

THE U.S. POLITICAL SYSTEM (PSC 211)

Fall 2021, Concordia College

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Time: 2:40pm - 3:50pm MWF
Class Location: Old Main 302
Office Hours: TR 1:00-3:00pm

This syllabus is the most important document you'll receive in PSC 211. It represents a contract between student and instructor. By taking this course, you are agreeing to the terms of the syllabus. You should review the syllabus carefully, and refer to it often during the semester.

Below, I describe what you should expect during our class meetings, and what I expect from you. I specify which chapters from the textbook we'll be covering each week. I discuss exactly how your final grade will be calculated. And I outline some important course and College-wide policies.

As the semester proceeds, I encourage you to stop by my office hours. To make an appointment during my office hours (either in-person or virtual), click on the following link: <https://concordia.campus.eab.com/pal/UGe9GygII5>.

Outside office hours, email (eschmid4@cord.edu) is the best way to reach me. Note that I don't answer emails after 8:00pm, but I will respond to student emails within 36 hours.

–Dr. Schmidt

Course Description and Overview

This course offers a broad overview of the U.S. political system (both political institutions and mass political behavior). We will cover the foundational topics: the disagreements at the Constitutional Convention; the branches of government; and what a “federal” system means for the balance-of-power between state and national government. We will also cover issues of enduring interest: civil liberties and civil rights; political parties and their functions; public opinion and voting; the role of the news media and interest groups; and the nature of federal political institutions (e.g. Congress, the presidency, the Supreme Court, and the bureaucracy). After taking this class, you will have glimpsed the tools that political scientists use to make sense of complicated events – tools that locate the *structure* beneath an otherwise chaotic political marketplace.

But let's address the elephant-in-the-room right away. **This is a unique time to be taking an introductory course on U.S. politics.** Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, you might have heard people say (on the news or talk shows) that U.S. politics had veered into new and dangerous territory. However, while national emergencies have historically *united* the American public, U.S. politics is arguably more polarized than before “COVID-19” became a household term. After all, this class is taking place just eight months after an attempted insurrection at the U.S. Capitol in

Washington D.C. – orchestrated not by fringe groups roundly condemned by both parties, but by supporters of a president that claimed (falsely) that he had won re-election in November 2020. Lest we forget, an angry mob of Trump supporters (some armed) stormed the U.S. Senate chamber, vandalized congressional offices, called for the public executions of the Vice President and Speaker of the House, forced elected leaders to evacuate the premises, and delayed Congress’s certification of President-elect Biden’s Electoral College victory.

This was not normal – and it took many political scientists (including your instructor) by surprise. It raises profound questions about the “staying power” of democracy in the United States. Perhaps elected officials (and increasingly, the public) are too polarized for representative government to function. Perhaps we can no longer assume that the parties-in-government are equally committed to free and fair elections. Perhaps our institutions have not only failed to guarantee civil rights to underrepresented groups, but were never equipped to guarantee these rights in the first place. Perhaps, in other words, much of what we thought we knew about the U.S. political system no longer holds.

These are valid questions. However, to think critically about U.S. politics, **we need to understand how the U.S. political system works in the first place.** By understanding this system’s strengths and weaknesses, we can be creative and critical democratic participants. It is good to *know* about the challenges facing representative government in the United States. But because these challenges are not going anywhere, we must understand the institutions that might make things better or worse – depending on the decisions of elected officials, bureaucrats, judges, and (yes) voters. In the end, this course offers a framework of analysis for understanding the U.S. political system. This framework holds even when U.S. politics makes little sense, or seems to be changing in fundamental ways. By the end of this course, you should be able to explain:

- **What is enduring about the U.S. political system.** What are the core institutional features that stay the same even when lots of other things change? What “checks and balances” are built into the system, and how do they work? Why is it that a president and a congressional majority that share the same party (as of August 2021) cannot pass most of the major policies they championed during their campaigns?
- **What it means for policy outcomes to be determined by procedural rules.** When elected officials argue over rules and procedures (e.g., the filibuster in the U.S. Senate), why are these actually arguments about which *policies* will win? How might this (obsessive) emphasis on procedure keep the system functional even when individual personalities are eccentric?
- **What is new and alarming about U.S. politics – and how we might confront these challenges.** Why are political scientists concerned that democracy is under threat in the United States? Which concerns are genuinely new? And which speak, instead, to long-standing tensions in the U.S. political system? Assuming that our institutions cannot be changed overnight, *which* institutions are best-equipped to stabilize the ship of democracy in the United States?

