

Northern Marianas College

CURRICULUM ACTION REQUEST

Course: PS 110 Principles of Democratic Institutions

Effective Semester / Session: Fall 2023

Type of Action:

- New
- Modification
- Move to Inactive (Stop Out)
- Cancellation

Course Alpha and Number: PS 110

Course Title: Principles of Democratic Institutions

Reason for initiating, revising, or canceling:

The course guide has been updated to reflect changes in textbook requirements.

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Course: PS 110 Principles of Democratic Institutions

1. Department

Social Sciences and Fine Arts

2. Purpose

PS 110 provides an introduction to the American system of democratic government, in both historical and contemporary contexts. Principles of Democratic Institutions or its equivalent is a standard component of the General Education curriculum at any accredited U.S. postsecondary institution, and it fulfills a General Education requirement at most such institutions.

The course aims to help students better understand the actions, issues, and policy decisions facing the U.S. government, the states, and other members of the U.S. political family, and its citizens by examining these issues from the perspective of how they have evolved over time. It explores how America is governed today by looking not just at present behavior but also at the intentions of the Framers of the Constitution, and how their intentions have been implemented (or not implemented) over the succeeding years. In addition to perennial questions raised by the Framers, PS 110 examines issues that the Framers could never have envisioned and considers how the basic institutions of government have responded to these new demands. This course also examines the relationship and the differences between the U.S. government and the government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

3. Description

A. Required/Recommended Textbook(s) and Related Materials

Required:

Geer, J. G., Segal, J. A., Schiller, W. J., Herrera, R. (2021). *Gateways to Democracy: An Introduction to American Government*. United States: Cengage Learning.

B. Contact Hours

1. Lecture: 3 hours per week | 45 hours per semester
2. Lab: None
3. Other: None

C. Credits

1. Number: 3
2. Type: Regular degree credits

Course: PS 110 Principles of Democratic Institutions

D. Catalogue Course Description

This is an introductory course designed to familiarize students with the principles and processes of democratic government as developed and practiced in the United States. Emphasis is on the concepts and procedures relating to the development of public policy. Attention is given to current issues at the national, state, and local government levels in the U.S. as well as issues of specific concern to the CNMI. Prerequisite: CO 210, or concurrent enrollment English Placement Level: EN 101. Math Placement Level: MA 091. (Offered Fall and Spring).

E. Degree or Certificate Requirements Met by Course

This course is a General Education requirement for the Associate Degrees in Liberal Arts and in Criminal Justice, and for the Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education. This course also fulfills the General Education requirement in the Social and Behavioral Sciences for the A.A.S. Degree in Business Administration: Accounting Emphasis, Business Management Emphasis, and Computer Applications Emphasis.

F. Course Activities and Design

This course incorporates lectures, small-group and class discussions, homework assignments (short, structured essays), guest speakers, viewing and discussing relevant videotaped programs, group and class projects, and a midterm and a final exam. Students are required to participate fully in class discussions, read and discuss textbook assignments, and keep abreast of current events regarding American and CNMI government activities as they relate to topics presented in this course. When possible, field trips to attend sessions of the CNMI Legislature, CNMI courts, the U.S. District Court, and other public meetings will be scheduled.

4. Course Prerequisite(s); Concurrent Course Enrollment

Prerequisite(s): CO 210, or concurrent enrollment English Placement Level: EN 101
Math Placement Level: MA 091

Required English/Mathematics Proficiency Level(s)

English Placement Level: Put English Placement Level

Mathematics Placement Level: Put Math Placement Level

5. Estimated Cost of Course; Instructional Resources Needed

Cost to the Student: Tuition for a 3-credit course; the cost of the textbook; and any applicable fees. Cost to the College: Instructor's salary.

Course: PS 110 Principles of Democratic Institutions

Instructional resources needed for this course include chalk and chalkboard, TVNCR and videotaped programs, wall maps, and library books and periodicals to be identified by the instructor.

6. Method of Evaluation

Student grades will be based on the regular letter grade system as described below:

- A: Excellent - grade points: 4.0;
- B: Above average - grade points: 3.0;
- C: Average - grade points: 2.0;
- D: Below average - grade points: 1.0;
- F: Failure - grade points: 0.0.

