POL 200
Introduction to Political Science

I. POL 200 Introduction to Political Science - 3 Semester Hours

II. Course Description

This course is an introduction to the field of political science through examination of the fundamental principles, concepts, and methods of the discipline, and the basic political processes and institutions of organized political systems. Topics include approaches to political science, research methodology, the state, government, law, ideology, organized political influences, government bureaucracy, problems in political democracy, and international politics. Upon completion, students should be able to identify, describe, define, and analyze, and explain relationships among the basic principles and concepts of political science and political processes and institutions of contemporary political systems.

III. Prerequisite

As required by program

IV. Textbook

Due to the varied selection of quality college level textbooks, each college will select the textbook needed to meet the requirements of this course.

V. Course Competencies and Objectives

Upon satisfactory completion of this course, the student will have a reasonable mastery of the following competencies:

A. Development of cognitive skills and a knowledge base in political science which advance the student’s ability to function as an informed, humane, rational, participating citizen in an increasingly interdependent world.

B. Awareness, comprehension, and ability to make applications of selected major concepts of political science.

C. Awareness and comprehension of the practices and functions of the world’s major political and governmental systems.
Upon satisfactory completion of this course, the student will have a reasonable mastery of the following objectives:

A. Comprehend and make application of the terms, facts, concepts, and skills included in this course.
B. Identify individuals, groups, institutions, terms, events, concepts, and facts included in this course.
C. Identify, analyze, explain relationships among, and explain the political significances of the individuals, groups, institutions, terms, events, issues, concepts, and facts included in this course.

VI. Course Outline of Topics

A. Introduction (political science, government, politics, approaches to political science, research methodology – basic steps and difficulties)
B. Some basic concepts (politics, government, power, legitimacy, authority, political culture, political socialization, other selected concepts)
C. The state (origins, development – sovereignty and nationalism)
D. Government (classification schemes – unitary, confederate, federal, presidential, parliamentary; functions)
E. Law (definition of law, classification of laws, major legal systems of the world, structures of judicial systems)
F. Ideology (terminology, government classifications and ideology – democracy, authoritarian, totalitarian; practical application of ideology)
G. Organized influences on politics and government (political parties, interest groups)
H. Governmental bureaucracy (why, organization and procedure)
I. Problems in political democracy (voting behaviors, representative democracy – bases of representation, unicameralism vs. bicameralism, single-member districts vs. proportional representation)
J. International politics (diplomacy, international law, balance of power, international organizations)

VII. Evaluation and Assessment

Exams
Course project

Grades will be given based upon A = 90 – 100%, B = 80 – 89%, C = 70 – 79%, D = 60 – 69%, and F = below 60%.

VIII. Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes for which they are registered. Students who are unable to attend class regularly, regardless of the reason or circumstance, should
withdraw from that class before poor attendance interferes with the student’s ability to achieve the objectives required in the course. Withdrawal from class can affect eligibility for federal financial aid.

IX. **Statement on Discrimination/Harassment**

The College and the Alabama State Board of Education are committed to providing both employment and educational environments free of harassment or discrimination related to an individual’s race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, or disability. Such harassment is a violation of State Board of Education policy. Any practice or behavior that constitutes harassment or discrimination will not be tolerated.

X. **Americans with Disabilities**

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 state that qualified students with disabilities who meet the essential functions and academic requirements are entitled to reasonable accommodations. It is the student’s responsibility to provide appropriate disability documentation to the College.