

## IST 3310/POL 3310: Civics & Economics

Randolph College

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Office Hours: by appointment only

### Course Description

In this course, students will examine the roles citizens play in US politics and government and the basic economic principles that underlie the US market economy. Students will investigate how decisions are made in the American market economy and explain the government's role. Students study how patriotism, respect for the law, willingness to perform public service, and a sense of civic duty facilitate thoughtful and effective active participation in the civic life of an increasingly diverse democratic society. This course is open to all students and is required for students seeking elementary education or history/social science teaching licensure. Course content maps to the Virginia Standards of Learning.

This course serves two general purposes. First, the course is meant for future teachers and covers the fundamental principles of American government (federal, state, and local) and American economic systems. Hopefully, after this course, you will be better able to teach this information to your students. Second, the course's content and approach will encourage you to think and act in a civic manner. We will read primary documents related to the founding of the United States and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the ideas in those documents. You will also understand how the founding ideas influenced the formation of the US government and how the government affects individuals and the community (and how individuals and the community affect the government).

### Course Goals

The course goals also cover the Virginia Standards of Learning Course Curriculum for Civics and Economics. These include:

- The essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments
- The importance of the Rule of Law for the protection of individual rights and the common good
- The rights and responsibilities of American citizenship
- The nature and purposes of constitutions and alternative ways of organizing constitutional governments
- American political culture
- Values, principles, and fundamental ideals of the American constitutional republic
- The process of making laws in the United States
- The structures, functions, and powers of local and state governments
- Importance of citizen participation in the political process in local and state governments
- The structure, functions, and powers of the national government

- The understanding that Americans are a people of diverse ethnic origins, customs, and traditions, who are united by basic principles of a republican form of government and a common identity of Americans
- The role of the United States in foreign policy and national security
- The structure of the federal judiciary
- The structure and function of the United States market economy as compared with other economies
- Knowledge of the impact of the government's role in the economy and individual economic & political freedoms
- The role of the individual and how economic decisions are made in the marketplace
- Knowledge of economic systems in the areas of productivity and key economic indicators
- The analysis of global economic trends

This course will also help future educators meet the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model Core Teaching Standards. The InTASC Standards covered in this course include:

- Standard 3 Learning Environments
  - o 3 (l) The candidate understands how learner diversity affects communication and how to communicate effectively in differing environments.
  - o 3 (m) The candidate knows how to use technologies and guides learners to apply them appropriately, safely, and effectively.
- Standard 4 Content Knowledge
  - o 4 (a) The candidate effectively uses multiple representations and explanations that capture key ideas in the discipline, guide learners through learning progressions and promote each learner's achievement of content standards.
  - o 4(f) The candidate evaluates and modifies instructional resources and curriculum materials for their comprehensiveness, accuracy for representing particular concepts in the discipline, and appropriateness for his/her learners
  - o 4(g) The candidate uses supplementary resources and technologies effectively to ensure accessibility and relevance for all learners
  - o 4(j) the candidate understands major concepts, assumptions, debates, processes of inquiry, and ways of knowing that are central to the disciplines he/she teaches.
  - o 4(k) The candidate understands common misconceptions in learning the discipline and how to guide learners to accurate conceptual understanding
  - o 4(l) the candidate knows and uses the academic language of the disciplines and knows how to make it accessible to learners
  - o 4(m) The candidate knows how to integrate culturally relevant content to build on learners' background knowledge
  - o 4(n) The candidate has a deep knowledge of student content standards and learning progressions in the disciplines he/she teaches.
- Standard 5: Application of Content
  - o 5(i) The candidate understands the ways of knowing in his/her discipline, how it relates to other disciplinary approaches to inquiry, and the strengths and limitations of each approach in addressing problems, issues, and concerns.
  - o 5(j) The candidate understands how current interdisciplinary themes connect to the core subjects and knows how to weave those themes into meaningful learning experiences.

## **Additional Readings**

There are occasional readings outside the textbooks, which will be posted on the Modules

## **Course Requirements**

- Prepare and Read. Preparation includes critically reading and thinking about the material so that you can come to class ready to engage with the material. Not all material from the readings will be presented in the lecture. Also, not all topics covered in the lecture and the readings may be on the exams
- Attendance. Attending class has a significant positive effect on you, your peers, and my experience with the class. Plus, you cannot participate if you do not attend class. You will lose up to 10% off the attendance portion of your grade for each absence after two absences
- Participation and Discussion. Ask questions! Make comments! Is there a current event that relates to our discussion?
- Lesson Plan project and presentation. Future educators will complete a lesson plan project on a topic of their choosing (in consultation with me). You will incorporate the VA Civics & Economic SOLs and include measurable student objectives, lesson materials, and an assessment plan. You will present an overview of your lesson plan to the class. More details will be provided later in the course.
- Civics project and presentation. For those not planning a career in education, you will complete a civics project on an area of your choosing (in consultation with me). You will identify an area of need in a community of your choosing. First, you will identify the source of the problem, make a plan for civic engagement and explain how that plan will ameliorate the issue. You will present an overview of your civics plan to the class. More details will be provided later in the course.
- Quizzes and Homework. There will be regular in-class quizzes and out-of-class homework in this course. Quizzes will occur toward the end of the class session, and homework is due at the beginning of class. Quizzes and homework will be announced in class at least one class period before. Quizzes are multiple choice and short answer and graded as such. You must be in class to take the quizzes.
- Tests. There are two tests in the class. Make-up exams will not be scheduled without a documented emergency. More details will be provided later in the course