NMC's grading and attendance policies will be followed.

7. Course Outline

This is a topical outline and does not necessarily indicate the sequence in which the material is presented.

1.0 Introduction to the Course

- 1.1 Ideas of government and their origins
- 1.2 Theories of democracy
- 1.3 Public policy in relation to democracy

2.0 Foundations of Democratic Government in the United States

2.1 The U.S. Constitution

- 2.1.1 The history and origins of the Constitution
- 2.1.2 The principles and formulation of the Constitution
- 2.1.3 Checks and balances in the U.S. government
- 2.1.4 Ratification of the Constitution
- 2.1.5 The evolving Constitution: The amendment process

2.2 Federalism

- 2.2.1 Characteristics of Federalism
- 2.2.2 The origins and development of Federalism
- 2.2.3 Problems of Federalism in the contemporary context

2.3 Civil Liberties and the Bill of Rights

- 2.3.1 The origins and nature of civil liberties
- 2.3.2 The First Amendment
 - 2.3.2.1 The establishment of religion clause
 - 2.3.2.2 The free exercise of religion clause
 - 2.3.2.3 Freedom of speech

Course: PS 110 Principles of Democratic Institutions

- 2.3.2.4 Freedom of the press
- 2.3.2.5 Freedom of assembly
- 2.3.2.6 Freedom of association

2.3.3 The rights of defendants and criminal justice: The Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth Amendments

2.3.4 The due process of law clause and the incorporation doctrine

2.3.5 The Ninth Amendment, the right of privacy and abortion rights

2.4 Civil rights

2.4.1 Concepts of civil rights

2.4.2 The history of the civil rights movement

2.4.2.1 The abolition of slavery and the emancipation of slaves

2.4.2.2 The Civil War Amendments to the Constitution

2.4.2.3 Civil rights and the courts

2.4.2.4 The Civil Rights Act of 1964

2.4.2.5 The Voting Rights Act of 1965

3.0 Political Behavior

3.1 Public opinion

3.1.1 What is public opinion?

3.1.2 How we measure public opinion

3.1.3 American political ideologies: Liberalism and conservatism

3.1.4 The effects of public opinion on politicians, politics, and policy

3.2 Political parties

3.2.1 What is a political party?

3.2.2 The organization and roles of American political parties

3.2.3 Party eras and the history of the two-party system in the U.S.

3.2.4 Third parties in American politics

3.3 Voting and elections

3.3.1 The purposes served by elections

3.3.2 Different kinds of elections

3.3.3 The Presidential nomination process

3.3.4 Campaigns: Types and processes

3.3.5 Voting behavior

3.3.6 The Electoral College

3.4 Interest groups

3.4.1 Theories of interest groups in politics

3.4.2 The roles played by interest groups

3.4.3 The structure and activities of interest groups

3.4.4 Types of interest groups

3.5 The news media's role in opinion and policy formation

3.5.1 The contemporary media scene

3.5.2 How the media cover politicians and government

Course: PS 110 Principles of Democratic Institutions

- 3.5.3 The media's influence on the public
- 3.5.4 How politicians use the media
- 3.5.5 Government regulation of the electronic media
- 4.0 Institutions of Government
 - 4.1 Congress
 - 4.1.1 Members and representation
 - 4.1.2 How Congress works
 - 4.1.3 How members of Congress make decisions
 - 4.1.4 The lawmaking process
 - 4.1.5 Lawmaking in relation to policy
 - 4.1.6 Congress and the President
 - 4.2 The Presidency
 - 4.2.1 The constitutional powers of the President
 - 4.2.2 The President's team: The Cabinet, the White House staff, and the Executive Office of the President
 - 4.2.3 The roles of the President
 - 4.3 The Federal Bureaucracy
 - 4.3.1 What is the bureaucracy?
 - 4.3.2 Types and functions of bureaucratic organizations in the U.S. government
 - 4.3.3 Managing bureaucracies
 - 4.4 The Federal Courts
 - 4.4.1 The structure of the Federal court system
 - 4.4.2 Original jurisdiction and appellate jurisdiction
 - 4.4.3 The Supreme Court
 - 4.4.4 The appointment and confirmation of Federal judges
 - 4.4.5 Courts as policymakers
 - 4.4.6 Differences between the judicial systems in the CNMI (local and federal courts) and state and federal judicial systems in the U.S.
 - 4.4.7 The relationship of the Federal court system to the CNMI
- 5.0 Current Issues: National-Security Policy-Making
 - 5.1 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
 - 5.1.1 Function of NATO
 - 5.1.2 Assess its need for 21st century
 - 5.2 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)
 - 5.2.1 Function of CIA
 - 5.2.2 Positions of liberals and conservatives on National Security
 - 5.2.3 Nuclear proliferation, globalization, and economic change

