

**Mayland Community College**  
**welcomes you to**  
**POL 120.95**  
**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**  
**Fall 2007**

**Course Description:** This course is a study of the origins, development, structure, and functions of American national government. Topics include the constitutional framework, federalism, the three branches of government including the bureaucracy, civil rights and liberties, political participation and behavior, and policy formation. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the basic concepts and participatory processes of the American political system. *3 credit hours, 3 contact hours*

*This course has been approved to satisfy the North Carolina Comprehensive Articulation Agreement general education core requirement in social/behavioral sciences*

**Prerequisite:** Reading 90

**Corequisite:** none

Although experience in online course-taking is not required, students should prepare themselves for the unique setting of online learning. Online learning is reading and writing intensive and requires some basic technical skills. Successful online learners are good at scheduling their time in an organized fashion.

**Instructor:** Rhonda Gunter

**Office Location:** Room 245 Gwaltney Hall (main building)

**MCC Telephone:** 828-765-7351 or 800-462-9526 (ext 261)

**E-mail Address:** rgunter@mayland.edu

**Office Hours:** Monday through Friday 9:00 to 11:00 am  
Other times by appointment

**Course Materials:**

**Required Textbooks:**

- Karen O'Connor & Larry Sabato, Essentials of American Government: Continuity and Change, 2008 edition
- Joseph F. Trimmer, A Guide to MLA Documentation, 7th edition

**Other Materials Required:**

- You should dedicate a diskette or a folder on your hard drive or flash drive to your POL 120 class. If your work somehow fails to reach me, you will want a saved copy you can re-send.

**Technology Requirements:**

- Personal computer with Internet and email capabilities

To access your online course you will need access to the Internet. Although there are no absolute requirements, computers with faster Internet connections, faster processors, and more memory will get better results. Keep in mind that if you have difficulties connecting to the class or a slow connection, the problem could be occurring at many levels.

- For Internet classes at MCC, Windows is the preferred operating software; in addition, Microsoft Word is the required word processing program.

If you have a different word processing program or an earlier version of Word, you must save your electronic essays and articles as "richtext" files (with extension .rtf). I may need to send you feedback the same way. You'll have to let me know.

### LRC Resources:

While many of the materials you must consult for this course are in your text, this LEO site, or other online sources, you will also need to look for the traditional resources of the social sciences. You may find these in the Learning Resources Center at MCC: with Inter-Library Loan, NC Live, and the Electric library, there should be few if any books or periodicals you can not access. The LRC staff is wonderful and will help with any of your questions about securing resources.

Contact Rhonda Gunter if you have any questions about these requirements.

**Course Objective:** At the completion of this course, students will understand that government, politics, and public policy in the US are a ***balancing act*** involving constant adjustments among conflicting interests and goals. Our class discussions and the assignments given over the semester will all underscore this reality.

### Units of Study:

- Module 1: Introduction: The Political Landscape
- Module 2: The Constitution
- Module 3: Federalism
- Module 4: Civil Liberties
- Module 5: Civil Rights
- Module 6: Congress
- Module 7: The Presidency
- Module 8: The Bureaucracy
- Module 9: The Judiciary
- Module 10: Public Opinion and the News Media
- Module 11: Political Parties and Interest Groups
- Module 12: Campaigns, Voting, and Elections

### Course Assignments:

- Reading the assigned chapters in your textbook and the lectures that accompany them is essential for understanding course issues.
- There is an assessment for each module, from material in the text and lectures.
- You will be asked to evaluate current events news articles pertaining to the issues we explore in each module.
- Each student will be asked to submit a documented research paper.

- Discussion Board participation is mandatory for this course since we don't have the classroom interaction of a regular seated course.

For a detailed description of your assignments and when they are due, consult the **Assignment Completion Guide** and the **Class Calendar**, both of which may be found in the **Assignments** area of your class site.

### **Learning Outcomes for the General Education Core at MCC**

Successful completion of the above requirements will indicate that students meet the Learning Outcomes for the General Education Core at Mayland Community College, which provide the essential body of knowledge and skills that enable all degree-level students to perform competently as employees and as contributing members of society. These Learning Outcomes include:

1. Improve communication in speaking and listening situations needed for college, personal, and work successes
2. Improve communication in writing and reading situations needed for college, personal, and work successes
3. Improve logical, critical, and creative thinking to evaluate evidence and reach a conclusion
4. Increase application of basic computer use skills
5. Increase both independent and collaborative work skills
6. Increase exposure to the diversity of various world groups from both historical and contemporary contexts.

### **Course Evaluation:**

A total of 1000 points is available in this course. Points will come from the following areas:

- Chapter Assessments = 360 points (36%)
- Current Events Evaluations = 240 points (24%)
- Documented Research Paper = 240 points (24%)
- Discussion Forum Activities = 160 points (16%)

Your final grade will be based on the following scale:

- A = 901 points and above
- B = 801 - 900 points
- C = 701 - 800 points
- D = 601 - 700 points

### **Attendance Policy:**

Because this is an Internet class, there is no attendance policy as such. Student success in an online class is dependent on your active participation, which is tracked through completion of assignments in a timely manner. Make every effort to adhere to deadlines listed in the Calendar.

To be on time, your assignment must be in my mailbox by midnight of the due date. Work that is submitted late will receive reductions in grade. Let me know if an emergency arises and you are unable to submit your work as required. Ultimate responsibility for the assignments and their timely submission lies with each student.

**Course Withdrawal:** If you find that you cannot complete the course for any reason, contact me right away. Refer to your college catalog for withdrawal procedures. Please keep in mind the withdrawal dates for Fall 2007:

- Unconditional Withdrawal through Tuesday, 25 September 2007
- Conditional Withdrawal through Thursday, 1 November 2007
- Emergency Withdrawal only through the last day of class

**Administrative Withdrawal:** If a student has not been in contact with the instructor and has not attended class for a consecutive two-week period, an administrative withdrawal will be submitted by the instructor.

**Tips for Successful Course Completion:**

1. Print copies of this **Course Syllabus**, the **Class Calendar**, and the **Assignment Completion Guide**. Refer to them often to ensure you are on track with the course requirements.
2. Plan your semester to ensure adequate time to complete assignments. Don't wait until the last moment to complete your assignments; you might run into technical problems that cause your assignments to be late.
3. Complete and submit assignments as directed in your Assignment Completion Guide. Remember always to save a copy of your assignments prior to submission.
4. Anticipate timely feedback from your instructor regarding your assignments. This feedback may be in the form of personal email or discussion forum responses. Expect a two-week "turnaround" time.
5. Monitor your overall progress in the course anytime by referring to the **Grades** function in LEO.

**Academic Integrity:** The policy adopted by the MCC Board of Trustees requires that Mayland Community College "impose sanctions for instances of plagiarism or cheating, or any act which violates the academic integrity of the College. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with Mayland's statement regarding violations of the Academic Integrity Code, located in the Student Handbook." You are held to a high standard in American Government. Proof of dishonesty, including plagiarism, will result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or for the course.

*Any student requesting special accommodations for this course due to a disability should apply for services through the SOAR Office or the Counseling Center, which will document the disability. A counselor will then determine which accommodations, if any, the student needs for success in this course.*