I. INTRODUCTION

A. An introductory, survey course on various United States government topics. This course includes study of the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution; the structure and powers of the national government, including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches; federalism; political participation; the national election process; public policy; and civil liberties and civil rights.

B. Through this course, students will prepare for contemporary challenges by developing and demonstrating the following core objectives: critical thinking skills, communication skills, social responsibility, and personal responsibility.

   • Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
   • Communication Skills: to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
   • Personal Responsibility: to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.
   • Social Responsibility: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

C. This course is a part of the core curriculum at Central Texas College and satisfies three semester hours of the Social/Behavioral Sciences for the Associate of Science and Associate of Arts degrees. Please check your degree plan to determine the status of this course in your program of study.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

A. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.
B. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.
C. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.
D. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
E. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.
F. Analyze the election process.
G. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens
H. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The instructional material identified for this course is viewable from http://www.ctcd.edu/im/im_main.asp

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading Assignment: your instructor will discuss the role of reading assignments for the course.
B. Projects, Oral Reports, Case Studies, Book Reports, Research Papers: Your instructor will assign one of these items for you to complete as a part of the requirements for this course. He/she will provide specific instructions regarding content, format, timelines, etc.
C. Class Performance: Your instructor will summarize and discuss CTC’s academic policies. You may refer to the CTC catalog for details. Your instructor will provide his/her policies on absences, make up work, etc.
D. Class Participation: Your instructor will explain how class participation affects your course grade, if applicable.

V. EXAMINATIONS

Your instructor will determine how many exams will be given during the course, their content, and when they will be administered. Make-up exams will be handled according to the policy of the individual instructor.

VI. SEMESTER GRADE COMPUTATIONS

A. It is the student’s responsibility to complete the course requirements as defined within this syllabus.
B. Your instructor will explain how to compute your semester grade based upon:
1. Examinations
2. Written work
3. Other measurable requirements (if any)

C. Grades are computed as follows:

Point/percentage-to-Grade Ratio
> 89 - 100 A
> 79 - 89 B
> 69 - 79 C
> 59 - 69 D
< 59 F

VII. NOTES AND ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

A. Withdrawal from Course: It is the student's responsibility to officially drop a class if circumstances prevent attendance. Any student who desires to, or must, officially withdraw from a course after the first scheduled class meeting must file an Application for Withdrawal or an Application for Refund. Please refer to the current CTC catalog for specific withdrawal requirements and processes.

B. Administrative Withdrawal: An administrative withdrawal may be initiated when the student fails to meet College attendance requirements. The instructor will assign the appropriate grade on the Administrative Withdrawal Form for submission to the registrar.

C. Incomplete Grade: An “IP” grade may be assigned by an instructor if a student has made satisfactory progress in a course but encounters extenuating circumstances beyond his/her control. The instructor makes the final decision concerning the granting of the incomplete grade.

D. The Disability Support Services Program provides services to students who have appropriate documentation of a disability. Students requiring accommodations for class are responsible for contacting the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) located on the main campus. This service is available to all students, regardless of location. Explore the website at http://www.ctcd.edu/gc/sss/index.htm for further information. Reasonable accommodations, in accordance with federal and state laws, will be given through the DSS office.

E. Instructor Discretion: The instructor reserves the right of final decision in course requirements.
F. Civility: Individuals are expected to be cognizant of what a constructive educational experience is and respectful of those participating in a learning environment. Failure to do so can result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

VIII. COURSE OUTLINE

(Material from the following chapters will be covered during the semester. The specific material within each chapter and the ordering of the chapters will be at the instructor’s discretion.)

A. Lesson One
   1. Chapter 1: The More Things Change . . . The More They Stay the Same
   2. Chapter 2: The Founding and the Constitution
   3. Chapter 3: Federalism

B. Lesson Two
   1. Chapter 6: Congress
   2. Chapter 15: American Domestic Policy
   3. Chapter 7: The Presidency
   4. Chapter 8: The Federal Bureaucracy
   5. Chapter 16: American Foreign Policy

C. Lesson Three
   1. Chapter 9: The Judiciary
   2. Chapter 4: Civil Liberties
   3. Chapter 5: Civil Rights, Equality and Social Movements

D. Lesson Four
   1. Chapter 10: Public Opinion
   2. Chapter 11: Interest Groups

Updated: August 2013
3. Chapter 13: Political Parties and Voting

4. Chapter 14: Campaigns and Elections