To be clear, we will talk about current events – including the January 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, and the events that enabled such a serious assault on democratic norms and institutions. And we will talk about everything else new-and-unusual in U.S. politics too. **However, we will also evaluate why the U.S. political system has a relatively high threshold for “unusual” events in the first place.** This is a strange (and frightening) time to study U.S. politics. But if you look hard enough, it exemplifies the stability and strength of the U.S. political system.

Moodle

You should familiarize yourself with the Moodle page for this course. As needed, I'll use Moodle to make announcements and updates. You'll use Moodle to submit both of your take-home exams. And you can use Moodle to see your current grade (including your most-recent participation scores). From time to time, I may also post optional additional readings (like news articles and essays germane to class discussion) on Moodle.

Textbook

Bianco, William T. and David T. Canon. *American Politics Today*, **full seventh edition**.

You must obtain a physical or online copy of the most current full version (7th edition) of this textbook. Since the authors update the textbook every two years, any past editions are out-of-date. **Please talk to me as soon as possible if you have any difficulties obtaining a current version of the textbook.**

There are copies of the textbook at the Cobber Bookstore; copies are also available through [Amazon](#) and [Book Scouter](#). You may also purchase an online version of the textbook if you would like to access the book that way.

If you do not purchase your book through the Cobber Bookstore, you should refer to the current ISBN number to make sure you obtain the correct edition. Depending on which format you choose, here are the ISBN numbers. (Most online book vendors allow you to enter the ISBN number instead of the book title.)

Paperback: 978-0393539196

E-book: 978-0393539585

Note: your textbook is associated with the online InQuizitive platform, through W.W. Norton & Company. Whether you purchase the eBook or hard-copy version of *American Politics Today*, you should have access to these eLearning resources. InQuizitive helps students review each chapter and improve their understanding of core concepts. While you are not required to use the InQuizitive platform, you might find it useful as you prepare for the exams.

Expectations

While PSC 211 is an "introductory" class, we will be covering a great deal of material. This requires substantial commitment on your part to stay on track. For most class sessions, you are expected to:

- **Read (ahead of time) selections from the textbook, as indicated in the schedule below.** Most weeks, we'll cover 1-2 chapters from *American Politics Today*; you should complete these readings by the first day of class for that week. I suggest taking detailed notes, and paying attention to the **bolded** terms throughout.
- **Keep up with current events by reading a daily national newspaper.** We will have regular discussions of current events, applying what we're learning to real-time political news.

- Authoritative newspapers include the *New York Times*, *Financial Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, or *Washington Post*. (Opinion-oriented websites (such as Daily Kos, Salon, MSNBC, Fox News, or Drudge Report) are not acceptable; neither are local newspapers or student newspapers.) The campus library provides students **free online access** to the *New York Times*; [click this link](#) to log-in with your Cobbernet username and password.
- **Note:** reading a newspaper does not require the same attention-to-detail as the textbook. **DON'T spend three hours reading the newspaper from front-to-back!** Rather, spend about 20-30 minutes reading your chosen paper (e.g., by focusing on the first 3 or 4 paragraphs of each article, and skipping things that are redundant or unimportant). **As you read/skim, take special note of current events that are relevant to course materials.**
- **Complete (very) short, frequent in-class writing exercises.** Participation is a graded part of this course, **and these exercises are your chance to participate.** To assess participation, I will often require the class to complete very short (4-5 minute) in-class writing assignments on discussion questions relevant to that day's topic (which I will then collect). These will not be graded for "correct" answers. Rather, they will help facilitate discussion and give me a clear sense of students' willingness to participate. **Remember to bring writing utensils and notebook paper to each class.**

Course Structure

Each class session will meet for 70 minutes. Please keep the following format and guidelines in mind. (Depending on how the semester unfolds, I reserve the right to modify this format – but for now, this should provide a general sense of how we're going to proceed.)

- **You are expected to show up for class on time.** If you arrive late, enter the classroom as quietly as possible.
- **Generally, classes will have an "interactive lecture" format.** I encourage you to take notes and ask questions. There is no need to copy down everything on my slides; the slides are meant to guide your understanding, not to function as a substitute for completing the assigned readings. **Without exception, slides will not be posted on Moodle.** Just focus on the "big picture" points and ask about areas that are unclear.
- **We'll sometimes break off into smaller groups** to brainstorm responses to discussion questions I pose to the class (usually after an in-class writing assignment). And we'll spend a not-inconsiderable amount of time linking the course material to current events.
- **Fridays will be especially interactive.** Expect Mondays and Wednesdays to be more lecture-heavy. On Fridays, we'll review that week's material – often with an extended, active learning exercise. Of course, you should always come to class prepared to be actively engaged, and you should always feel free to ask questions as we go along.

