

**PLS 1010-800 and PLS 1010-801: Introduction to American National Government**  
**Spring 2012 - Online via Blackboard and McGraw Hill Connect**

**Instructor:** [Ms. Carole Graham, J.D.](#)

**Class hours:** Online

**Office:** Oxendine Science Building 1305 (inside Oxendine 1300)

**Office hours:** Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00 am - 11:00 am and by appointment. I am only on campus on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Due to faculty meetings and other commitments, my availability is subject to change on short or no notice, so I ask that you please e-mail me to make an appointment if you are going to come to the office.

**Phone:** (910) 522-5788

**E-Mail:** [carole.graham@uncp.edu](mailto:carole.graham@uncp.edu)

E-mail is the BEST way to reach me, because I am on campus on Tuesdays and Thursdays only. Please be sure to spell my first name correctly (Carole), otherwise I will not receive your e-mail.

**Syllabus and Course Schedule adjustments** will be announced on **Blackboard** as necessary, so check the **Announcements** page often.

**About the Professor:** I am originally from Alabama, which is where I attended law school and practiced for a number of years. I mostly worked in real estate development and title insurance, although I was involved in other areas of practice. Shortly after moving to Lumberton with my husband, Dr. Kevin Freeman, I was given the opportunity to teach a class at UNCP as an adjunct professor. I greatly enjoyed the experience, and now I teach at UNCP full time and serve as the pre-law advisor. This is my sixth full year of teaching at UNCP. Besides American Government, I also teach PLS 2170 Judicial Process and Behavior, PLS 3100 and 3110 Constitutional Law, and PLS 3120 The Law of Criminal Procedure.

I have taught American National Government many times as a lecture course and online, and this semester I am teaching two sections online (FYI - Sections 800 and 801 have been combined onto one Blackboard page, which is easier for me to manage). This spring, I am using a new textbook with features integrated with Blackboard, so please understand that it may take a little while for me to "get up to speed" on how to operate these new features.

Many of you may have the same or similar questions regarding the course, content, etc. You can post questions and comments to the "**Talk to the Professor**" forum on the **Discussion Board on Blackboard**.

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Welcome to PLS 1010 American National Government – Online!

## **Why is it important to study American Government?**

My hope is that your interest in this class goes beyond the fact that it fulfills a General Education requirement and is online, because now is a great time to study American Government. Barack Obama's election as president was historic, but the "honeymoon" period quickly ended as the administration tried to address a number of issues early on, including health care, the economy, and the War on Terror. We are more than halfway through President Obama's four year term, which gives us the opportunity to view, in real time through current events, how a president structures his administration, selects his cabinet and Supreme Court justices, and develops national policy. Current events like government spending and raising the debt ceiling are great examples of how the president and Congress interact to formulate policy. Another reason to learn about American Government is that you are affected by it every day, even if you don't think about it that often. For example, if you have a job, the federal government regulates the minimum wage, occupational safety, taxes, and Social Security withholding. Even if you are a full time student without a job, I'm sure you can think of a number of ways the federal government regulates and influences your everyday life (student loans?).

## **Course Description**

This course is an introductory study of:

- (1) a brief history of the development and basic principles of the Constitution, including separation of powers and federalism;
- (2) the structure, functions and relationship between the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the national government; and
- (3) the political process, including public opinion, voting, campaigns and elections.

## **Course Objectives**

1. To understand the constitutional structure of American federalism.
2. To learn how the relationship and powers of the three branches of government have evolved over time.
3. To appreciate the election process, including the role of political parties, national conventions, the primary process and the Electoral College.

## My Expectations for your participation in an Online Course

1. Because you have signed up for an online course, you should have regular, uninterrupted access to a working computer. Your computer should be able to play streaming videos (including sound), handle Flash animation, and have access to the internet. I understand that occasionally computers "act up", but it will be difficult to do well in the course if your computer is constantly "down".

Since this is a General Education course, your "attendance" and academic progress will be monitored. Students who fail to log on, participate in Discussion Boards, complete assignments or fail to take tests will be referred to the Center for Academic Excellence under the [Early Alert program](#).

