

## **IDS4930: Special Topics in Interdisciplinary Studies: Florida Politics**

### **Spring 2026 - Two Credit Hours**

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**NOTE:** This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see UF's "[Academic Policies and Resources](#)" web page.

#### **I. General Information**

- a. Instructor:** Chris Emmanuel
- b. Class Location:** Office of Government Relations Conference Room
  - i. 215 South Monroe Street, Suite 110, Tallahassee, Florida (January)
  - ii. 150 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida (February)
- c. Class Time:** F (9:30 – 11:30 am)

#### **II. Instructor Information:**

- a. Office Location:** Office of Government Relations Conference Room
  - i. 215 South Monroe Street, Suite 110, Tallahassee, Florida (January)
  - ii. 150 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida (February)
- b. Office Hours:** Mondays and Fridays 8:00am-9:00am and by appointment.
- c. Phone:** (850) 933-1223
- d. Email:** [chris.emmanuel@ufl.edu](mailto:chris.emmanuel@ufl.edu)

#### **III. Course Description**

- a.** Advanced study of selected topics. Content varies from term to term. Florida is one of the most dynamic, most interesting, and most unusual states in the union. This course is a short survey of governing the Sunshine State, with perspectives from law, political science, and history. Students will leave with an understanding of the institutions, actors, and processes which govern Florida.

#### **IV. Course Expectations**

- a.** You are expected to exemplify high academic and professional standards. This course will usually include a weekly in-person Friday meeting in two parts, a session with Mr. Chris Emmanuel, Director of the UF State Relations Office to discuss "Governing Modern Florida," and a TIP Speaker Series guest speaker. Together, your Friday meeting will last two hours with a break between each session. Prepare for these Friday meetings ahead of time. Your first-class meeting will be Friday, January 16, 2025, and the speaker series will begin at subsequent Friday morning meetings and possibly last through the Florida Legislative Session. **All Friday meetings are live and in-person, and Zoom-based lectures are not available.**

#### **V. Course Objectives**

- a.** In this course we will:
  - i.** Explore the structure and functions of Florida's government.
  - ii.** Study the separation of powers in the state's system.
  - iii.** Evaluate the influence of lobbyists, trade groups, and advocates.
  - iv.** Analyze policy bills by tracking their progress through the legislative process

- v. Identify potential career paths in government and politics

## **VI. Course Materials**

- a. Calendar includes all materials.
- b. **Materials Fee:** N/A

## **VII. Student Learning Outcomes**

- a. A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:
  - i. Describe and explain the structure, functions, and roles of Florida's state and local governmental institutions (including the executive, legislative, and judicial branches).
  - ii. Analyze how Florida's constitutional framework, electoral systems, political parties, interest groups, and public policy processes influence governance and decision-making in the state.
  - iii. Evaluate influential political issues in Florida (e.g., demographic change, economic development, education, health care) and assess how they shape policy outcomes.
  - iv. Apply political science concepts and empirical data to Florida-specific case studies, enabling evidence-based reasoning about political behavior, policy choice, and institutional performance.
  - v. Communicate informed perspectives on Florida politics through written work and/or presentations, demonstrating clarity, logical argumentation, and awareness of multiple viewpoints.
  - vi. Reflect on civic engagement, recognizing the role of citizens and political actors in Florida's democracy, and identify ways individuals or groups can influence state and local politics.

## **VIII. Graded Work**

### **a. Graded Components (100%)**

#### **i. Attendance/Discussion (70%)**

- 1. Come to class, be prepared to discuss the readings.

#### **ii. Oral Presentation (10%)**

- 1. Ten-minute presentation on a state agency. Students will pick their agency on the second day of class. The presentation has to answer these five questions:
  - a. What does the agency do?
  - b. How was the agency created?
  - c. What is the organizational structure of the agency?
  - d. Who is the leader of the agency?
  - e. What was the career path of that the agency leader?

#### **iii. Bill Analysis (10%)**

- 1. A two-page bill analysis of a bill .Students will pick their bill, either from the current legislative session or a prior session from the last five years. The bill analysis has to answer the following questions:
  - a. What is the current situation that the bill is adjusting?
  - b. How does the bill change the status quo?

- c. Who supports the bill and why?
- d. Who opposes the bill and why?