Take-Home Exams

You are required to complete two (2) take-home exams. These exams will not be cumulative. Each exam will be posted on Moodle; you have **three days** to write and submit your exams (see **Course Schedule**, below). Exams should be uploaded to Moodle as a .doc or .docx (Microsoft

Word) file.

During the exam period, you are not allowed to discuss the exam with your classmates. When you submit your exams, you will be required to digitally sign an Academic Integrity statement – affirming that the exam reflects your own work, and that you did not discuss or otherwise collaborate on the exam with anyone else.

Each exam will contain three (3) essay questions. The questions are written to assess how well you understand the course material – and in particular, whether you understand the relationship between different concepts and their implications for contemporary U.S. politics. In general, you should aim for (\approx) 2-3 double-spaced pages per essay.

Exams will be graded on how completely and accurately you answered the essay questions. You should answer the questions as-written, rather than demonstrate your knowledge of unrelated course material. Responses will not be graded on your writing quality, grammar, spelling, or punctuation. However, remember that if your writing is difficult to follow or contains many typographical errors, it might be more difficult to assess whether you understand the course material.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Friday, August 27): Course introduction and overview.

- **Read:** Course syllabus. (Remember that **syllabi are contracts** between the student and instructor; you are responsible for **carefully** reading this syllabus, reviewing the course requirements, and asking your instructor to clarify anything that is unclear.)

Week 2 (Monday, August 30 - Friday, September 3): The Constitution and the Founding

- **Read:** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, Chapter 2

Week 3 (Monday, September 6 - Friday, September 10): Federalism

- **Read:** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, Chapter 3; James Madison, *Federalist No. 51* (pp. A18-A19 at the back of the textbook)

Week 4 (Monday, September 13 - Friday, September 17): Civil Liberties

- **Read:** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, Chapter 4

Week 5 (Monday, September 20 - Friday, September 24): Civil Rights

- **Note:** due to the campus-wide Symposium, **we will not hold class on Wednesday, September 22.**
- **Read:** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, Chapter 5

Week 6 (Monday, September 27 - Friday, October 1): Political Parties

- **Read:** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, Chapter 8

Week 7 (Monday, October 4 - Friday, October 8): Interest Groups

- **Read:** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, Chapter 10

Week 8 (Monday, October 11 - Friday, October 15): Elections

- **Read:** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, Chapter 9

Week 9 (Monday, October 18 - Friday, October 22): Public Opinion

- **Read:** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, Chapter 6

EXAM 1 will be posted on Moodle on Tuesday, October 19 at **12:00pm CST**. The exam will cover all the material through Week 8.

Exams are due on Friday, October 22 at **7:30pm CST**. You must submit your complete exam on Moodle in .doc or .docx format.

Week 10 (Monday, October 25 - Friday, October 29): Fall Interim; no class.

Week 11 (Monday, November 1 - Friday, November 5): The Media

- **Read:** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, Chapter 7

REMINDER: Your last day to drop PSC 211 is Monday, November 8. If you believe you must withdraw from PSC 211 (or that you are in danger of failing the course), I **strongly** encourage you to consult myself, your academic advisor, and (if applicable) your first-year mentor **in advance** of this deadline.

Week 12 (Monday, November 8 - Friday, November 12): The U.S. Congress

- **Read:** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, Chapter 11

Week 13 (Monday, November 15 - Friday, November 19): The Presidency

- **Read:** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, Chapter 12

Week 14 (Monday, November 22; shortened week):

- For Monday, November 22, we'll review Chapter 12 ("The Presidency") of *American Politics Today*; otherwise, there is no new reading.
- **Thanksgiving break runs from November 23 (end of academic day) through November 28. We will not have scheduled classes on Wednesday and Friday.**

Week 15 (Monday, November 29 - Friday, December 3): The Bureaucracy

- **Read:** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, Chapter 13

Week 16 (Monday, December 6 - Friday, December 10): The Courts

- **Read:** Bianco and Canon, *American Politics Today*, Chapter 14

Finals Week (Wednesday, December 15: 2:00-4:00pm): Looking Ahead

- **No assigned readings.** As we reflect on everything we've learned, we'll consider any "big picture" questions that might have been glossed over during our discussions of specific topics. And if the class has piqued your interest in U.S. politics (or Political Science more generally), I'll highlight some ways that you might build upon your experience – in the Department of Political Science, at Concordia as-a-whole, and in your future careers.

