



Course Syllabus

PSCI 2302 01W

United States and Texas Government: Institutions and Politics

Summer I 2014

Instructor: Dr. Chad M. King

Virtual Office Hours: T 9-11 AM

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COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required

We the People, Texas Edition

Authors: Lowi, Ginsberg, Weir

Publisher: W.W. Norton

Edition: 9th Texas Edition

You should be able to purchase this book from the bookstore or your favorite on-line merchant. Please note there is also an on-line version of the text available from the publishers that is significantly cheaper.

Course Description

This course is an examination of the United States and Texas political systems with emphasis on both political 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.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course students will be able to

- 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.
- 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

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

The primary method of instruction in this class will be student self-directed readings supplemented with interaction with classmates in discussion assignments as well as the instructor when needed.

Course grades will be based upon the following components.

Exams

Students will take three midterm exams. All exams will include material from the textbook and the scheduled dates for the exams are listed below. These exams will feature 50 multiple choice questions. Exam One will cover Chapters 1, 2, 12, 13, 14 and Appendix Readings. Exam Two will cover Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18. Exam Three will cover Chapters 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.

Discussion Assignments

Students will be required to participate in a total of 6 class discussion assignments that focus on the assigned readings. This is the second graded component of the course and will consist of 6 discussion assignments. Topics for the discussion assignments will be posted on the dates listed below at 9 AM and close 60 hours later at 9 PM. Regardless of the reason, there will be no make-up opportunities for discussion assignments and students will not receive any credit for posts made after the deadline.

Each student will randomly be assigned to a discussion group for the duration of the course. The instructor will create a discussion thread topic for each discussion group to which students are expected to compile responses.

Students will be graded upon two criteria. First, students are expected to submit an original response to the topic posted, answering all parts of the topic. Second, students are expected to respond to the posts of other students in their discussion group. Students should engage in conversation with their group members in a thoughtful discussion about the topic as well as their

individual responses to the topic. Students should make a minimum of 5 posts per assignment and these posts should not be made all on the same day or during the final hours of the assignment time line.

Students will receive a grade of between a .5 through a 3 being the highest, on each discussion assignment. (Students who do not participate will receive a 0) Grades will be based both upon the quality of the content of a student's posts, as well as the student's engagement with other students by responding to posts in the student's group. Posts that do not fully answer the questions or do not make a minimum of 5 posts will not receive full credit. . Students who wait until the end of the time frame may receive a grade penalty.

All content submitted for Discussion Assignments must be a student's original submission. Any material taken from another source, including the textbook, should include a proper citation. Material which is copied or pasted from any source will be considered plagiarism as discussed above in the Course Policies and Procedures section. Effectively, students who do not follow the proper citation/attribution requirements listed above will receive a 0 for all of the discussion assignments.

The Discussion Assignment average will be a ratio of the number of points earned on each assignment divided by 18 (3 points X 6 assignments)

Extra Credit "Syllabus "Quiz"

Students can earn up to a 3 bonus points toward their final average by taking a syllabus quiz. This quiz is designed to ensure that students familiarize themselves with the requirements and expectations of the syllabus.

GRADING

Course grades will be based upon the following breakdown.

Final Grade Breakdown

Midterm One	28%
Midterm Two	28%
Midterm Three	28%
Discussion Average	16%
Final Grade	100%

Grading Scale

Final grades will be based on a 100-point scale, using the following letter/number conversion.

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	65-69
F	Below 65

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

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

- Regular access to a good quality computer
- Regular, high-quality Internet access, specifically, a high-speed internet connection, not dial-up or a cellular phone.
- Students will need access to an Internet browser such as Internet Explorer.
Note that is the student's responsibility to ensure they meet these requirements. Aside from when the eCollege system is down, technical issues will not be accepted as a reason for failing to complete any course work.

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).

Your courses will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.

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

eCollege Access and Log in Information

This course will be facilitated using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: <https://leo.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.

Course Navigation

All course assignments and requirements will be delivered and completed through eCollege. All grades and any comments on submitted assignments will be made available in the Gradebook in eCollege.

This course is not a self-paced class. Students will need to follow the timelines and calendars included below to ensure that they complete the exams, discussion assignments, and extra credit opportunity in a timely manner. The exams will be found under the module labeled “Exam”; discussion assignments will be found under the module labeled “Discussions” and the extra credit assignment is located under the “Course Home” module. Students should become familiarize with the scheduled times and dates for all of these requirements.

Exam Technical Issues: Students will take three midterm exams via the course site. 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 taken once. Once the exam has begun, the allotted time will begin counting down and students will not be able to "pause" or put the exam time on hold, even if they disconnect from the course site or exam. Students should save their answers frequently by clicking on the “Save Answers” button. Students should not click the “Submit Test” button until they have completed the exam as it will not be possible to re-enter the exam once the test has been submitted. Students who encounter technical problems as a result of failing to comply with these guidelines will not be given an opportunity to re-take or re-access an exam. Any technical problems should be immediately referred to the help desk.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Students should rely upon e-mail and reading class announcements as the primary means of communication with me. I will use both means to announce any changes to the course syllabus or other relevant information. Also, please note that the system will only send e-mail to your official University Email address, so you will need to check that account regularly. Because this

is a completely online class, I will try to e-mail you as soon as I can. From M-F you can expect a reply, at the latest within 24 hours.