Please be aware that failure to participate in the course does not automatically withdraw or drop you from the class. Each semester, I have a few students who just stop participating and then wind up with an "F" on their transcript. If you intend to drop the course, please follow the proper procedures as outlined by the [Registrar's office](#). **For the Spring 2012 semester, Wednesday, March 14th is the last day for undergraduates to drop a class with a "W" grade.**

2. This course, the course modules, assignments, tests, quizzes and discussion boards have **designated start and end dates and deadlines**. A course module usually lasts **2 weeks per chapter**, and **tests will be open for one week** (test dates are reflected on the Course Schedule).

This course is not set up for those who wish to cover all Course Modules in one weekend or hand in all assignments for the entire course at one time. In other words, you should plan on doing some work in this course every week. Meaningful participation on the **Discussion Boards** is difficult if you only "stop by" infrequently, and a lack of participation will affect your final grade in the class.

3. You should set up, use and regularly check your UNCP e-mail account. All e-mails that discuss grades MUST come from your UNCP account for privacy reasons. Please use correct English spelling and grammar (no txt speak, please) and be sure to sign your e-mails so I know who I am addressing. Putting "PLS 1010-800" or "PLS 1010-801" in the subject heading of the e-mail will help me to identify the e-mail as coming from a student in this class. Be aware that e-mail from faculty may be delivered to the Junk Mail folder in BraveMail ([click here](#) for instructions to correct the problem). If you are having problems with UNCP e-mail or Blackboard, contact the UNCP [Division of Information Technology](#) (Dolt).

You should also be aware that occasionally student e-mails are not delivered to my inbox. This has happened to me on more than one occasion, so if you e-mail me and have not received a response after 3-4 days, please re-send the e-mail. If you still do not receive a response, call my office (910-522-5788) to leave a message on my voicemail, and contact DoIT about the problem.

4. If you are unfamiliar with Blackboard or uncomfortable using a computer, my best advice to you is to "learn by doing." Even those who have previously taken an online class under the old version of Blackboard should take some time to explore the new Blackboard site by clicking on the buttons on the left hand side of the screen. I will try my best to include clear instructions on the location of materials within the Blackboard site, but if you are having trouble finding something (like a posted assignment or test) please let me know by either e-mailing me or posting to the **"Talk to the Professor" forum on the Discussion Boards.**

5. Reading and writing are key elements of an online course. You should READ all materials thoroughly and completely, whether they are assigned readings from the textbook or postings to the Blackboard page. Your grade in this course is mostly determined by the WRITTEN answers you provide to assignments, test questions or Discussion Board topics. Therefore, you should think through your answers carefully, and use these opportunities to "show me what you know". By this I mean show me that you have done the reading, watched the assigned videos, thought about the covered topics in depth, and kept up with current events in American Government. General answers, such as "I agree with what the professors in the video said", do not clearly reflect that you have watched the video, and therefore would receive a low grade. Your answers should be more detailed, explaining exactly what you agreed (or disagreed) with, and why.

## **Required Course Materials - Blackboard, Software, Hardware**

**1. Blackboard:** The syllabus, assignments, course modules and schedule will be posted on Blackboard. Correspondence in Blackboard is through the UNCP e-mail system. Therefore, you should **activate and check** your UNCP e-mail account often. Be aware that e-mail from faculty may be delivered to the Junk Mail folder in BraveMail ([click here](#) for instructions to correct the problem).

If you are having problems with UNCP e-mail or Blackboard, contact the UNCP [Division of Information Technology](#) (Dolt). Because I will not always send an e-mail when I update the Blackboard page, you should **regularly check the Announcements page** for updated and additional information.

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## Required Software/Hardware

You may be asked to explore interactive, media rich websites using the Internet. Some may use multimedia components, such as audio tracks, video, etc. The multimedia features provide a richer experience for the viewer by using sound and movement to make content come alive. Your computer should have a sound and video card. Some of these sites require you to download special software programs called plug-ins. Plug-ins allow your web browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, etc.) to view or play certain types of files. The plug-ins are free and download quickly.

