

## Washtenaw Community College Comprehensive Report

### PLS 112 Introduction to American Government Effective Term: Fall 2024

#### Course Cover

**College:** Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**Division:** Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**Department:** Social Sciences

**Discipline:** Political Science

**Course Number:** 112

**Org Number:** 11750

**Full Course Title:** Introduction to American Government

**Transcript Title:** Intro to American Government

**Is Consultation with other department(s) required:** No

**Publish in the Following:** College Catalog , Time Schedule , Web Page

**Reason for Submission:** Three Year Review / Assessment Report

**Change Information:**

**Consultation with all departments affected by this course is required.**

**Course description**

**Outcomes/Assessment**

**Objectives/Evaluation**

**Rationale:** Three-year syllabus review. Update based on assessment report.

**Proposed Start Semester:** Winter 2024

**Course Description:** In this course, students will be introduced to the forms and functions of American government with an emphasis on the national government. The decision-making process in Congress, the Presidency, and the federal court system are studied. The course also examines the relationship of political parties and public opinion to the electoral process.

#### Course Credit Hours

**Variable hours:** No

**Credits:** 3

**Lecture Hours: Instructor: 45 Student: 45**

**Lab: Instructor: 0 Student: 0**

**Clinical: Instructor: 0 Student: 0**

**Total Contact Hours: Instructor: 45 Student: 45**

**Repeatable for Credit:** NO

**Grading Methods:** Letter Grades

Audit

**Are lectures, labs, or clinicals offered as separate sections?:** NO (same sections)

#### College-Level Reading and Writing

College-level Reading & Writing

#### College-Level Math

#### Requisites

#### General Education

**MACRAO**

MACRAO Social Science

**General Education Area 5 - Social and Behavioral Science**

Assoc in Applied Sci - Area 5

Assoc in Science - Area 5

Assoc in Arts - Area 5

**Michigan Transfer Agreement - MTA**

MTA Social Science

**Request Course Transfer****Proposed For:****Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Identify the purposes, values, and models of democratic political systems.

**Assessment 1**

Assessment Tool: Outcome-related departmental exam

Assessment Date: Spring/Summer 2026

Assessment Cycle: Every Three Years

Course section(s)/other population: Random sample of one-half of all sections, including all teaching modalities

Number students to be assessed: All students in selected sections

How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric

Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome related questions.

Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

2. Summarize the major principles of government embodied in the United States Constitution.

**Assessment 1**

Assessment Tool: Outcome-related departmental exam.

Assessment Date: Spring/Summer 2026

Assessment Cycle: Every Three Years

Course section(s)/other population: Random sample of one-half of all sections, including all teaching modalities

Number students to be assessed: All students in selected sections

How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric

Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome related questions.

Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

3. Identify the basic institutions of American government and their powers and purposes in the American political system.

**Assessment 1**

Assessment Tool: Outcome-related departmental exam.

Assessment Date: Spring/Summer 2026

Assessment Cycle: Every Three Years

Course section(s)/other population: Random sample of one-half of all sections, including all teaching modalities

Number students to be assessed: All students in selected sections

How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric

Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome related questions.

Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

4. Define civil liberties and civil rights, and identify important cases where the courts have applied and expanded civil liberties and civil rights.

**Assessment 1**

Assessment Tool: Outcome-related departmental exam.

Assessment Date: Spring/Summer 2026

Assessment Cycle: Every Three Years

Course section(s)/other population: Random sample of one-half of all sections, including all teaching modalities

Number students to be assessed: All students in selected sections

How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric

Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome related questions.

Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

5. Identify the role of public opinion, the media, interest groups, political parties, and elections in the American political system.

**Assessment 1**

Assessment Tool: Outcome-related departmental exam

Assessment Date: Spring/Summer 2026

Assessment Cycle: Every Three Years

Course section(s)/other population: Random sample of one-half of all sections, including all teaching modalities

Number students to be assessed: All students in selected sections

How the assessment will be scored: Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric

Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome related questions.

Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

**Course Objectives**

1. Describe the major purposes of government.
2. Identify important American political values.
3. Define common American ideological positions, such as "conservative" and "liberal."
4. Explain the typology of government based on rule of one, the few, and the many.
5. Compare and contrast the different types of democracy (e.g., constitutional, egalitarian), and how they differ from the pluralist and elitist models of government.
6. Explain the historical, political, and social origins of the United States Constitution.
7. Describe the system of government established under the Articles of Confederation.
8. Describe the major weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation.
9. List some of the major debates and compromises made at the Constitutional Convention.
10. Discuss the major principles of government in the United States Constitution (e.g., popular sovereignty, representative government, separation of powers, checks and balances).
11. Describe how the United States Constitution divides governing powers in our federal system and the evolving roles of the states and national government over the years.
12. Describe the powers of the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Branches of the federal government.
13. List the constitutional requirements for members of the United States House of Representatives, the United States Senate, the President, and the federal courts.
14. Compare the role of the United States House of Representatives to the role of the United States Senate in the constitutional framework.
15. Describe reapportionment and redistricting in United States House of Representatives.
16. Identify the power of incumbency.
17. Explain how the powers and responsibilities of the Presidency and Executive Branch have expanded over time.
18. Describe how federal judges are appointed and the factors considered in selecting federal judges.
19. Describe the basic organization of the federal court system.
20. Define the terms civil liberties and civil rights, and explain how they differ.

21. Describe the freedoms and due process guarantees in the Bill of Rights and how courts have interpreted and applied these guarantees over time.
22. Explain the constitutional basis for our civil rights and how the Supreme Court's interpretation of "equal protection" has evolved over time.
23. Identify significant Supreme Court decisions in the area of civil liberties and civil rights.
24. Identify the role of public opinion in a democracy.
25. Explain how public opinion polls are conducted and used in the political process.
26. Describe the role of the media in a democracy.
27. Understand how the news media cover politics and its significance.
28. Explain what an interest group is, why interest groups form, and the role interest groups play in American politics.
29. Identify the most important functions of political parties.
30. Explain why the United States has a two-party system and why most other democracies have multi-party systems.
31. Explain why the United States uses the Electoral College to select the President and describe how it works.
32. Describe the difference between nominating and general election campaigns.
33. Identify the major factors influencing voter turnout and vote choice.
34. Develop a better understanding for why civic engagement is important in the American political system.

## New Resources for Course

### Course Textbooks/Resources

Textbooks  
Manuals  
Periodicals  
Software

### Equipment/Facilities

Level I classroom

| <u>Reviewer</u>  | <u>Action</u>             | <u>Date</u>         |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Faculty Preparer:</b><br><i>Lauren Foley</i>                      | <i>Faculty Preparer</i>   | <i>Jun 30, 2023</i> |
| <b>Department Chair/Area Director:</b><br><i>Christopher Barrett</i> | <i>Recommend Approval</i> | <i>Jul 11, 2023</i> |
| <b>Dean:</b><br><i>Victor Vega</i>                                   | <i>Recommend Approval</i> | <i>Jul 12, 2023</i> |
| <b>Curriculum Committee Chair:</b><br><i>Randy Van Wagnen</i>        | <i>Recommend Approval</i> | <i>Feb 14, 2024</i> |
| <b>Assessment Committee Chair:</b><br><i>Jessica Hale</i>            | <i>Recommend Approval</i> | <i>Feb 16, 2024</i> |
| <b>Vice President for Instruction:</b><br><i>Brandon Tucker</i>      | <i>Approve</i>            | <i>Feb 19, 2024</i> |

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**Is Consultation with other department(s) required:** No

**Publish in the Following:** College Catalog , Time Schedule , Web Page

**Reason for Submission:** Three Year Review / Assessment Report

**Change Information:**

**Consultation with all departments affected by this course is required.**

**Outcomes/Assessment**

**Objectives/Evaluation**

**Rationale:** PLS 112 is up for its three year syllabus review and in need of streamlining.

**Proposed Start Semester:** Fall 2017

**Course Description:** This class studies the forms and functions of American government with emphasis on national government. The decision-making process in Congress, the Presidency and the federal court system are studied. The course also examines the relationship of political parties and public opinion to the electoral process.

