Texas A&M University – Commerce

PSCI 2302.02W United States and Texas Government: Institutions and Policies
SPRING 2013 - ONLINE

Instructor Information
Leighann Temple
Adjunct Faculty – Political Science Department
Email: cornilia.temple@tamuc.edu

Course Description:
This course is an examination of the United States and Texas political systems with emphasis in 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 (formulation and implementation).

Learning objectives:

1. To learn the key features of American and Texas political institutions, behaviors and the interaction between citizens and the institutions of government.

2. To understand the history of federal and state government institutions and their constitutional underpinnings.

3. To understand the various forms of political behavior and participation with national and state government.

4. To promote comparative analysis between government and politics at the national level and local levels, highlighting similarities and differences between them, with special attention to comparisons between national government and Texas government.

Required Textbooks and Materials

The required text is *We The People, 8th Texas Edition by* Lowi, Ginsberg, Weir. ISBN – 9780393935257. While there are earlier editions of this text available, this is the officially required edition. If you would like an alternative option to purchasing a hardcopy of the textbook, there is an online version of the text which can be purchased from the publisher's website for a fraction of the cost. This version can be purchased at
www.wwnorton.com/nortonebooks

Course Requirements

All students are required to meet the following expectations:

1. Students are expected to complete all course readings as assigned for each section of the class. The assigned reading schedule is attached below and will be posted in the weekly schedule found on the course homepage through eCollege.
2. Students are expected to access the course on a regular basis. You are responsible for checking the course for any announcements, updates, and changes that may be made throughout the semester.
3. Students are expected to complete all of the elements listed under **Grading and Evaluation** including Midterm Exams, Discussions, and Assignments.
4. Students are expected to be active on discussion boards and are required to participate.
5. Students are to be respectful in any and all correspondence for the course. Please use courtesy and respect when posting in any areas of the course such as the Discussion Boards and Student Lounge. Please refer to the Student Guidebook for more information on this subject.
6. Students are expected to use academic honesty and maintain the highest level of personal responsibility. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated! Please see the **Student Conduct & Discipline section** below for a detailed description on this subject and what is considered as academic dishonesty in this class. ***Any acts of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for that assignment and cannot be made up.

Grading and Evaluation
Examinations: 75 percent. There will be three required midterm exams. All exams will include material from both the textbook and lecture. The scheduled dates for the exams are listed below and will be posted within the course. Each exam will be worth 25% and will count for 1/3 of your final grade. Details of each exam will be provided to you prior to taking the exam.

Discussion Assignments: 15 percent. Students will be required to participate in discussion threads on a weekly basis. The instructor will post the topics for weekly discussions which will focus on that week's assigned reading. Each student will be required to post one response and respond to three of their fellow classmate's responses. More information regarding discussion assignments is listed below.

Writing Assignments: 10 percent. There will be two library assignments that students will be required to complete. These assignments will be assigned throughout the course and will have a specific due date which will be made available to you in advance. NO late assignments will be accepted. The assignments will be posted and instructions will be provided to you. Please do not ask for the assignments in advance.

Grading Schedule
Final grades will be based on a 100-point scale, using the following conversion.
A: 100-90 B: 89-80 C: 79-70 D: 69-65 F: Below 65

Midterm Exams
Students are required to take three midterm exams. These exams will be taken on-line and will have a 60 minute time limit. Each exam will be open for 48 hours and can only be accessed once.

- Midterm Exam One – Opens Thursday, February 14th at 11:59 p.m. and closes Saturday, February 16th at 11:59 p.m.
  - will cover Chapters 1,2,12,19, 20, 23, and Appendix Readings
- Midterm Exam Two – Opens Thursday, April 4th at 11:59 p.m. and closes Saturday April 6th at 11:59 p.m.
  - will cover Chapters 13,14,15,24,25,26
- Midterm Exam Three – Opens Wednesday May 1st at 11:59 p.m. and closes Friday, May 3rd. ***Because exam three is a midterm, it will open on Wednesday so that it can be completed by the last class day of classes.
  - will cover Chapters 16,17,18,27

Technical Issues
Students are required to take three midterm exams, which will be accessed through the course page. 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 accessed once. Exams cannot be paused once it has begun even if there is a sudden disconnection. Students are given the option to "Save Answers" and should do so frequently. Students should not click the "Submit Test" button until the exam has been completed. Once the student clicks the "Submit Test" the exam will be closed and cannot be re-entered. Any technical problems that occur while taking the exam should be immediately referred to the help desk. Students who encounter technical problems as a result of failing to comply with these guidelines will not be given an opportunity re-take or re-access an exam.

Discussion Assignments
There will be 15 weekly discussions. Each week, the instructor will post a topic for the discussion assignments on Monday at 10:00 a.m. Each discussion thread will be open until Sunday of that week and will close at 10:00 p.m. The only exception to this schedule is the first week of class where the discussion will open at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday and will close at 10:00 p.m. on Sunday. We will not have a discussion the week of Spring Break. Students are given ample time to participate in discussion assignments and therefore there will be no make-up opportunities if for any reason the student fails to participate. No credit will be given for posts made after the deadline.