## Additional Resources

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One of the great advantages of online learning is the access to a wealth of resources. Locate library and research information for topics covered in this course using the links at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke [Livermore Library](#).

## Research Tips

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Should you be required to conduct some research during this course, don't wait until the night before your assignment is due to begin to search for information such as journal articles, books, web sites, etc. to support your work in this course. The University of North Carolina at Pembroke Library can help you locate much of the information you need, either online or at a library near you.

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## Required Course Materials - Text: *American Democracy*

2. Text: There is one textbook for this course: *American Democracy*, Selected materials from *American Democracy Now*, Second Edition by Harrison and Harris, published by McGraw-Hill.

The textbook is available for purchase from the [UNCP Bookstore](#).

This textbook is comprised of selected chapters from *American Democracy Now*, Second Edition by Harrison and Harris. A picture of the cover of our version of the text is available under the "Textbook Information" tab on the left hand side of the Blackboard page. The publisher's listing for the full version of the text, which has a different cover picture and additional chapters than our version, is located here: [click here to view](#).

Each NEW textbook purchased from the UNCP Bookstore SHOULD BE packaged with an access card/registration code for the companion website [McGraw-Hill Connect](#). (If you bought a used textbook or a textbook from another vendor, Connect access codes can be purchased separately on the Connect course website. Click on "[How to Buy Access Online](#)" in the gray box on the Connect course website for more information). The back of the access card/registration code package has instructions for registering for ConnectPlus materials.

If you wish to buy the full version of the text with a Connect access code from another vendor, you will need to obtain the correct ISBN number from McGraw Hill. At the end of the day, YOU are responsible for obtaining the correct textbook with Connect access.

## Required Course Materials - Connect class registration

3. **Connect Website:** [Registration for Connect is required](#). You can get to the Connect website by clicking on the button "Connect Website" on the left hand side of the page, or by going to the Connect page for our class: [click here](#).

Instructions for registering for Connect are located on the back of the online access card for Connect package that is included with your new textbook. Registration instructions, including how to buy access online (in case you purchased a used textbook without the online access card package), are also located on the Connect course web page [located here](#).

If you have problems registering for Connect, you will need to contact [Customer Support](#) on the Connect website. I cannot fix any registration issues you might be having (i.e., your code does not work). **It is your responsibility to contact McGraw Hill Connect Customer Support, and be registered for Connect as soon as possible. [Click here for more information.](#)**

**Connect Overview:** Take a few moments to explore McGraw Hill Connect. You will find on the home page e-book access, LearnSmart study modules and other resources, including various political news feeds and links. The home page also has an announcements area, where you can view a list of assignments that I have designated for you to complete. Because of the integration of materials between Blackboard and Connect, assignments that you complete on Connect will be graded and posted to your gradebook on Blackboard.

## **Required Course Materials - Assignments on McGraw-Hill Connect**

**4. Assignments on Connect: Post-test:** Each Chapter on Connect comes with a Post-test to gauge your proficiency in the chapter. Results from the Post-test can help you identify areas of weakness and strength. For each assigned chapter, **you must complete and submit for grading** the chapter post-test before the end date stated on the Course Module. These tests are for your benefit, and will count toward your class participation grade (see **Grading** on this syllabus).

The Post-test is not a timed quiz, so you can take as long as you would like to answer the questions, but you can only attempt the Post-test twice and you must complete at least one attempt before the end date and time of the course module. The Post-test questions are preset with a value of one point each, however those points will not directly translate to points on Blackboard. Instead, credit points will be assigned to the "My Grades" section of Blackboard, based on your completion of the Post-test and how many questions you answered correctly from the average of your two attempts (if only one attempt is made, then your credit points will be assigned from that single attempt).

### **5. Assignments on Connect: LearnSmart**

You will also be assigned questions from the LearnSmart program on Connect. The number of questions per chapter may vary, however you must complete the LearnSmart activity before the end due date and time of the Course Module.