### Course Credit Hours

**Variable hours:** No

**Credits:** 3

**Lecture Hours: Instructor: 45 Student: 45**

**Lab: Instructor: 0 Student: 0**

**Clinical: Instructor: 0 Student: 0**

**Total Contact Hours: Instructor: 45 Student: 45**

**Repeatable for Credit:** NO

**Grading Methods:** Letter Grades

**Audit**

**Are lectures, labs, or clinicals offered as separate sections?:** NO (same sections)

### College-Level Reading and Writing

College-level Reading & Writing

### College-Level Math

### Requisites

### General Education

## **MACRAO**

MACRAO Social Science

### **General Education Area 5 - Social and Behavioral Science**

Assoc in Applied Sci - Area 5

Assoc in Science - Area 5

Assoc in Arts - Area 5

### **Michigan Transfer Agreement - MTA**

MTA Social Science

## **Request Course Transfer**

**Proposed For:**

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Identify the purposes, values, and models of democratic political systems

### **Assessment 1**

**Assessment Tool:** Departmental exam

**Assessment Date:** Winter 2017

**Assessment Cycle:** Every Three Years

**Course section(s)/other population:** Random sample of one-half of all sections including all teaching modalities.

**Number students to be assessed:** All students in selected sections

**How the assessment will be scored:** Answer key and departmentally-developed rubric

**Standard of success to be used for this assessment:** 70% of the students will score 70% or higher on the outcome related questions

**Who will score and analyze the data:** Departmental faculty will score and analyze the data

2. Summarize the Constitution's major principles of government

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3. Identify the basic institutions of American government and their powers and purposes in the American political system

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4. Define civil liberties and civil rights and identify important cases where the Courts have applied and expanded civil liberties and civil rights

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5. Identify the role of public opinion, the media, interest groups, political parties, and elections in the U.S. political system

### **Assessment 1**

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8. Describe the major weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation.
9. List some of the major debates and compromises made at the Constitutional Convention.
10. Discuss the Constitution's major principles of government (popular sovereignty, representative government, separation of powers, checks and balances).
11. Describe how the Constitution divides governing powers in our federal system and the evolving roles of the states and national government over the years.
12. Describe the powers of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
13. List the constitutional requirements for members of the House and Senate, the President, and federal judges.
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33. Identify the major factors influencing voter turnout and vote choice.



34. Develop a better understanding for why civic engagement is important in the U.S. political system.

**New Resources for Course**

**Course Textbooks/Resources**

Textbooks  
Manuals  
Periodicals  
Software

**Equipment/Facilities**

Level I classroom

| <b><u>Reviewer</u></b>  | <b><u>Action</u></b>      | <b><u>Date</u></b>  |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Faculty Preparer:</b><br><i>Donna Wasserman</i>                | <i>Faculty Preparer</i>   | <i>Dec 07, 2016</i> |
| <b>Department Chair/Area Director:</b><br><i>Gregg Heidebrink</i> | <i>Recommend Approval</i> | <i>Dec 16, 2016</i> |
| <b>Dean:</b><br><i>Kristin Good</i>                               | <i>Recommend Approval</i> | <i>Dec 19, 2016</i> |
| <b>Curriculum Committee Chair:</b><br><i>David Wooten</i>         | <i>Recommend Approval</i> | <i>Feb 08, 2017</i> |
| <b>Assessment Committee Chair:</b><br><i>Ruth Walsh</i>           | <i>Recommend Approval</i> | <i>Feb 09, 2017</i> |
| <b>Vice President for Instruction:</b><br><i>Bill Abernethy</i>   | <i>Approve</i>            | <i>Feb 09, 2017</i> |