

## **HIBBING COMMUNITY COLLEGE COURSE OUTLINE**

**COURSE NUMBER & TITLE:** PSCI 1100 - American Government

**CREDITS:** 3 (3 Lec / 0 Lab)

**PREREQUISITES:** College-level reading ability required.

### **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

American Government focuses on three basic documents of our democracy and looks in a detailed way at how they work. Particular attention will be paid to civil and personal liberties; how the Declaration, Constitution, and Bill of Rights were created; our federal system; the roles, powers, and functions of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government; the origins and roles of political parties; the operation of interest groups; the media's role as watchdogs; and the development of public policy. MNTC goal areas: (5)History and the Social and Behavioral Sciences and (9)Ethic and Civic Responsibility.

### **OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS:**

- I. The structure of American government
  - A. The three branches
  - B. Separation of powers
  - C. Checks and balances
- II. Documents of democracy
  - A. Declaration of Independence
  - B. The Constitution
  - C. The Bill of Rights
- III. The federal system
  - A. Federalism and states' rights
  - B. The executive branch
  - C. The legislative branch
  - D. The judicial branch
- IV. Political parties
  - A. Origins
  - B. Roles in politics
  - C. Effectiveness
- V. Interest groups and the media
  - A. Types of interest groups
  - B. Interest group operations
  - C. The media's role in politics
- VI. Public policy development

## **COURSE GOALS/OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES:**

Students will

1. identify the three major branches in the federal government.
2. explain how the separation of powers operates.
3. illustrate on a flow chart the operation of the system of checks and balances.
4. explain what foundations for our federal system are contained in the Declaration of Independence.
5. describe the basic elements of the Constitution and how they originated.
6. explain why the Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution and the basic protections contained in the Bill.
7. explain the differences between federalism and states' rights.
8. describe the workings of the executive branch.
9. explain how the legislative branch makes laws.
10. explain how the Supreme Court decisions act as precedents and how these decisions affect presidential and Congressional actions.
11. describe the origins of America's political parties and their role in politics.
12. list the major types of interest groups.
13. explain how interest groups operate.
14. explain, using case studies, the media's watchdog role in politics.
15. describe the process used to create public policy.

## **MNTC GOALS AND COMPETENCIES MET:**

History and the Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Ethics and Civic Responsibility

## **HCC COMPETENCIES MET:**

Communicating Clearly & Effectively  
Thinking Creatively and Critically

## **STUDENT CONTRIBUTIONS:**

Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis and be prepared to contribute to and participate in class discussions.

## **STUDENT ASSESSMENT SHALL TAKE PLACE USING INSTRUMENTS SELECTED/DEVELOPED BY THE COURSE INSTRUCTOR.**

## **SPECIAL INFORMATION: (SPECIAL FEES, DIRECTIVES ON HAZARDOUS MATERIALS, ETC.):**

**AASC APPROVAL DATE: February 16, 2012**

**REVIEW DATE: February 2017**

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