**LearnSmart:** [Click here](#) for an informational video about LearnSmart activities.

## **6. Assignments on Connect: Homework**

In addition, you will be given a homework assignment for each chapter. The assignments will vary in form; some may require you to write a short answer response, while others may include matching or multiple choice questions. You must complete the homework assignment before the end due date and time of the Course Module.

## **Assignments on Connect: For Your Information**

The Connect website is developed and maintained by the publisher of our textbook. Occasionally, questions from the Post-tests, LearnSmart or homework may have mistakes - this includes listing an incorrect answer as the correct answer to a question. If you have any concerns about a question you think is "wrong", you can post them to the "Talk to the Professor" forum on the Discussion Board and/or e-mail McGraw-Hill customer support.

## **Current Events**

In addition, you should keep up with **current news events** (especially stories on the 2012 national elections, Congress and the Obama administration) through newspapers, TV, magazines or the internet, as they will be brought up in the course of our discussions. Current news events are a great way to bring concepts out of the textbook and into the "real world". I have made some mainstream news feeds (AP, FoxNews, etc.) available on the Connect homepage.

**Grading:** There will be three tests during the semester, the dates of which will be posted on the **Course Schedule on Blackboard**. These are timed tests, usually a combination of multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, essay and short answer questions.

Blackboard has a grade book function available "My Grades", which will display your scores for each Discussion Board, test and assignment after I have finished grading them.

**Midterm and final grades** will be posted on **BraveWeb** as soon as they are calculated. Your final grade is the grade you have earned over the course of the semester. I do not offer or accept "extra credit" work. Instead, you should focus on studying the materials and participating in class from the beginning of the semester. Barring mathematical error, I will not change your final grade.

Because this is an online course, **participation** is a large portion of your grade. Participation reflects your “attendance” to our online class, and includes posting (not just viewing) to the Discussion Boards (as assigned), taking and “submit for grading” the Post-tests, LearnSmart questions and homework assignments offered through Connect. In order for me to keep track of your progress on these tests, you **must register for the class on Connect**.

Test 1	50 points
Test 2	50 points
Test 3	50 points
Connect Assignments	195 points (Homework, Post-test and LearnSmart)
Discussion Board (2)	30 points
Assignments (best 5 of 7)	<u>75 points</u>
Total	450 points

Grading Scale: 450-419= A; 418-405= A-; 404-392= B+; 391-374= B; 373-360= B-; 359-347= C+; 346-329= C; 328-315= C-; 314-302= D+; 301-284= D; 283-270= D-; 269 and below= F

The tests will be made up of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer/essay questions. These tests are CLOSED book tests, meaning you should not reference your textbook, notes, our Blackboard page or the internet when completing the test.

Once you open the test, you will have **one hour and 15 minutes** to complete and submit the test. You **cannot** save the test and come back to it later, so make sure you have an uninterrupted hour and 15 minutes set aside for the test. Tests will be posted under the "Assignments" tab on the Blackboard page.

The dates and available times of the tests are posted on the Course Schedule. All start and end dates and times are formatted for the Eastern time zone. Please keep this in mind, in case you live in another time zone. Tests are open for one week, however you should try to take the test as early as possible during the test availability period in order to avoid time and computer issues (for example, your browser locks up after opening the test). Test dates and times are set out in the Course Schedule. I will not extend the test availability period beyond the end date and time for any reason, short of Blackboard going offline for a prolonged time.

If you do have a problem, you should e-mail me as soon as possible ([carole.graham@uncp.edu](mailto:carole.graham@uncp.edu)) or call my office (910-522-5788). If you have a problem accessing Blackboard during the test period, you should contact me and the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) as soon as possible.

**UNCP Religious Holiday Policy:** To accommodate students' religious holidays, each student will be allowed two excused absences each semester with the following conditions:

Students, who submit written notification to their instructors within two weeks of the beginning of the semester, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith. Excused absences are limited to two class sessions (days) per semester. At the time written notification is submitted to the instructor, students who will miss tests or other work due to an excused absence for a religious observance should be prepared to discuss with the professor a plan to make up such work.

