

# Political Science 2301

## Principles of U.S. and Texas Government

Section Three  
12:30-1:45 TTh

### **Professor Information:**

Dr. Jeffrey C. Herndon  
Ferguson Social Science Building, 160  
[Jeffrey.Herndon@tamuc.edu](mailto:Jeffrey.Herndon@tamuc.edu)  
Office Hours: 8:00-9:30 a.m. Mon.-Thur.  
And by appointment

### **Books:**

ISBN: 978-0-393-91288-3  
Ackerman, Erin and Benjamin Ginsberg, eds. *A Guide to the United States Constitution*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. W.W. Norton and Company.

ISBN: 978-0-393-93565-3  
Ginsberg, Benjamin, et.al., *We the People: An Introduction to American Politics*, 8<sup>th</sup> essentials edition. W.W. Norton and Co.

ISBN: 978-0-073-37898-5  
Halter, Gary M. *Government and Politics of Texas*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. McGraw Hill.

In addition to the above materials, you will be required to keep up with your MyLeo email to receive material. For this reason, you will also need to purchase a 1 ¼ inch binder to keep primary documents as assigned. You will also have to access at least one major news source everyday in order to keep up with current events in order to fulfill the requirements of the course. Your professor reserves the right to assign additional readings as required.

### **Course Description:**

This class is a survey of the principles underlying the American experiment in self-government with justice and the constitution and government of Texas.

### **Course Objectives:**

1. To develop a base of knowledge regarding the historical and philosophical origins of the American regime and the government of Texas.
2. To know and understand the basic principles of constitution government in the United States and Texas with particular reference to the key concepts that inform those respective regimes.
3. To improve critical thinking and analytical skills appropriate to both the subject matter at hand and in terms of a broad liberal arts education.
4. To maximize your potential as a writer and to develop skills in expressing yourself through writing.
5. To increase civic engagement.

The following general learning objectives will also be achieved:

1. Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain the political institutions and processes of the government of the United States.
2. Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain the political institutions and processes of the state of Texas.
3. Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain the theories of federal policy development and implementation.
4. Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain the theories of Texas state policy development and implementation.

**Attendance:** Attendance will be taken daily and you would be well-advised to attend every class—if for no other reason than the fact that experience demonstrates that you will not do well if you are not here. Students who have more than two absences will have ten points deducted from their final grade for each absence over two. You may use your two absences for any purpose you choose—the only exception is on exam days when you must be in class. When an absence happens to coincide with an examination or quiz, that examination or quiz cannot be made-up. There will be no make-up examinations or quizzes. Furthermore, if you do miss class, it is your responsibility to prevail upon your classmates to share their materials with you.

Given the size of this class, attendance will be taken using a sign-in sheet. Your professor may, of course, decide to call roll at any time. If you are signed in and the professor calls roll and you are not there, you will be assessed two absences for that day. In other words, do not have your friend sign in for you if you are not here.

Of course attendance is more than merely being in your seat on time (although timeliness is a virtue). You are expected to come to class prepared for class. Readings assigned for particular dates should be completed prior to coming to class. You will have quizzes over the readings and current events, so it is important that you arrive at class on time and that you have adequately prepared for class prior to attending.

You should not arrive late to class. Most importantly do NOT be late for exams! Tardiness for a quiz or exam will result in not receiving credit for it. Needless to say, this might have a deleterious effect on your final grade.

Finally, if you need to leave the class for any reason while it is in session, please make sure to take your belongings with you, as you will not be readmitted to class on that day. If you have to use the restroom you may do so before and after class, but not during. If you do have to leave class, you will, of course, be marked “absent” for that day.

**Electronics Policy:** We are fortunate to live in a technologically advanced time. With that said, the following guidelines must be observed. First, laptop computers and tablets

are wonderful things—but their use is forbidden in this class during our time together. Do not, under any circumstances, engage in “social networking” during class.