**iv. Professional Resume (10%):**

- 1. Will count as Final Exam

**IX. Grading Scale**

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Number Grade</b>
A	100-92.5
A-	92.4-89.5
B+	89.4-86.5
B	86.4-82.5
B-	82.4-79.5
C+	79.4-76.5
C	76.4-72.5
C-	72.4-69.5
D+	69.4-66.5
D	66.4-62.5
D-	62.4-59.5
E	59.4-0

**X. Calendar**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings/Assignments</b>	<b>Work Due</b>
Week One: January 16, 2026	Class Introductions		January 16, 2026
Week Two: January 23, 2026	Quick History of Florida and its Government continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required Reading:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read: <a href="#">Article I and II</a> of the Florida Constitution</li> <li>○ Read <a href="#">Article I, Section 1 and Section 9 of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Assignment: Pick Oral Presentation and schedule presentations.</b></li> </ul>	January 23, 2026
Week Three: January 30, 2026	Florida's Legislative Branch: Part I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required Reading:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read: <a href="#">Article III</a> of the Florida Constitution</li> <li>○ Read: <a href="#">How an Idea Becomes a Law</a> by the Florida Senate</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Optional Readings: Optional Readings:</li> </ul>	January 30, 2026

Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments	Work Due
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read: Mary Adkins. <a href="#"><u>The Same River Twice: A Brief History of How the 1968 Florida Constitution Came to Be and What it Has Become.</u></a> 18 FLA. COASTAL L. REV. 5 (2016). Part I and II.</li> </ul>	
Week Four: February 6, 2026	Florida's Legislative Branch: Part II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Required Reading:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Understanding a House and Senate Calendar Note: <i>These are not published til the second week of session.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	February 6, 2026
Week Five: February 13, 2026	Florida's Judicial Branch, Part I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Required Reading:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read: <a href="#"><u>Article V of the Florida Constitution</u></a></li> <li>○ Read: <a href="#"><u>The Judicial Branch Organizational Chart</u></a></li> <li>○ Read: <a href="#"><u>Florida's Court System</u></a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Assignment: Current event or bill analysis</b></li> </ul>	February 13, 2026
Week Six: February 20, 2026	Florida's Judicial Branch: Tour of Florida Supreme Court & Careers in Florida Public Policy (Tentative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No readings</li> <li>● Professional resume.</li> </ul>	February 20, 2026
Week Seven: February 27, 2026	Florida's Executive Branch, Part I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Required Reading:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read: <a href="#"><u>Article IV</u></a> of the Florida Constitution</li> <li>○ Read: <a href="#"><u>The State of Florida Organizational Chart</u></a></li> <li>○ Read: <a href="#"><u>The Executive Office of the Governor Organizational Chart</u></a></li> </ul> </li> <li>●</li> </ul>	February 27, 2026
Week Eight: March 6, 2026	Florida's Executive Branch, Part II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Required Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read: <a href="#"><u>Executive Order 23-214 (Tropical Storm Milton)</u></a></li> <li>○ Read: <a href="#"><u>Executive Order 20-51 (COVID-19)</u></a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <i>Optional viewing:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#"><u>I'm Just A Bill</u></a> by School House Rock</li> <li>○ <a href="#"><u>Executive Order</u></a> by Saturday Night Live</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	March 6, 2026

Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments	Work Due
Week Nine: March 13, 2026	Florida's Executive and Legislative Branches & Florida's State Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skim: <a href="#">Florida Long-Range Financial Outlook (September 11, 2025) by EDR</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>•</li> </ul>	March 13, 2026
Week Ten: March 20, 2026	Closing Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBD</li> </ul>	March 20, 2026

## XI. Academic Policies

- Academic Standards:** Courteous and appropriate classroom behavior is always expected, this begins with punctuality and preparedness at each class meeting. Since this class will require active engagement, students should avoid such offensive behavior as text messaging, unrelated phone or laptop use, working on assignments for other classes, talking with neighbors about unrelated matters, and, if possible, coming to class late or leaving before class is over.
- Attendance and Participation:** Your attendance is a mandatory part of this course. Active participation, including reading and coming to the Speaker Series having done your research, is an essential part of the course and will factor directly into your final grade.
- Make-ups and Extension:** Makeup or extensions will be permitted only at the discretion of the instructor and require advanced notice and documentation of severe hardship or medical need.

## XII. Procedure for Conflict Resolution

- Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Marianne Vernetson ([mvernetson@ufl.edu](mailto:mvernetson@ufl.edu), [\(646\) 831-0332](tel:(646)831-0332)). Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; [352-392-1308](tel:352-392-1308)) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; [352-392-1261](tel:352-392-1261)).