

Political Science 2302: Section 02E
United States & Texas Government: Institutions & Policies
Spring Semester 2013

Instructor: Mr. Tim Houston
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COURSE INFORMATION

***Meeting Time**

Monday, Wednesday, & Friday from 12:00 PM to 12:50 PM.

***Required Texts:**

Collier, Ken; Steven Galatas; Julie Herrelson –Stephens. *Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation in Texas*. Second Edition. CQ Press: Washington, D.C. ISBN: 9781604266382

Lowi, Theodore J.; Benjamin Ginsberg; Kenneth A. Shepsle; Stephen Ansolabehere, *American Government: Power & Purpose*, Twelfth Edition, W.W. Norton: New York. ISBN: 9780393912074

United States Constitution, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html

Any additional materials, such as brief articles, videos, or primary documents, will be supplied by the instructor in class or through your university email.

***Course Description:**

This course is an examination of the United States and Texas political systems with emphases on both formal and informal institutions and the roles they play in the creation and implementation of public policy. Topics considered include: the legislative, executive, and judicial branches; bureaucracies; and public policies. This course will also examine the historical, social, political, cultural, and international forces the effect our political systems in the United States and in Texas.

***Student Learning Outcomes:**

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I. Attendance and Participation

Your attendance is strongly encouraged. Those who do not attend class regularly will not be able to participate in class discussions or benefit from the lecture material, which put them at a distinct disadvantage as compared to students who do attend regularly. As such, you cannot

expect to be absent often and pass this class. Frequent unexcused absences will not be tolerated, and such absences will result in penalties according to the following scale:

Absences		Penalty
0-3	=	No Deductions
4	=	3% Deduction in Final Grade
5	=	5% Deduction in Final Grade
6	=	10% Deduction in Final Grade
7 +	=	Automatic Failure of Course

If you are unable to attend a specific date please inform me beforehand or follow up with me about the circumstances involved! For an absence to be excused you will be required to provide documentation.

Student Athletes, band members, and other students involved in events officially sanctioned by the university: If you miss a date for a university sanctioned event you must provide me a letter from your advisor, coach, or director before you leave for the event. Failure to do so will result in the absence being counted as unexcused.

For the purposes of keeping attendance roll sheets, or a roll call, will be used to keep track of your attendance at each class. Make sure you sign in before you leave, or you will be counted absent. If you are not present at the time a roll call is done or you do not respond during the roll call, you will be counted absent for that day.

Collusion by students to cheat on their attendance grade by misrepresenting or falsely claiming their attendance by any means will not be tolerated. Those students found to be involved in any such acts will be subject to the Academic Dishonesty section of this syllabus. This will result at minimum the forfeiture of all Attendance & Participation points.

Students will be responsible for reading the assigned portions of the text, as this will assist in your understanding of concepts and prepare you to participate in the lecture and discussion of the material. Reading of materials will be considered in your attendance grade.

Students must access a news source daily before coming to class to keep up with current events. As politics and the world are ever changing it is important that you keep up to date with the most current event occurring in our state, nation, and world.

In order to fully participate in this class all students are encouraged to ask questions about the material or of issues they do not understand. It is also useful for class discussion and debate if you speak up and give your thoughts on the material and the events, people, and places discussed. Your contributions will develop the discussion in an invaluable way and improve the learning experience for all.

The Attendance and Participation portion of your grade is worth 10% and will be based upon the following grading rubric:

- A = Always present and prepared; speaks frequently
- B = Rarely absent; always prepared when present; speaks frequently
- C = Rarely absent; usually prepared; rarely speaks
- D = Often unprepared; several absences
- F = Usually unprepared; frequent absences

II. Assessments

1. Exams

There will be three exams, which shall consist of two mid-terms and a final. Prior to each exam I will tell you what types of questions to expect, i.e. multiple choice, essay etc. If you have any questions regarding the exam format please ask them. Each exam is intended to ensure that you have grasped the concepts from the lectures, readings, and discussions. Students who will be absent on an exam date can make up the exam at a later date, but only at the end of the semester and only for one of the midterm exams.

2. Quizzes

From time to time, quizzes may be given to ensure that the class has read and understood the concepts mentioned in the assigned material. These quizzes may be announced or unannounced, and shall be given at the instructor's discretion. Quiz grades may also come in the form of a written assignment and the form of that assignment shall be at the instructor's discretion. Quizzes may also look to see how well students are keeping up with current events.

