3 credits**

**Prerequisites:** ACLT 052 or ACLT 053

**Overall Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. define the terms politics and government;
2. trace the historical foundation of American government;
3. explain the compromises, conflicts, concepts, events and ideas that led to the evolution of the American political system;
4. outline the rights and responsibilities of a United States citizen;
5. examine why issues of Constitutional individual rights and/or civil liberties have become more complex in contemporary times;
6. summarize the development of measures designed to promote equality in America;
7. analyze the Constitutional and traditional functions, organization, and responsibilities of the legislative, executive and judicial branches of American government;
8. illustrate how factors such as money and the media influence and shape political behavior and ethics;
9. analyze the relationship and impact among and between pressure groups and institutions of government that are influential in shaping laws and creating public policy;
10. evaluate the federal public policy making process from agenda setting and problem recognition to policy evaluation;
11. compare and contrast major elements of current federal domestic and foreign policies; including human/civil rights and liberties, the environment, personal and military security, international diplomacy, relations, finance and trade;
12. interpret issues and events affecting the current political environment;
13. defend a key issue facing American democracy, using technological resources, and
14. find, evaluate, use and cite academic sources on political issues and events based on criteria discussed in the course.

## **Major Topics**

- I. Foundations of American Government
  - A. Articles of Confederation
  - B. U.S. Constitution /Constitutional Rights
  - C. Federalism
  - D. The role and responsibilities of the Executive Branch
  - E. The role and responsibilities of the Legislative Branch
  - F. The role and responsibilities of the Judicial Branch
  
- II. People, Politics and Political Behavior
  - A. Political ideology
  - B. Interest groups and political parties
  - C. Media and public opinion
  - D. Campaigns and elections
  
- III. Public Policy Process
  - A. Development of domestic policy
  - B. Development of foreign policy

## **Course Requirements**

Grading/exams: Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include the following:

- Participation in at least 5 of the following: debates, oral presentations, online discussion forums about current political events and topics
- A minimum of 4 exams
- A minimum of research assignment or project on a selected topic of interest

Written Assignments: Multiple assignments will infuse CCBC General Education Program objectives; at least one assignment (at least 5 pages) worth a minimum of 10% of the total course grade will allow students to demonstrate at least 5 of the 7 General Education Program outcomes.

Students are required to utilize appropriate academic resources.

## **Other Course Information**

This course is an approved General Education course in the Social and Behavioral Sciences.

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