With regard to cellular telephones: one person in this class has permission to leave his on during class—and it is not you. It is entirely possible that you will survive for an hour and half without using your telephone. Your instructor reserves the right to answer any telephone that rings during class (and trust me—you do not want him to do it). Repeat violations will result in the confiscation of the offending instrument. Texting during class is prohibited and will likewise result in the confiscation of the offending instrument. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in your being removed from the course.

**Conduct:** “All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” What this means in terms of our class is that from time to time we will discuss controversial issues. During these discussions, you are expected to conduct yourself with civility and politeness (remember, politeness is the first form of politics). A university education is a privilege and should not be abused through disruptive and impolite behavior.

With this in mind, the following are not allowed in the context of this class:

- Sunglasses, Bluetooth earpieces, caps/hats, etc.
- Eating during class
- Texting, or any other form of instant messaging
- Listening to your iPod™ or other media devices

**Caveat:**

Your professor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as required by the exigencies of the class.

**Grading:**

The following is a breakdown of your final grade:

Exam One:	100 points
Exam Two:	100 points
Exam Three:	100 points
Quizzes/Reaction papers:	100 points

The scale used in calculating final grades is as follows:

364-400	A
324-363	B
284-323	C
240-283	D
000-239	F

## Course Calendar

(All dates and content are subject to revision.)

August 28: Introduction to the Course

### Thinking About “Politics”

August 30: Plato, “Allegory of the Cave”

September 4: selections from Aristotle’s *Politics*

September 6: selections from John Locke’s *Second Treatise of Government*

### The Colonial Experience and the Development of American Constitutionalism

September 11: Mayflower Compact, The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut

September 13: The Declaration of Independence

September 18: John Adams, “Thoughts on Government”

September 20: Articles of Confederation

September 25: Review for Examination One

September 27: Examination One (Ginsberg, Chapter 1; Halter, Chapter 1)

### Constructing a New Order for the Ages

October 2: The Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan

October 4: The Constitution of the United States

### Deliberation and Choice

October 9: Publius and the Problem of Self-Government with Justice (*The Federalist* 10)

October 11: The Republican Solution

October 16: Theories of Representation (readings from *The Federalist*; Edmund Burke, “Speech to the Electors of Bristol”)

October 18: The Development of Law (selection from Aristotle’s *Politics*, Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”)

October 23: Abraham Lincoln and the Transformation of American Politics (Abraham Lincoln, “The Gettysburg Address”)

October 25: Framing the Regime: Structural Characteristics of the U.S. Constitution (*The Federalist* 51)

October 30: Framing the Regime, continued.

November 1: Examination Two (Ginsberg, Chapters 2 and 3; Halter, Chapters 2 and 4)

### The Judiciary

November 6: The Judiciary: The Structure of the U.S. Court System

November 8: Principles of Statutory Interpretation

November 13: Judicial Power and the Role of the Courts (*The Federalist* 78; Marbury v. Madison)

### Politics in the United States

November 15: Political Parties in the United States (Ginsberg, Chapter 7)  
November 20: Media and Public Opinion  
November 27: Pluralism and the Politics of Interest (Ginsberg, Chapter 8)

Texas

November 29: The Development of the Texas Constitution  
December 4: Texas Politics

Back to the Beginning

December 6: Prospects for the American Republic (George Washington, “Farewell Address)

December 13: Examination Three, 10:30 a.m. (Ginsberg, Chapters 5 and 6; Halter, Chapters 5 and 6)

Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services, Texas A&M University-Commerce, Gee Library, Room 132; Phone (903) 886-5150



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Fall 2012  
Dr. Jeffrey C. Herndon

**Student statement of understanding**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the syllabus and understand the guidelines and policies therein. Furthermore, I understand my obligation to adhere to these guidelines and policies in this class and failure to do so could result in my being dropped from the course at the discretion of the professor. I understand that I am bound by the requirements listed herein.

X \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_