3. Electoral Issues Group Presentation

Students will complete a group presentation that focuses on a specific national issue. Groups will consist of two students. Each group will have a different issue, so make sure you find one and sign up for it before that issue is taken. All information used from your research must be factual, but some intelligent, researched conjecture will be allowed on the issues presented. Each issue should be broken down by history, how our leaders (past & present) weigh in on it, and what the opposing viewpoints are (if any). The only issues groups may select are those that take place in U.S. national politics, but may also include international political issues that involve the U.S. If you need help narrowing your topic please see me.

I encourage everyone to make use of the internet, the library, articles, books, etc. As with anything, be careful when researching because not all information is factual or correct. Make sure that sources are from a reputable website, or author. If you are unsure of a source contact me about it. If you have any further questions about the assignment see me about them.

Everyone should take part in each portion of the presentation. Topic selection, research, writing, the assembling of visual aids, and verbal presentation of your research are the factors that contribute to your final grade. Though certain students will have strengths at one or more of these areas each student should participate in them all equally. Please be aware that students within your group will grade your performance on each part, which will affect your grade to some extent on the assignment. Each group will have eight (8) minutes to present.

III. Course Grading Rubric

<u>Exams (60%)</u>	<u>3 @ 20% each</u>
<u>Quizzes</u>	<u>15%</u>
<u>Group Presentations</u>	<u>15%</u>
<u>Attendance & Participation</u>	<u>10%</u>

The grading scale used for this course is as follows:

90-100%	=	A
80-89%	=	B
70-79%	=	C
65-69%	=	D
64% or less	=	F

NOTE:
All assignments must be completed to pass this course!
There will be no Extra Credit Assignments!

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS, ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

***Microsoft Office Word:**

You will need access to a computer equipped with Microsoft Office Word. If you do not have it readily available on a computer of your own, please make use of our library computer lab or purchase a copy of the program. You can find a copy of the program at discount rate here:

<http://www.microsoft.com/student/office/en-us/default.aspx>.

***University Email:**

Be sure that you can access the email account the university has on record for you. It is the primary means by which I will communicate with you.

***eCollege:**

Please make sure you have access to eCollege. This service will be used to disseminate documents and to post grades on assignments so that you have the most up to date calculations on your current grade in the course.

Because this is a web-enhanced course, all students must meet the following technology requirements to successfully complete this course.

1. Regular access to a good quality computer
2. Regular, high-quality Internet access, specifically, a high-speed internet connection, not dial-up or a cellular phone. Students should use the eCollege tutorial to test the quality and speed of their browser and ensure that it is compatible with the system.
3. Students will need access to an Internet browser such as Internet Explorer.
Access and Navigation

Student will access the web-enhanced portion of this course using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. Students can access their online courses through the myLeo portal or directly from the URL <http://online.tamuc.edu>. In order to login, students will need both their CWID and password to access the myLeo site. If you do not know what your CWID or password is, please contact Technology Services at 903-468-6000 or by e-mail, helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

***eCollege Student Technical Support:**

Technical support for eCollege is provided around the clock (24 hours a day/7 days a week) so if students experience technical issues with the class page itself they should contact the student help desk for assistance. Students can access support through one of three following methods:

1. Chat support: Students can access real-time chat support from within the course page by clicking on "Tech Support" in the tool bar and then clicking on "Chat Online."
2. Phone: Students can access phone support by calling the toll free phone number for eCollege, 1-866-656-5511.
3. E- mail: Student can request assistance by e-mail eCollege directly at helpdesk@online.tamuc.org. Please note that you might not receive a response for 24 hours if you use the e-mail option.

- eCollege also has extensive help files available. These can be accessed by clicking the 'Help' button on the toolbar.

***Internet:**

You will need access to high-speed internet to review the United States Constitution, access email, eCollege, and research certain topics.

***News Source**

All students are required to have access to some form of media to keep up with current events.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Please stop by during my office hours should you need to speak with me. If I am out of the office please send me an email or leave a message at the Department of Political Science's Main Office at SS 152. I am also happy to meet with any student who wishes to see me in person, but cannot make my office hours. Simply email or call and we will set up a time that is mutually acceptable for us to meet. My contact details are at the beginning of the syllabus.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES
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***Cell Phones, Laptops, Tablets, and Other Electronic Devices**

All cell phones, laptops, tablets, pagers, iPods, MP3 Players, or other electronic devices are to be turned off! Headphones, or similar products, cannot be worn during class. Please respect both your classmates and me, refrain from using an electronic devices that cause disturbances. If you use these devices the instructor reserves the right to dismiss you from the remainder of the class lecture. Remember, you are in class to learn. In addition, if anyone is caught using any of said devices there will be an immediate pop quiz for the entire class. The contents of the questions on the pop quiz will be at the sole discretion of the instructor.