**Make-up Policy:** There will be **no make-ups for the scheduled tests** in this course. If, for **whatever reason**, you should miss Test 1 or Test 2, then Test 3 will be counted at 80% in replacing the missing score. If you miss Test 1 and Test 2, then one test will be given a grade of ZERO. No replacement will be given for Test 3. The only exception to this will be for students with OFFICIAL scheduled university activities, and arrangements must be made to do such graded work BEFORE the scheduled date.

There will be **no make-ups for assignments** in this course. Your final assignment grade is calculated by adding together the best 5 out of 7 assignments given throughout the semester. Therefore, you could miss up to two assignments, and the remaining five completed assignments would be added together in calculating your grade. A missed assignment (for **whatever reason**) will receive a score of ZERO.

There will be **no make-ups for Discussion Board** posting/participation in this course. Each Discussion Board assignment lists an available point total and completion/final posting date and time, after which that Discussion Board will close and I will not accept any new postings for a grade. I encourage you to participate in the Discussion Boards early and often. Your Discussion Board grade is based upon your level of involvement in answering questions asked or discussing the assigned topic. If you are asked to watch and then comment on an assigned video, your answers should ideally reflect that you have actually watched the video and were paying attention. **More information about Discussion Boards is posted below.**

**Don't wait until the last minute** to complete tests, assignments or the Discussion Boards. Give yourself a time buffer, in case your computer "acts up" and you are unable to log on to Blackboard. I do ask that if your long-term failure to log on and participate is due to hospitalization or illness that you inform me of such ASAP, through either an e-mail or a telephone call to my office, so I do not think you have just stopped participating and "quit" the class.

**Exceptions to the Make-up Policy will be made for those students observing a religious holiday, however students must follow policy directives regarding notification to the instructor during the first two weeks of the semester. Please see "UNCP Religious Holiday Policy" for more information.**

### **Participating in Group Discussions/Discussion Boards:**

The class will be randomly divided into three groups. Each group will be assigned two discussion boards over the course of the semester, corresponding to the Chapter/Course Module we are covering at that time. For example, Group A will be assigned Discussion Boards for Chapters 2 and 8, Group B for Chapters 4 and 10, Group C for Chapters 6 and 12. Be sure to read the instructions for each Discussion Board carefully. The instructions will contain important information, including word count, posting deadlines, etc. Please post and respond to the Discussion Boards in proper written English (occasional typos are understandable, but "B a gr8" student – don't answer like you are messaging a friend). Provide input of your own and respond thoughtfully to your fellow students comments. While I will facilitate the discussion and provide direction, the discussions are dependent on your contributions. Respond to both the original discussion items and to each other's responses. I can only know that you are involved in a discussion if you **contribute**, not just "visit" to see what others are saying. Each of you has a contribution to make, please don't be shy.

Discussion Board postings should be your own original work. For example, do not copy and paste language from a news article in order to meet the word count requirements (although you can post a link to the article for others to review).

The Discussion Board is a good place to exchange ideas and opinions, and sometimes to ask additional questions that may not be part of the original assignment thread. I believe there is a great deal about American government you can learn from your fellow students, because everyone has a different background, upbringing, and life experience.

In addition, I encourage you to participate in the Discussion Boards **early and often**. This provides your fellow students (and the professor) time to respond to your postings, creating a **dialogue**, which is what the Discussion Board should be.

Discussion board postings will be graded for the following:

- Content of your answer: Did you answer the question asked? Does your answer reflect that you actually watched an assigned video or read the assigned chapter? If posting a response, does the response show that you have actually read other student's posts? Does your answer reflect knowledge of current events or research (if required)?
  - Length of your answer: Did your answer comply with stated word length (i.e., 150 words or more)?
- Completion of assignment: Did you post your response(s) before the deadlines as outlined in the Course Module?
- Grammar and clarity: Did you answer the question using proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation? Are your answer and the reasoning behind your position clear?
- Engaging with others: Is your answer written in a way that will develop, add to, or help others engage in the discussion? If your answer is a response to another student's post, does your answer acknowledge and address their opinion as well? Remember, the goal of the Discussion Board is just that – discussion, dialog, conversation.