Course: PS 110 Principles of Democratic Institutions

8. Instructional Goals

The course will introduce students to:

- 1.0 The basic philosophical and legal concepts underlying the American system of democratic government;
- 2.0 The foundations and development of democratic government in the United States, emphasizing the U.S. Constitution, Federalism, checks and balances among the three branches of the U.S. government, the Bill of Rights, and civil rights, and how all of these apply to the Commonwealth;
- 3.0 The participating groups in American political life and public policy making, including interest groups;
- 4.0 The ideologies of liberalism and conservatism, and how they differ;
- 5.0 The roles of the two major parties and minor parties in the U.S.;
- 6.0 The elements and the sequence of the elections process in the U.S., and differences between this process and the CNMI elections process;
- 7.0 The steps in the election of the President, including the Electoral College;
- 8.0 The structure and functions of national-level government institutions: The Congress, the Presidency, the Executive Branch departments and agencies, and the U.S. courts;
- 9.0 The steps in the U.S. Congress by which a bill becomes a law;
- 10.0 The relationship between the U.S. government and the CNMI government;
- 11.0 Differences between the U.S. government and the CNMI government;
- 12.0 The extent of government influence on the lives of citizens;
- 13.0 Current issues in American government and politics; and
- 14.0 Critical thinking and evaluation of sources of information.

A further integrated goal of the course is to provide a learning environment that stimulates students' interest and involvement in the political life of their community, and in which students can apply critical thinking skills to real- world issues addressed by the course.

Course: PS 110 Principles of Democratic Institutions

9. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1.0 Identify and describe the basic philosophical and legal concepts underlying the American system of democratic government;

2.0 Demonstrate an understanding of the development of democratic government in the United States, specifically with regard to the U.S. Constitution, Federalism, checks and balances among the three branches of the U.S. government, the Bill of Rights, and civil rights, and how all of these apply to the Commonwealth;

3.0 Identify and describe the participating groups in American political life and public policy making;

4.0 Define and explain the differences between liberalism and conservatism;

5.0 Explain the roles of the two major parties and minor parties in the U.S.;

6.0 Identify the elements and sequence of the elections process in the U.S., and describe how this process differs from the CNMI elections process;

7.0 Identify and explain the steps in the election of the President;

8.0 Describe the structure and functions of national-level government institutions: The Congress, the Presidency, the Executive Branch departments and agencies, and the U.S. courts;

9.0 List and explain the steps in the U.S. Congress by which a bill becomes a law;

10.0 Explain how the judicial systems in the CNMI (local and federal courts) are different from the state and federal judicial systems on the U.S. mainland;

11.0 Explain and assess the relationship between the U.S. government and the CNMI government;

12.0 Analyze and evaluate the extent of government influence on the lives of citizens, and the advantages and disadvantages of this influence:

13.0 Identify, discuss, and evaluate current issues in American government and politics; and

14.0 Demonstrate the ability to apply critical thinking skills to real-world issues addressed by the course. North

Course: PS 110 Principles of Democratic Institutions

10. Assessment Measures of Student Learning Outcomes

Assessment of student learning may include, but not be limited to, the following:

1.0 Four chapter exams; and

2.0 Written and oral presentations on the student's comprehension, analysis, and evaluation of a current political, economic, or governmental problem..