

Political Science 2301
Principles of U.S. and Texas Government

Section 4
11:00—12:15 TTh

Professor Information:

Dr. Jeffrey C. Herndon
Ferguson Social Science Building, 160
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*, 2nd edition. W.W. Norton and Company.

ISBN: 978-0-393-92110-6

Ginsberg, Benjamin, et.al., *We the People: An Introduction to American Politics*, 9th essentials edition. W.W. Norton and Co.

ISBN: 978-0-073-37914-2

Halter, Gary M. *Government and Politics of Texas*, 8th 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. Critical Thinking—Students will be able to differentiate between fact and opinion.
2. Communications—Student Communication will be clear, purposeful, and make appropriate use of evidence, data and technology as applicable.
3. Personal Responsibility—Students will be able to understand their role in their own education.
4. Social Responsibility—Students will demonstrate awareness of societal and/or civic issues.

The following 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.

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 will have ten points deducted from their final grade for each absence over three. You may use your three absences for any purpose you choose—the only exception is on exam days when you must be present. If 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.

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 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 two hours 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 Three: | 100 points |
| Exam Two: | 100 points | Quizzes/Reaction papers: | 100 points |
| Exam Three: | 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 27: Introduction to the Course

Thinking About “Politics”

August 29: Plato, “Allegory of the Cave”

September 3: selections from Aristotle’s *Politics*

September 5: selections from John Locke’s *Second Treatise of Government*

The Colonial Experience and the Development of American Constitutionalism

September 10: Mayflower Compact, The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut

September 12: The Declaration of Independence

September 17: John Adams, “Thoughts on Government”

September 19: Articles of Confederation

September 24: Review for Examination One

September 26: Examination One (Ginsberg, Chapter 1; Halter, Chapter 1)

Constructing a New Order for the Ages

October 1: The Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan

October 3: The Constitution of the United States

Deliberation and Choice

October 8: Publius and the Problem of Self-Government with Justice (*The Federalist* 10)

October 10: The Republican Solution

October 15: Theories of Representation (readings from *The Federalist*; Edmund Burke, “Speech to the Electors of Bristol”)

October 17: The Development of Law (selection from Aristotle’s *Politics*, Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”)

October 22: Abraham Lincoln and the Transformation of American Politics (Abraham Lincoln, “The Gettysburg Address”)

October 24: Framing the Regime: Structural Characteristics of the U.S. Constitution (*The Federalist* 51)

October 29: Framing the Regime, continued.

October 31: Examination Two (Ginsberg, Chapters 2 and 3; Halter, Chapters 2 and 4)

The Judiciary

November 5: The Judiciary: The Structure of the U.S. Court System

November 7: Principles of Statutory Interpretation

November 12: Judicial Power and the Role of the Courts (*The Federalist* 78; Marbury v. Madison)

Politics in the United States

November 14: Political Parties in the United States (Ginsberg, Chapter 7)
November 19: Media and Public Opinion
November 21: Pluralism and the Politics of Interest (Ginsberg, Chapter 8)

Texas

November 26: The Development of the Texas Constitution
December 3: Texas Politics

Back to the Beginning

December 5: Prospects for the American Republic (George Washington, “Farewell Address)

December 10: 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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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. I understand that failure to do so could result in my being dropped from the course at the discretion of the professor.

X _____

Date: _____