Reading and writing are key elements of an online course. You should READ all materials thoroughly and completely, whether they are assigned readings from the textbook or postings to the Blackboard page.

Your grade in this course is mostly determined by the WRITTEN answers you provide to test questions or Discussion Board topics. Therefore, you should think through your answers carefully, and use these opportunities to "show me what you know". By this I mean show me that you have done the reading, watched the assigned videos, read your classmates' responses to the Discussion Board, thought about the covered topics in depth, and kept up with current events in American Government.

General answers, such as "I agree with what the professors in the video said", or "I disagree with your Discussion Board posting" do not clearly reflect that you have watched the video or read the Discussion Board, and therefore would receive a low grade. Your answers should be more detailed, explaining exactly what you agreed (or disagreed with) and why.

If you have any questions about the Discussion Boards, feel free to ask them on the "Talk to the Professor" forum, which is located (surprise) on the Discussion Board!

**"Netiquette"** Please observe proper "Netiquette", and treat your fellow classmates with respect, even if you strongly disagree with their postings. There is room for all opinions in our forum--we are here to share and learn, together.

**Students with Disabilities:** Any student with a documented learning, physical, chronic health, psychological, visual or hearing disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak directly to [Disability Support Services](#) and the instructor, as early in the semester (preferably within the first week) as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please contact Disability Support Services, DF Lowry Building, Room 103 or call 910-521-6695.

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact Disability Support Services, DF Lowry Building, 910-521-6695.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Students have the responsibility to know and observe the UNCP Academic Honor Code. This code forbids cheating, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, fabrication or falsification of information, and complicity in academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty of any variety will not be tolerated. Any instance coming to the attention of the instructor will result in the assignment of an "F" grade for the course, and notification of the appropriate Deans. For more information the UNCP Academic Honor Code, [click here](#).

**Course Schedule (Adjustments may be made to this Schedule. Please check the Announcements page often)**

Specific starting and ending times are posted with each course module, assignment, test, etc., so please read instructions carefully.

<b>Date (Chapter Module and Test Start Date - End Date)</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Textbook Readings</b>
January 9 - 15	Introduction	Textbook Preface and Syllabus (online on Blackboard)
January 9 - 22	People, Politics and Participation	Chapter 1
January 16 - 29 ( <b>Jan. 16 MLK Day, Univ. Closed</b> )	The Constitution	Chapter 2 and US Constitution
January 23 - February 5	Federalism	Chapter 3
January 30 - February 12	Civil Liberties	Chapter 4
February 6 - 19	Civil Rights	Chapter 5
<b>Feb. 20 - 26 (Monday - Sunday)</b>	<b>Test I</b>	<b>Test on Chapters 1 - 5</b>
February 13 - 26	Political Socialization and Public Opinion	Chapter 6
February 20 - March 4	Interest Groups	Chapter 7
February 27 - March 18 (UNCP Spring Break March 5 - 10, Univ. Closed)	Political Parties	Chapter 8
March 12 - 25 (March 14 Last day to withdraw from class with a	Elections, Campaigns,	Chapter 9

"W")	and Voting	
March 19 - April 1	The Media	Chapter 10
<b>April 2 - 11 (Monday to the following Wednesday) (April 6 Good Friday, Univ. Closed)</b>	<b>Test II</b>	<b>Test on Chapters 6 - 10</b>
March 26 - April 8	Congress	Chapter 11
April 2 - 15	The Presidency	Chapter 12
April 9 - 22	The Judiciary	Chapter 14
<b>April 23-29 (Monday to Sunday)</b>	<b>Test III</b>	<b>Test on Chapters 11, 12 and 14</b>