## **Grading**

The breakdown of the course grade is as follows

- Attendance and Participation-----20%
- Lesson Plan (for future educators) and presentation or Civics Plan for non-future educators) -----15%
- Quizzes and Homework -----25%
- Tests -----40%

## **Attendance and Participation**

A portion of your grade is based on attendance and active participation, which includes asking appropriate questions, effectively answering questions, drawing comparisons, relating concepts, etc. Participation is 20% of your grade, and you will lose up to 10% off your grade's attendance portion for each absence after two absences

## **Course Polices**

- You are responsible for all announcements made in class, over email, and on Google Classroom
- I use Google Classroom extensively. I post readings, articles, and instructions there. You will also use Google Classroom to turn in assignments, papers, and some tests. Please become familiar with it.
- I encourage students to challenge the ideas discussed in this class. Everyone must give their fellow students full respect and courtesy in discussions
- Late Assignments: please avoid turning in your work late. If you need to turn it in late, please let me know. If you do not inform me about your late work you may be docked 5% each day.
- Technology in the classroom: I place great trust in my students. That comes with privileges and responsibilities. I understand that laptops are important tools in the classroom. Please use them for class purposes only. Cellphones use in class is highly distracting, not only for you and other students but also for me. Please avoid all cellphone use in class

## **Classroom Etiquette**

The classroom is a collective learning space, and participation is necessary. We all are responsible for creating an environment where everyone can speak, ask questions, think out loud, etc. Above all, I expect and will facilitate discourse with civility.

## **The Honor Code**

We have the privilege to live in a community of honor. I take the Honor Code seriously, as you should. If you have questions about your responsibilities, please ask or see the Student Handbook.

Plagiarism, the most common academic violation of the Honor Code, is using the words/ideas of others without properly acknowledging the source. Ignorance of the conventions of documentation is not a defense for plagiarism. The student Handbook provides ways to avoid plagiarism.

## **Accommodations**

Randolph College is committed to providing learning experiences that are accessible for all students and will make reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented disabilities. If you have a learning difference or a disability, mental health, medical, or physical impairment, please get in touch with the Coordinator of Disability Services, in the Academic Service Center.

## **Title IX**

One of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as a faculty member. My goal is for you to share information about your life experiences in classroom discussions, your written work, and our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep the information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information

about a crime that may have occurred on Randolph's campus with the College's Title IX Coordinator. I do this to ensure you get all the necessary information and support

The Health Center and Counseling Center staff are not mandated reporters, are not required to share information about sexual misconduct with the College, and will keep your information confidential.

### **Free Pantry**

Randolph College has a campus food pantry in Moore Hall 107, available to students, faculty, and staff who need assistance. The pantry provides non-perishable items and resources for securing perishable items through Parkview Community Missions, which is partnering with us. For more information regarding the Food Pantry, don't hesitate to get in touch with the Dean of Students Office

### **Course Outline**

We will stick to the course outline's general spirit, but changes will likely occur. Also, please note the due dates are suggestive and may change. I will announce any changes ASAP. I ask you to be adaptable and patient

#### **Week 1**

- Introductions and review of syllabus
- American Citizenship
  - o The meaning of citizenship, government and society, what unites America, the duties and responsibilities of citizenship
- Foundations of American Government
  - o The roots of citizenship, the Colonial heritage, steps toward independence, the nation's early government

#### **Week 2**

- The Constitution
  - o The Constitution Convention, Government Principles in the Constitution, the structure of the Constitution, amending the Constitution
- Bill of Rights
  - o Adding to the Bill of Rights, inside the Bill of Rights
- The Living Constitution
  - o The Constitution and change, extending Civil Rights, extending voting rights, changing interpretations in changing times

#### **Week 3**

- Test 1
- The Legislative Branch
  - o Functions of the Legislative Branch, members of congress, organization of congress, powers of congress, pass a bill
  - o Function of the Executive Branch, the President and Vice President, organization of the Executive Branch
- The Judicial Branch

- The Constitution and the Federal Judicial Branch, the Federal Court System, The lower courts, the United States Supreme Court, the court through history

#### **Week 4**

- State Government
  - The federal system, the state legislative branch, the state executive branch, the state judicial branch
- Local Government
  - What local governments provide, the authority of local governments, city governments, county governments, town, townships, and village governments, special districts, issues in local government
- How the Political System Works
  - Political parties, election campaigns, voting and elections
- Public Opinion and Interest Groups
  - Propaganda and public opinion, shaping public opinion, measuring public opinion, interest groups and public policy

#### **Week 5**

- United States Foreign Policy
- Test 2
- Law and Our Legal System
  - Laws and society, moral and civil disobedience, types of law, sources of American law, basic rights and responsibilities
- The American Justice System
  - Civil Law, Criminal Law, Criminal Justice System

#### **Week 6**

- Economics and the American Economy
  - The American economic system economic systems, U.S business organization and management, basic economic decisions
- Government's Role in the Economy
  - Government and the economy, maintaining economic stability, government and banking, government and business, government and labor
- Global issues
  - A global economy, environmental issues, terrorism, world health, human rights, making a difference

#### **Final**

- Presentations
  - Lesson Plan project and presentation (Education Students)