EXAM 2 will be posted on Moodle on Sunday, December 12 at 12:00pm CST. The exam will cover all the material from Weeks 9-16.

Exams are due on Wednesday, December 15 at 7:30pm CST. You must submit your complete exam on Moodle in .doc or .docx format.

Course Policies

Grading

Your final grade will be weighted as follows:

- **Exam 1**, 42.5 percent
- **Exam 2**, 42.5 percent
- **Participation**, 15 percent. Students will receive a participation score for each substantive week of classes (10 points maximum: 0-6 = needs improvement; 8 = adequate; 10 = excellent).

- I will recognize good-faith efforts to participate in class discussions. **Moreover, I will encourage participation with structured opportunities for students to collect their thoughts.** Frequent in-class writing exercises (and small-group discussions) will help me gauge students' willingness to participate. Just as important, these impromptu exercises will give *you* ideas for comments, insights, and questions. People will lose points on participation if it is clear from your in-class writing that you have not prepared for class or are not interested in earning a strong participation score. (If you have questions about the quality of your class participation, please see me during my office hours.)

Please note that **there will not be opportunities to earn extra credit** in this course.

Office Hours

Regardless of your performance in this class, I encourage you to stop by my office hours. During my office hours, I will certainly help students that might be struggling in PSC 211 – or who need clarification about the course material. However, I am also interested in your professional and intellectual development. Please see me as a *resource* (and ally) as you progress through your academic careers.

My office hours are from **1:00-3:00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, in Old Main 311 (or virtually)**. Priority will be given to students with scheduled appointments. To make either an in-person or virtual appointment, click the following link:

<https://concordia.campus.eab.com/pal/UGe9GygII5>. Remember to wear a mask to any in-person appointments; for virtual appointments, you'll receive the Zoom link after you sign up.

Attendance Policy

Concordia College requires students to attend all classes as scheduled; I will take attendance at each class session. Note that while you won't be graded on attendance (*per se*), it is difficult to obtain participation credit if you aren't in class.

Students will be excused from class in cases of illness, family emergency, or religious observance. Generally, students should provide documentation of illness (e.g., a valid doctor's note) to be excused from the participation requirement for missed classes. **However, I recognize that due to COVID-19 mitigation measures, it is not always practical (or safe) to obtain a doctor's note;** in these cases, please keep open communication with your instructor to ensure you are not penalized for health circumstances beyond your control.

In addition, **Concordia students will not be penalized for missing class due to participation in a co-curricular activity.** Students should notify their instructors of scheduled absences at the beginning of the semester, or as soon as that information is available to them.

Remote Attendance (Isolation and Quarantine Only)

If you must self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19 mitigation measures, you may "listen in" to live-streamed class sessions. In these cases, you are not expected to participate virtually – and you will not be penalized for failing to "attend" the virtual class. Rather, this is an (admittedly imperfect) back-up option for students that cannot attend class because of COVID-19

infection or exposure. Students attending in-person will be unable to see identifying information (e.g., name, audio, video) about students logged into the Zoom meeting room. Without exception, classes will not be recorded.

To remotely listen-in, go to the following Zoom link during our regularly scheduled class period: <https://cord.zoom.us/j/93954920108>. (This link will also be available from the course Moodle page.)

Deadlines

Students must complete both take-home exams during the allotted time periods. Make-up exams will only be permitted in cases of illness (if applicable, provide a valid doctor's note), family emergency, religious observance, or participation in a co-curricular activity. Please note that if you qualify for a make-up exam, you will receive an "alternate" version of the exam. This exam will not be more difficult than the missed exam, but it will have different essay questions. **If you miss an exam without a valid excuse, you will receive zero (0) percent for the exam – and will not have the opportunity to complete a make-up exam.**

Expectations Regarding Academic and Personal Integrity

All students are expected to make a personal pledge to uphold Concordia's and general professional standards on academic honesty and integrity. For more information, see the College's [Student Handbook and Academic Policies](#).

