PSci 2301, Section 3: Principles of American and Texas Government

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Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.


**Learning Objectives:** The general purpose of this class is to expand the student’s understanding of American national government and Texas government. Specifically:

1. Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to understanding political behavior and interaction between citizens, institutions of government and the United States Constitution.

2. 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 Constitution of the State of Texas.

The expectation is that by the end of the course students will be prepared to be informed participants in the political processes of the United States and the State of Texas. It is also expected that students will gain an appreciation of the complexities of political questions and the absence of clear right and wrong answers to most contemporary issues and thus understand the importance of showing tolerance for points of view other than their own.

**Requirements:** Each student will be expected to:

1. Complete the assigned readings on time and come to class prepared to engage in class discussion.

2. Keep up with current issues and activities in American and Texas government and integrate this information into class activities. A good newspaper, such as the Dallas Morning News will help you do this. On television, CNN and MSNBC are the best sources.

3. Take four examinations during the semester and a comprehensive final exam at the end. The final exam will be optional for students who have taken all four of the previous exams and are satisfied with the grades they have earned prior to the final. All exams will be of equal value.
The grading scale for all exams will be:  
A= 90-100
B= 80 – 89
C= 70 - 79
D= 60- 69
F= 0 - 59

Student Responsibilities

1. Attend class regularly, be on time, and participate in class discussion.
2. Be present for all exams. There are no makeups for missed examinations, but the value of the final exam will be increased to compensate for a missed exam.
3. Do not leave the room during class except for emergencies and if you must leave class, take your books and other materials with you and do not return for the remainder of that class period.
4. Do not bring food or drinks to class.
5. Do not wear caps, hats, or other head coverings in class.
6. Use laptop computers only for taking notes and do not use cell phones during class.
7. Do not carry on private conversations during class.
8. Respect the political opinions of your classmates.
9. Each of you will be allowed two class absences without penalty. After two, each additional absence will result in a reduction of one point from your semester average.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. This guarantee requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation for their disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Resources and Services, Gee Library, room 132, 903-886-5835/5150.

Conferences

My office is in SS-147 and I will be there beginning at 12:00 noon on class days. If you need some special help or you just want to visit, come by at that time. If you need to talk with me but are unable to come at that time, check with me after class and we will make an appointment for another time.
I. Introduction to the Course

Jan 15: Basic Concepts – take notes.

Jan 17: Patterson and Halter, Chapter One, include the National Journal piece at the end of the chapter.

Jan 22: P&H, Chapter Two (plus NJ article)

Jan 24: P&H, Chapter Three

Jan 29: P&H, Chapter Four

Jan 31: P&H, Chapter 5

Feb 5: Exam 1 – bring a scantron sheet

II. Mass Politics

Feb 7: P&H, Chapter 6

Feb 12: P&H, Chapter 7

Feb 14: P&H, Chapter 8

Feb 19: P&H, Chapter 9

Feb 21: P&H, Chapter 10

Feb 26: Exam 2 – bring a scantron sheet

III. Government Institutions

Feb 28: P&H, Chapter 11

Mar 5: P&H, Chapter 12

Mar 7: P&H, Chapter 13

Mar 19: P&H, Chapter 14

IV. Texas Government

Mar 21: P&H, Chapter 18

Mar 26: P&H, Chapter 19

Mar 28: Exam 3 (covers chapters 11, 12, 13, 14 – bring a scantron sheet
Apr 2: P&H, Chapter 18
Apr 4: P&H, Chapter 19
Apr 9: P&H, Chapter 20
Apr 11: P&H, Chapter 21
Apr 16: P&H, Chapter 22
Apr 18: P&H, Chapter 23
Apr 23: P&H, Chapter 25

Apr 25: Exam 4 (chapters 18 through 25) – bring scantron sheet

V. Conclusion to the Course

May 2: Review
May 7: Review

Final Exam