

Course Title **PSCI 2301: Principles of United States and Texas Government**

Section 01W

Winter Mini 2013

Instructor Information Dr. Chad M King

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Course Learning Objectives

- Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to understanding political behavior and interaction between citizens, institutions of government, and the US Constitution.
 - Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to understanding political behavior, interaction between citizens and institutions of government in Texas, and the Texas constitution.
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Course Policies and Procedures

All students are expected to comply with the following requirements.

1. Complete all course readings for each section of the course.
2. Regularly check the course site for announcement and updates.
3. Complete assigned readings
4. Take each of the scheduled Midterm Exams.
5. Participate fully in the Class Discussion assignments.
6. Students will respect their fellow classmates and the instructor. This includes treating everyone with courtesy and respect in any and all correspondence for the course. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.

7. All students will maintain the highest level of personal responsibility and academic honesty. Academic dishonesty affects all individuals at the University and accordingly will not be tolerated. For this class, academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic work. In particular, passing off work as your own that was written by someone else, without proper citation or attribution, on either exams or discussion assignments will be considered an act of plagiarism. This holds true whether material comes from the textbook, another publication, an internet source, or another student. Any act of plagiarism on a midterm exam will result in score of 0 for the exam. Any act of plagiarism on a Discussion Assignment will result in a 0 for the entire semester's Discussion Assignment grade. Instances of academic dishonesty may also be referred to the appropriate offices on campus and may result in significant administrative penalties.
 8. Students will comply with any and all eCollege technical requirements in terms of training, computer access, & Internet access.
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Required Textbook

There is one required textbook for this course

We the People, Texas Edition

Authors: Lowi, Ginsberg, Weir
 Publisher: W.W. Norton, 8th Texas Edition

You should be able to purchase this book from the bookstore or your favorite on-line merchant. Please note there is also an on-line version of the text available from the publishers that is significantly cheaper. While older editions of the textbook are available, the 8th Texas edition is the required edition.

Telephone and Email Use

The University prefers electronic mail as the primary means of communication between faculty, staff and students. Please use the e-mail address provided by the instructor.

Student Conduct & Discipline

The University has rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of business. It is the responsibility of each student to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the student

handbook.

**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 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu

**Grading
and
Evaluation**

Graded Components

Course grades will be based upon two categories of required components.

- Exams: Students will take three midterm exams. All exams will include material from the textbook and the scheduled dates for the exams are listed below. These exams will feature multiple choice and short answer/essay questions.
- Discussion Assignments: Students will be required to participate on a weekly basis in discussion threads that focus on the assigned readings. Detailed information on this component is listed below.
- Extra Credit: There is no extra credit available for this course, so please do not ask about it.

Final Grade Breakdown

Midterm One	30%
Midterm Two	30%
Midterm Three	30%
Class Discussions	10%
	100%

Grading Scale

Final grades will be based on a 100-point scale, using the following letter/number conversion.

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	65-69
F	Below 65

Midterm Exams

Exam Format: Students will take three midterm exams that feature 50 multiple choice questions. Students are allotted 60 minutes for each exam.

Exam Times and Dates: Midterm Exams will be taken on-line and are scheduled on the dates listed below. All three exams will begin at **11:59 PM** on the start date and will close exactly 48 hours later at **11:59 PM**.

Midterm Exam One

Opens December 21st

Covers Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and Appendix Readings

Midterm Exam Two

Opens December 28th

Covers Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

Midterm Exam Three

Opens January 4th

Covers Chapters 19, 20, 21, 22

Technical Issues: Students are responsible for testing the compatibility of their own computers and software prior to starting the exam and must be sure to have a high speed internet connection to eliminate the chance of technical problems. Exams are timed and can only be taken once. Once a student has entered the the exam, the allotted time will begin counting down and students will not be able to "pause" or put the exam time on hold, even if disconnected from the course site or exam. Students should save their answers frequently by clicking on the "Save Answers" button. Students should not click the "Submit Test" button until they have completed the exam as it will not be possible to re-enter the exam once the test has been submitted. Students who encounter technical problems as a result of failing to comply with these guidelines will not be given an opportunity to re-take or re-access an exam. Any technical problems should be immediately referred to the help desk.

Make Up Exams

If a student misses a midterm exam, that student will receive a grade of 0 for the exam. Make-up exams will only be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Any request for a make-up exam must be made in writing and include documentation explaining why the absence was legitimate. Such a request must be received within 3 calendar days of the missed exam date, unless the student is physically unable to submit such a request during that time period. Legitimate reasons may include illness severe enough to require professional treatment, death in the immediate family, participation in University activities, and/or legal

obligations. Technical problems with accessing the course will not be considered a valid excuse for missing an exam unless it can be shown that the problem is the fault of the eCollege platform. *Please note, these reasons do not guarantee that a make-up exam will be given.*

Make-up exams will be exclusively essay format.

**Class
Discussion
Assignments**

This is the second graded component of the course and will consist of 6 discussions. Topics for the discussion assignments will be posted at 8 AM on the day they open and close exactly 48 hours later. Regardless of the reason, there will be no make-up opportunities for discussion assignments and students will not receive any credit for posts made after the deadline.

Each student will randomly be assigned to a discussion group for the duration of the course. The instructor will create a discussion thread topic for each discussion group to which students are expected to compile a response.

Students will be graded upon two criteria. First, students are expected to submit an original response to the topic posted, answering all parts of the topic. Second, students are expected to respond to the posts of other students in their discussion group. Students should engage in conversation with their group members in a thoughtful discussion about the topic as well as their individual responses to the topic. Students should make a minimum of 5 posts and these posts should not be made all on the same day during the final hours of the assignment time line.

Students will receive a grade of 1, 2, or 3, with 3 being the highest, on each discussion assignment. (Students who do not participate will receive a 0) Grades will be based both upon the quality of the content of a student's posts, as well as the student's engagement with other students by responding to posts in the student's group. Posts that do not fully answer the questions or do not respond posted will not receive full credit. Students who wait until the end of the time frame may receive a grade penalty

All content submitted for Discussion Assignments must be a student's original submission. Any material taken from another source, including the textbook, should include a proper citation. Material which is copied or pasted from any source will be considered plagiarism as discussed above in the Course Policies and Procedures section.

The dates of the assignments are as follows:

12/18 Discussion 1

12/20 Discussion 2
 12/24 Discussion 3
 12/26 Discussion 4
 1/1 Discussion 5
 1/3 Discussion 6

**Suggested
 Reading
 Schedule**

Dates	Topic	Reading Assignment
12/17	American Political Culture	1
12/18	US Constitution	2, Appendix A
12/19	Federalism	3
12/20	Civil Liberties	4
12/21	Civil Rights	5
12/22	Exam 1	
12/23	Exam 1	
12/24	Public Opinion, The Media	6, 7
12/25	Political Participation	8
12/26	Political Parties	9
12/27	Campaigns and Elections	10
12/28	Interest Groups	11
12/29	Exam 2	
12/30	Exam 2	
12/31	Texas Political Culture	19
1/1	Texas Constitution	20
1/2	Texas Political Parties	21
1/3	Texas Interest Groups	22
1/4		
1/5	Exam 3	
1/6	Exam 3	

***** Please note that the instructor reserves the right to change any part of this syllabus as needed over the course of the semester. Any and all changes will be announced.**