As the instructor-of-record for this course, **I am required to report academic integrity violations to the Office of Academic Affairs.** Depending on the severity or deliberateness of the offense, penalties for academic misconduct may include: an automatic zero (0) percent on the assignment in question, an automatic failing grade (F) for the course, or (at the administrative level) suspension from the College.

Avoiding plagiarism is essential for anyone at any stage of their academic career. **In my experience, however, most cases of plagiarism are not deliberate;** rather, students are not aware that what they are doing constitutes plagiarism. For example, don't assume that plagiarism is not an issue in this class because you're not required to write a research paper; it is still possible to plagiarize on your take-home exams. On take-home exams, plagiarism would include instances where:

- Students quote (without citation) a verbatim definition from the textbook in one of their essay responses, rather than putting the definition into their own words.
- Groups of students prepare for the exams together, and write identical (or very similar) responses to the essay questions.

There are multiple ways to plagiarize, but here's a good rule-of-thumb: plagiarism means that you have copied from another text – without appropriate citation – **any intellectually unique sequence of three or more words.** There are obvious exceptions to this rule; proper nouns (e.g., "National Republican Convention," "Senator Amy Klobuchar"), technical terms (e.g., "party in the electorate") need not appear in quotations, nor do phrases likely to appear in most academic writing on your topic (e.g., "In the United States"). But if you keep the "three words" rule in mind, it will be

extremely hard to accidentally plagiarize. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, feel free to ask me and/or refer to the College's guidelines on academic integrity (see above).

COVID-19

As campus "re-opens," keep the following considerations and policies in mind:

- **Concordia College strongly encourages students to get vaccinated against COVID-19 – and mandates vaccinations for student athletes and others that travel as part of co-curricular activities.** Vaccines remain the best way to keep yourself and others safe. To find walk-in sites, make an appointment, or find sites that offer a specific vaccine (e.g., Johnson and Johnson, Moderna, Pfizer), you can visit the following link: <https://vaccineconnector.mn.gov/en-US/>. For more information about the College's (ongoing) COVID-19 response, you can visit <https://www.concordiacollege.edu/about/covid-response-planning/>.
- **If you are enrolled in PSC 211, you must wear a mask during our class sessions.** As your instructor, I have discretion to require face coverings in class for the duration of the semester; students are expected to follow individual masking expectations set by their faculty, unless an accommodation has been approved. If you come to class without a face covering or refuse to comply with this policy, I will politely ask you to leave. If you miss class because you refuse to comply with class policy on masking, your absence will count against your participation grade for that week.
- In addition, please note that **until September 17, Concordia College requires faculty, staff, and students to wear face coverings in all classes, laboratories, and studios.** Students seeking an exemption from either the campus-wide or class policies should contact Matthew Rutten in the [Counseling Center and Disability Services Office](#).
- **I expect students to stay home from class if you are ill.** If you experience COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, it is important that you receive prompt medical attention – and that you self-isolate to protect others from infection. In this event, **I will ensure that you are not penalized for health circumstances beyond your control.**
- **If you are unvaccinated and exposed (close contact) to someone that tests positive for COVID-19, you must quarantine according to campus mitigation measures – and contact the COVID student helpline at (701) 730-8304.** If you are vaccinated and have no symptoms after a close contact exposure, you should continue to monitor your health – but do not need to quarantine unless you develop symptoms. If you are vaccinated and develop symptoms after a COVID-19 close contact exposure, you should call the COVID student helpline and stay home until you receive further instruction. **In these circumstances, I will again ensure that you are not penalized for following the campus's specified COVID-19 mitigation measures.**
- **Students that cannot attend class in-person for reasons related to COVID-19 may "listen in" at the following link: <https://cord.zoom.us/j/93954920108>.** Note that classmates attending in-person will not be able to see which students have logged into the virtual Zoom meeting. To protect your privacy, your video and audio will be disabled; students in isolation or quarantine are not expected to participate in class. In addition, you may "rename"

yourself upon logging into the Zoom meeting room; otherwise, your name will be visible only to your instructor and other classmates that might be attending virtually.

- **Campus resources are in-place to help students affected by COVID-19.** Students who find it difficult to complete course work are expected to contact the course instructor and the Center for Student Success (success@cord.edu). Students who have technology issues are expected to contact ITS (pcsupport@cord.edu). Students who miss class for an extended period should reach out to Center for Student Success (success@cord.edu).