Office Hours

Because this class is offered online, office hours will be held online. Some weeks I will be in my campus office during the posted office hours, but I will always be available virtually during the posted times. If students need to discuss an issue with me during that time, they should make arrangements by e-mail to setup a time to either use the “Live” chat option on the course page, to see if I will physically be in my office or for me to call on the phone.

Virtual Office

The Virtual Office, found in the Course Home module is a discussion thread that provides students an opportunity to post questions or concerns that might be useful for the entire class to see. While other students may attempt to help answer your question, please check back for my answer as well, which will always be provided within 24 hours during the week.

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:

- 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."
- Phone: Students can access phone support by calling the toll free phone number for eCollege, 1-866-656-5511.
- 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.
- Help: Click on the '*Help*' button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege (i.e. how to submit to dropbox, and how to post to discussions, etc.)

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures

All students are expected to comply with the following requirements.

1. Students are expected to complete all course readings for each section of the course.
2. Students are expected to regularly check the course site for announcement and updates.
3. Students are expected to take each of the scheduled Midterm Exams.
4. Students are expected to participate fully in the class discussion assignments.

5. Students are expected to respect their fellow classmates and the instructor. This includes treating everyone with courtesy and esteem in any and all correspondence for the course. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.
6. Texas A&M University-Commerce does not tolerate **plagiarism** and other forms of academic **dishonesty**. Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. "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. For this class, academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic work. In particular, passing off work as your own that was written by someone else, without proper citation or attribution, on either exams or discussion assignments will be considered an act of plagiarism. This holds true whether material comes from the textbook, another publication, an internet source, or another student. Any act of academic dishonesty on a midterm exam or quiz will result in a score of 0 for the exam or quiz. Any act of academic dishonesty on a discussion assignment will result in a 0 for the entire semester's discussion assignment grade. Instances of academic dishonesty may also be referred to the appropriate offices on campus and may result in significant administrative penalties.
7. Failure to complete more than 2 discussion assignments will be considered "excessive" absenteeism and the student will be administratively dropped from the class.
8. Students will comply with any and all eCollege technical requirements in terms of training, computer access, & Internet access.
9. Make-up exams: 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 made in writing 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 University activities, and legal obligations. Technical problems with accessing the course will not be considered a valid excuse for missing an exam unless it can be shown that the problem is the fault of the eCollege platform. Students who miss any exam because they forgot about the exam dates/times or because they did not have access to a computer/Internet will not receive a make-up exam. Please note, these reasons do not guarantee that a make-up exam will be given. Make-up exams will be exclusively essay format.
10. Incompletes will be granted completely at the discretion of the instructor and only be granted in the case of serious medical illness or other serious, unavoidable circumstances and only if the student has completed at least 50% of the course work. Incompletes must be made up within two weeks of the end of the semester as students only have access to their eCollege course for two weeks following the final day of the term.

University Specific Procedures

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- Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Student Conduct

The University has rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. Specific expectations regarding student behavior and conduct are contained in different sections of this syllabus. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the student handbook.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Suggested Reading Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
6/2	American Political Culture	Chapter 1
6/3	US Constitution	Chapter 2, Appendix A
6/4	US Constitution	Chapter 2, Appendix A
6/5	Congress	Chapter 12
6/6	Congress	Chapter 12
6/7	The Presidency	Chapter 13
6/8	The Presidency	Chapter 13
6/9	Bureaucracy	Chapter 14
6/10	Bureaucracy	Chapter 14
6/11	Review/Study	
6/12	Review/Study	
6/13	Federal Courts	Chapter 15
6/14	Federal Courts	Chapter 15
6/15	Economic Policy	Chapter 16
6/16	Economic Policy	Chapter 16
6/17	Social Policy	Chapter 17
6/18	Social Policy	Chapter 17
6/19	Foreign Policy	Chapter 18
6/20	Review/Study	
6/21	Review/Study	
6/22	Texas Constitution	Chapter 20
6/23	Texas Legislature	Chapter 23
6/24	Texas Legislature	Chapter 23
6/25	Texas Executive	Chapter 24
6/26	Texas Executive	Chapter 24
6/27	Texas Judiciary	Chapter 25
6/28	Texas Judiciary	Chapter 25
6/29	Local Government in Texas	Chapter 26
6/30	Local Government, Public Policy	Chapter 26, 27
7/1	Public Policy in Texas	Chapter 27
7/2	Review/Study	
7/3	Review/Study	

Midterm Exam Schedule

Midterm Exams will be taken on-line and are scheduled on the dates listed below. Each exam begins at 11:59 PM on the scheduled date and closes 48 hours later.

Midterm Exam One: Available 6/10 @ 11:59 PM
Covers Chapters 1, 2, 12, 13, 14 and Appendix Readings

Midterm Exam Two: Available 6/19 @ 11:59 PM
Covers Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18

Midterm Exam Three: Available 7/1 @ 11:59 PM
Covers Chapters 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27

Discussion Assignment Schedule

Topics for the discussion assignments will be posted on the dates listed below at 9 AM and close 60 hours later at 9 PM. Regardless of the reason, there will be no make-up opportunities for discussion assignments and students will not receive any credit for posts made after the deadline.

Discussion 1 6/3
Discussion 2 6/6
Discussion 3 6/14
Discussion 4 6/17
Discussion 5 6/24
Discussion 6 6/28

Extra Credit Syllabus Quiz Schedule

The quiz will open at 9 AM on 6/6/2014 and close at 9 AM on 6/8/2014.

*** Please note that 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 on the class site.