***Slacker Clause**

You will find, if you have not done so already, that taking university courses and making time for life within the context of work, family, and our other daily issues is difficult to manage. However, to that end a person must learn to effectively manage their time for leisure, work, and family while also making room for their class assignments. In an effort to reinforce that idea, and ensure that you receive a quality learning experience in this course, all assignments that you receive during the time of this course must be completed. If you fail to complete one or more assignments, you will automatically fail this course.

***Make-Up Policy**

I understand that sometimes there are extenuating circumstances that prevent our being in class. However, the acceptance of late papers, or the allowance of make-up quizzes, shall be at the sole discretion of the instructor. There will be an assigned day at the end of the semester where students may make-up one missed midterm exam. Though this date exists, only students who have a legitimate excuse can make up an exam and those students wishing to make up the exam must make their request to do so via an email request to my stated university email on this syllabus. A make-up exam will consist strictly of essay questions. Do not miss both exams as only one exam may be taken on this day. Electoral Issues Group Presentations cannot be made up; your attendance is required on the day your group goes.

***Instructor's Rights**

As instructor, I reserve the right to amend and/or modify this syllabus.

***Classroom Behavior & Student Conduct**

All students are expected to observe basic tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct). Violation of the conduct policy will not be tolerated.

***Academic Dishonesty**

-Definition-

In all courses, it is expected that all work that you do and turn in is your own. It is the policy of the University and me that no form of plagiarism, cheating, collusion or any other form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as deliberately taking the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as your own. Cheating is obtaining unauthorized assistance on any assignment. Collusion is the selling of academic products with the intention that they be submitted to satisfy an academic requirement. Students are expected to uphold and support the highest academic standards at all times.

-Punishment-

Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty will automatically fail the assignment in question, and the grade cannot be made up. The student's academic advisor and/or academic major department head will also be notified of any such infraction. With regard to the severity of the infraction, the instructor reserves the right to fail from the course any student caught plagiarizing or cheating. Such students will also be subject to disciplinary action by the University (See Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3]). If you are still unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please ask me before committing this error in judgment.

***Writing Center**

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources of the Writing Center for assistance with drafting their papers. The Writing Center is a resource that you pay for, so if you need assistance use it. They will not write your paper, but they will help you improve your writing skills. If you use the Writing Center, please plan ahead as they can only help you if you see them in advance and you have time to incorporate their suggestions into your final paper. More information can be found at <http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/litlang/CSC/>.

***ADA Statement**

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 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu
[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

The following outline is a tentative schedule for our readings; all due dates and exam dates will remain intact, barring an occurrence beyond our control.

Introductions

January 14

Course Introduction

The Constitution

January 16-18

United States Constitution (USC) Articles I, II, and III

NO CLASS

January 21

MLK Holiday

The Constitution Continued

January 23-28

USC Articles IV – VII and USC Amendments 1-27

The Legislative Branch: United States Congress

January 30 – February 8

Lowi Chapter 6, All

The Executive Branch: United States Presidency and Bureaucracy

February 11-20

Lowi Chapter 7, All

Lowi Chapter 8, All

February 22 – Exam #1

The Judicial Branch: United States Federal Courts

February 25 – March 4

Lowi Chapter 9, All

Select Court Documents

The Texas Legislature

March 6-8

Collier Chapter 3, All

NO CLASS

March 11-15

Spring Break

The Texas Governor and Bureaucracy

March 18-20

Collier Chapter 4, All

The Texas Judicial System

March 22-25

Collier Chapter 5, All

Texas Local Government

March 27

Special Presentation on Local Governance

Texas State Policymaking

March 29 – April 1

Collier Chapter 9, All

April 3 – Exam #2

U.S. Economic Policy

April 5-10

Lowi Chapter 15, All

Library Research Day

April 12

Research Information and Finish Your Group Presentations

Electoral Issues Group Presentations

April 15-19

Present Your Research

U.S. Social Policy

April 22-24

Lowi Chapter 16, All

U.S. Foreign Policy

April 26 – May 1

Lowi Chapter 17, All

May 3 – EXAM MAKE-UP DAY

FINAL EXAM (#3)

Wednesday, May 8, 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM

**Political Science 2302
United States & Texas Government:
Institutions & Policies**

Spring Semester 2013

Mr. Tim Houston

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 or bring upon me some other corrective measure at the discretion of the professor. I understand that I am bound by the requirements listed therein.

Student's Signature:

Student's CWID:

X _____

Date: _____