

**Political Science 2302**  
**United States & Texas Government: Institutions & Policies**  
**Spring 2014**

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Office Hours: M & W 11am-12pm & 1-3pm, or by appointment

**Required Texts**

Collier, Ken; Steven Galatas; Julie Jerrelson-Stephens. *Lone Star Politics; Traditions and Transformations in Texas*. Second Edition. CQ Press; Washington, D.C.  
ISBN 9781604266382

Patterson, Thomas. *We the People*. Tenth Edition. McGraw-Hill; New York.  
ISBN 9780393912074

Woodworth, James R.; W. Robert Gump; James R. Forrester. *Camelot: A Role Playing Simulation of Political Decision Making*. Fifth Edition. Cengage Learning; Stamford, CT.  
ISBN 9780534602796

*United States Constitution*: [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html)

*The Bill of Rights*: [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill\\_of\\_rights.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights.html)

\*Additional materials may be used throughout the semester at the discretion of the instructor. These will be provided for you either as a hard copy or through your university email. You will also need access to media and a source of current events, as these will be discussed throughout the semester.

**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.

**\*\*The instructor reserves the right to amend the syllabus and course schedule as needed\*\***

### **Attendance Policy**

You are expected to attend class regularly. A roll sheet will be provided during specific class sessions; you are expected to keep track of signing in. If there is no signature on the class roll, you will not be given credit for attendance that day. Cheating will not be tolerated under any circumstances, so do not sign in for your neighbor. Anyone caught falsifying a roll call sheet will be reported under university guidelines for Academic Dishonesty. Excessive absences (6 or more) will result in a failing grade for the course.

**Quizzes cannot be made up.** If you are absent on the day a quiz is given, the grade will be zero. It is a small percentage of your grade, but it can make a difference. This is another important reason to make the effort to attend class.

\*If you will be attending a university sanctioned event, you must inform me **before** your anticipated absence, or the absence will count against you.

### **If you miss an exam:**

I understand that things happen in life that are unforeseen and beyond our control. To that end I will consider legitimate excuses for missing an exam, **only under extraordinary circumstances that made it impossible for you to attend**. In order to be considered for a make-up exam, you will be required to submit a request in writing, with supporting documents for your absence. Only one exam can be made up. **Make-up exams are comprehensive** and will be given during finals week.

## Grading Policy

The following format will be used to determine grades in this course.

Assignment:	Percentage of final grade:
Exams (2)	<b>60%</b>
Camelot Simulation (total)	<b>30%</b>
Pre-simulation paper	(10%)
Post-simulation paper	(10%)
Participation	(10%)
Quizzes/Short Essays	<b>10%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Exams:

There will be two exams in this course; a mid-term and a final. Together they will comprise 60% of your final grade. They may be in any format including but not limited to multiple choice, short answers and essays. The format of each one will be given to you prior to that exam. **Tardiness for exams will not be tolerated. The classroom door will be locked at the beginning of class on exam days. Those arriving late will not be allowed in.**

### Camelot Simulation:

*Camelot* is a role-playing simulation in which you will be introduced to participating in the process of local government through a series of city council meetings. The simulation will take place over a period of about three weeks, and each of you will be assigned to a role in the community of Camelot. A successful simulation is entirely dependent on active participation. It can be an excellent learning experience if taken seriously, and most of all it can be a lot of fun if everyone plays their part. The goal is to provide you with a real-world understanding of the complexity and challenges in the political decision-making process, and to introduce you to the workings of city government.

There are three components to be graded during the simulation, worth a total of 30% of your final grade:

- Pre-simulation position paper – 10%: description of the role you will be playing and the philosophy of your character
- Post-simulation assessment paper – 10%: summary of your experience and what you learned through the process.

- Participation – 10%: presence in class is imperative during this time, and **more than two absences will result in a zero** for the participation grade.

As the semester progresses, handouts will be given with specifics for the written assignments and further details about the simulation.

### **Quizzes/Short Essays:**

Pop quizzes will periodically be given in class. These can be over the lectures, required reading, or current events. **Pop quizzes are by nature unannounced.** Various short essays may also be assigned throughout the semester at my discretion. Both quizzes and writing assignments will be graded on a scale of 10 points, and the average will comprise 10% of your final grade.

The percentage scale for final grades are as follows:

**A** 90-100%; **B** 80-90%; **C** 70-80%; **D** 60-70%; **F** Below 60%

### **Note-Taking Policy:**

To be successful in this course, it is imperative that you take consistent and thorough notes during lectures. If you are absent for any reason and miss a lecture, it is up to you to acquire the notes from a fellow student, as **they will not be available from your instructor.**

### **Technology Policies**

**The use of electronic devices is prohibited in this classroom.** This includes but is not limited to cell phones, laptops, ipads, mp3 players, or recording devices. **If you are caught using one of these items in class, you will be asked to leave. A cell phone ringing in class will result in an instant pop quiz for the entire class, on any topic of my choosing.**

### **Conduct**

“All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” This means that we need to respect our fellow classmates and treat one another with kindness. Occasionally we may find ourselves engaged in discussions over controversial subject matter. I expect every member of this class to conduct themselves

in a respectful and appropriate manner. **Disrespect or disruption of the class will not be tolerated, and excessive behavior will result in ejection from the classroom.**

### **Academic Dishonesty**

As members of this university, students are expected to demonstrate the highest levels of academic integrity as 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."

Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

**If you are unsure of what may constitute academic dishonesty, please consult me before submitting the assignment in question.**

### **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@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

## **Course Schedule:**

**Week 1;** January 13-17

*Introduction to Political Science, Founding Principles, Relationship of Federal and State Systems*

**Week 2;** January 20-24

*The Constitution*

**Week 3;** January 27-31

*The Legislative Branch: Congress*

**Week 4;** February 3-7

*The Executive Branch: Presidency & Bureaucracy*

**Week 5;** February 10-14

*The Judicial Branch: Supreme Court and Bill of Rights*

**Week 6;** February 17-21

*Bill of Rights, cont.*

**Week 7;** February 24-28

*Review: **Mid-Term Exam***

**Week 8;** March 3-7

*Social Policy*

**Week 9;** March 17-21

*Economic Policy*

**Week 10;** March 24-28

*Foreign Policy*

**Week 11;** March 31-April 4

*Texas: Local Government Structure & Policy*

**Week 12;** April 7-11

*Camelot Simulation*

**Week 13;** April 14-18

*Camelot Simulation*

**Week 14;** April 21-25

*Camelot Simulation*

**Week 15;** April 28-May 2

*Review*