Concordia's Diversity Statement

Concordia College aspires to be a diverse community that affirms an abundance of identities, experiences, and perspectives in order to imagine, examine, and implement possibilities for individual and communal thriving. Critical thinking grounded in the liberal arts compels us to participate in intentional dialogue, careful self-reflection, and honest interactions about difference, power, and inequity. As responsible engagement in the world calls us to recognize worlds that are familiar or unfamiliar, visible or less visible, Concordia will act to increase and support diversity in all areas of campus life.

Value of Diverse Perspectives, Backgrounds, and Identities

As your instructor, I am committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion at Concordia. Ultimately, **inclusion is a quality-of-life issue.** Students are unlikely to succeed in (let alone enjoy) an educational environment where their contributions are neither valued nor noticed. More than ever, liberal arts education must celebrate students with under-represented racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations or gender identities, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic statuses. Students with physical or learning disabilities must be fully included in campus life. And instructors must proactively *and quickly* address discrimination in all its forms.

Just as importantly, if you feel under-valued and unnoticed in class, this is probably not your fault. Rather, it is your instructor's responsibility to promote an inclusive learning environment. During the semester, I will do my utmost to promote diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and identities in the classroom. But if I ever fall short, please let me know. Like everyone at Concordia, I am still learning; like everyone, there are "blind spots" in my cultural sensitivity and awareness. For this reason, I value *any* feedback that makes my classroom more inclusive – and would consider it a privilege to learn from you.

Pronouns and Identity

Class rosters are provided to us with the students' legal names. Because all people have the right to be addressed in accordance with their personal identity, the instructor will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please let him know how you would prefer to be addressed as soon as possible.

Concordia's Interfaith Cooperation Statement

Concordia College practices interfaith cooperation because of its Lutheran dedication to prepare thoughtful and informed global citizens who foster wholeness and hope, build peace through understanding, and serve the world together.

Religious Accommodations

Students from all faiths and religious backgrounds (and no or uncertain faiths) are welcome in this classroom. If a religious holiday precludes your class attendance, please make arrangements with the instructor in advance for retrieving information and turning in class assignments.

Concordia's Sexual Misconduct Policy

Concordia College takes sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment **seriously**. All faculty members, including myself, are mandatory reporters, which means that if I learn about any form of sexual misconduct, I must report it to the Title IX coordinator. For more information, I strongly encourage students to access both the [College's Title IX Resources](#) and [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Concordia College values diversity and inclusion. We are committed to providing students with access to mental health services and equitable access to learning opportunities.

The Counseling Center and Disability Services Office (Old Main 109A) is the campus office that helps students find solutions and relief through talk therapy, and reasonable accommodations. [Additional Community and Online Resources](#) are also available on Cobbernet.

- If you feel stressed, anxious, worried, or lonely, please consider contacting a staff member in the Counseling Center and Disability Services Office to learn more, or to set up an appointment with a counselor. All appointments are free and confidential and can be arranged by emailing counseling@cord.edu, or calling (218) 299-3514, or by stopping in Lower Level, Old Main, room 109A.
- If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attention, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact the Director of the Counseling Center and Disability Services Office to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations. Appointments can be arranged by emailing counseling@cord.edu, or calling (218) 299-3514, or by stopping in Lower Level, Old Main, room 109A.
- Accommodations can be coordinated with the staff in the Counseling Center and Disability Services Office. To receive reasonable and appropriate accommodations in your course(s), you will need to share your Letter of Accommodation (LOA) with your class instructor(s) as soon as possible so necessary arrangements can be made. **Accommodations can start only after the LOA has been shared with your instructor, and accommodations are not retroactive.** Your information will be kept confidential.

- For additional information on accommodations (e.g., accommodation petition process or appeal process for accommodation plans) please see the Policy for the Accommodation of Students with Disabilities in the Concordia College Course Catalog.

Please contact me if you feel there are aspects of my instruction, or design of this course, that could better support your learning.

Mental Health

It is very important that your first priority this semester be to take care of yourself. Monitor and take care of your own health and well-being. It is important to recognize stressors you may be facing, which might be personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. Sleep, exercise, balanced nutrition and connecting with others are great strategies to help you flourish at Concordia. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, feel free to contact me and/or pursue other campus resources, such as the Counseling Center. Contact the Counseling Center to learn more, at counseling@cord.edu, (218) 299-3514, or stop in Lower Level, Old Main, Room 109A. All appointments are free and confidential.