Each student is required to respond to the topic and is required to respond to three other posts made by other students. Each post should answer all parts of the topic in a clear and coherent manner. When responding to other members of the course, students should provide thoughtful discussion that will help stimulate conversation. It is not sufficient to simply agree or disagree with the post; the student must provide an educated response.

The student will be graded based upon the quality and content of their original response to the topic posted as well as those posted in response to other students. Posts that do not fully answer the questions or respond to other posts will not receive full credit. Each discussion assignment will be graded on a scale from 1-3, with 3 being the highest. Students who fail to participate will receive a 0 and cannot be made up.

Students must be conscious of the academic dishonesty as discussed in the Student Conduct and Discipline section below when content is submitted for Discussion Assignments. All content that is submitted should be the student's original work. Any material taken from another source, including the textbook, should include a proper citation. Material which is copied or paste from any source will be considered plagiarism and as a result the student will not receive credit for ALL Discussion Assignments.

Additional Course & Instructor Policies

Make-up exams: No individual make-up examinations will be given. If a student misses an 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 submitted in writing, not e-mail, 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. Legitimate reasons may include illness severe enough to require professional treatment, death in the immediate family, participation in official University activities and legal obligations. *Please note, these reasons do not guarantee that a make-up exam will be given.* Should you be allowed to take the make-up exam, it will be a cumulative examination that will be given during the last scheduled week of class for the semester.

Extra Credit: There is no extra credit in this class so please do not ask about it. At times, you may be given the opportunity to receive extra points on exams. These will be given at the instructor's discretion and are not a guarantee.

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.

I expect all students to maintain the highest level of personal responsibility and academic honesty which is discussed in Texas A&M University-Commerce Procedures A13.12 Academic Honesty. "Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material."

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. Any attempts to pass off work as your own that was written by another individual, without proper citation or attribution, on any assignment or exam in this course will be considered an act of plagiarism. Any and all instances of academic dishonesty will be referred to the appropriate offices on campus and may result in significant penalties.

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

NOTE: 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.

Reading Assignments and Examination Calendar

Week	Dates	Topics	Assigned Chapter Readings
1	Jan 14-Jan 18	American Political Culture	1
		The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas	19
2	Jan 21-Jan 25	The Founding and the Constitution	2
3	Jan 28-Feb 1	The Constitution	A1-A24
		The Texas Constitution	20
4	Feb 4-Feb 8	Congress	12
5	Feb 11-Feb 15	The Texas Legislature	23
6	Feb 18-Feb22	The Presidency	13
7	Feb 25-Mar 1	The Texas Executive Branch	24
8	Mar 4-Mar 8	Bureaucracy in a Democracy	14
9	Mar 18-Mar 22	Local Government in Texas	26
10	Mar 25-Mar 29	The Federal Courts	15
11	Apr 1 – Apr 5	The Texas Judiciary	25
12	Apr 8-Apr 12	Economic Policy	16
13	Apr 15-Apr 19	Social Policy	17
14	Apr 22- Apr 26	Public Policy on Texas	27
15	Apr 29-May 3	Foreign Policy	18

* The instructor reserves the right to amend the reading assignments and examination calendar as needed over the course of the semester. Any and all changes will be announced.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Technology: Please take the "Student Orientational Tutorial" linked to your main courses page within eCollege that you should have completed prior to beginning this course. In addition to reliable web service on a daily basis for your online sessions, you also need access to Microsoft Word or to word processing software that you can save files in "Microsoft Word" compatible style.

You also need a reliable place to save and keep copies of your coursework files for storage and reference.

You also need the following to use technology successfully in this course.
- Internet access/connection – high speed recommended (not dial-up)
- Internet browser software (Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox work best)
- Word Processor (MS Word)

Additionally, the following hardware and software are necessary to use eCollege:

Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, or 8.0).

It is strongly recommended that you perform a "Browser Test" prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login in to eCollege, click on the 'myCourses' tab, and then select the "Browser Test" link under Support Services.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

This course used eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: https://leo.tamu-commerce.edu/login.aspx. You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamu-commerce.edu.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT
Email is the very best way to reach me. In every email, please make sure to provide your full name at the end, which course you are enrolled in, and a description of your request. I will communicate with you through the email address you have on file in MyLeo (make sure yours is up to date and working throughout the semester) and eCollege announcements. In all forms of class communication including all online forums, students are expected and required to maintain a respectful tone and use semiformal to formal language.

eCollege Student Technical Support
Texas A&M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of eCollege. The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Chat Support: Click on *'Live Support'* on the tool bar within your course to chat with an eCollege Representative.

Phone: 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with eCollege Technical Support Representative.

Email: helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with eCollege Technical Support Representative.

Help: Click on the *'Help'* button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege

Technological Failure: "If at any time you experience technical problems (e.g., you can't log in to the course, you can't see certain material, etc.) please contact the eCollege HelpDesk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The HelpDesk can be reached by clicking on the HelpDesk link in the Help pages as described above, or by sending an email directly to helpdesk@online.tamuc.org. You may also reach the HelpDesk by calling (toll-free) 1-866-656-5511." This information is also available through the "Technical Support" tab on the course main menu. Course instructors are not responsible for technical failures and should only be notified in cases of repeated failure or lack of response by the HelpDesk.