PSCI 2301.02E

Principles of United States and Texas Government

COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2014

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COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required:

Ginsberg, Benjamin, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, Caroline J. Tolbert, Anthony Champagne, and Edward J. Harpham. 2013. *We the People*. 9th Texas Edition. New York: W.W. Norton.

ISBN: 978-0-393-92111-3

Course Description

This course is a survey of the underlying ideas, principles, and participatory practices of constitutional government in the United States and Texas. Topics considered include civil liberties and civil rights, constitutionalism, federalism, ideology, pluralism, political culture and socialization, political parties and interest groups, public opinion, republicanism, and voting and electoral politics.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course:

1. Students will be able to analyze, evaluate, or solve problems when given a set of circumstances or data.
2. Students will demonstrate awareness of societal and/or civic issues.
3. Student communication will be clear, purposeful, and make appropriate use of evidence, data and technology as applicable.
4. Students will be able to understand their role in their own education.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

This course consists of a series of lectures, readings, discussions, activities, and assessments which will assist you in achieving the learning objectives outlined above.

Attendance: Students are required to attend every class meeting. Attending class is the only way to take part in lectures and class discussions designed to aid you in meeting the course objectives. Attendance will be taken every class meeting and performance in this area is calculated as 10% of the student's final grade.

Quizzes: Quizzes will feature questions over topics covered in assigned readings, lectures, and discussions for the corresponding week. Quizzes will be unannounced, and the number of quizzes administered will be at the instructor's discretion. Students should expect True/False questions, multiple choice questions, and/or short answer questions as the format. There will be no make-up quizzes. Students who fail to complete a quiz due to an unexcused absence will receive a grade of 0 for that quiz. At the end of the semester, the lowest quiz grade for each student will be dropped. The final quiz average will be calculated as 10% of the student's final grade.

Analytical Activities: Students are required to complete three analytical activities throughout the semester. These assignments require the student to apply ideas, concepts, and information covered in the course to current or recent events concerning US or Texas politics. Students will select and analyze a report from the website of a credible news source and explain how the story relates to topics covered in

class including the U.S. or Texas Constitutions, political culture, and political behavior. Students must write at least 300 words for each activity; detailed instructions will be covered in class. Performance in this area is calculated as 20% of the student's final grade.

Midterm Exams: Students will complete two midterm examinations, each consisting of 50 multiple choice and true/false questions. Performance on each midterm exam is calculated as 20% of the student's final grade.

Final Exam: Students will complete one final examination consisting of 50 multiple choice and true/false questions. Performance on the final exam is calculated as 20% of the student's final grade.

GRADING

Final grades will be determined as follows:

Grades	
Attendance	10%
Quizzes – Average of All	10%
Analytical Activities	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final Exam	20%

Grading Scale	
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
Below 60	F

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

This is a web-enhanced course, meaning that this course uses components of eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University – Commerce. This also means that this is **not** an "online course," but that some procedures are facilitated through the eCollege system. To access this course using eCollege go to http://online.tamuc.edu. You will need your CWID and password. If you do not know your CWID and password contact Technology Services at 903-468-6000, or email helpdesk@tamuc.edu.
The specific components of the eCollege system utilized in this class are:

- Gradebook – students will be able to track their progress in the eCollege "gradebook."

- Dropbox – students will submit activities through the eCollege "dropbox."
- Announcements – important announcements and communication will be posted through the eCollege "Announcements" component, as well as in class.
- Descriptions of assignments and a copy of this syllabus will be posted in eCollege.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

The following information has been provided to assist you in preparing to use technology successfully in this course. Please note that these resources are available for use at the library. You will need:

- Internet access/connection – high speed recommended (not dial-up)

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Technical Support:

The instructor is not responsible for technical support or technical difficulties.

The University provides technical support in the use of eCollege through the student help desk which may be contacted 24 hours a day and seven days a week by the following:

- Phone: 1-866-656-6511
- Email: helpdesk@tamuc.edu
- Also students may find assistance through the 'Help' or 'Tech Support' links on the course home page.

Interaction with Instructor Statement

The preferred mode of student/instructor communication is in person (in class, during office hours, or by appointment) or through e-mail. All correspondence concerning grades must take place in person during office hours. Instructor contact information is listed on the front page of this syllabus.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

1. Students are required to attend all scheduled classes. Attendance will be taken every class. In accordance with University policy and procedures, students with more than 3 absences may be administratively dropped from the course. "Excused" absences will be granted for official university activities and medical issues, assuming the student submits the proper documentation (in person) within three days of the absence.

2. Students are required to complete all reading assignments and be prepared to discuss the readings in class.

3. Students are required to complete all assignments by the due date. Specific instructions for these assignments will be covered in class. Due dates will be included in these instructions. Late assignments will not be accepted.

4. Students are required to complete two midterm examinations and one final examination. Specific dates for these examinations can be found in the course calendar at the end of this document.

5. Students are required to refrain from distracting behavior. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, eating in class, arriving late for class, and being disrespectful to other students or the instructor.

6. **Electronic Device Policy:** Electronic devices must be put away during class meetings (exceptions may be granted for note taking with laptop computers).

7. **Make-up Exam Policy:** If a student misses an exam, the resulting grade will be 0 for that particular exam. In accordance with the attendance policy and the documentation required to obtain an "excused" absence, students may be given the opportunity to complete a make-up exam at the discretion of the instructor. Students requesting the opportunity to take a make-up exam must do so in writing within 3 days of the missed exam. This statement does not guarantee the opportunity to take a make-up exam. If a make-up

exam is approved, it will be given during finals week. No opportunity will be given to make up quizzes.

8. **Extra Credit Policy:** Students may be given opportunities to earn extra credit points. If offered, these opportunities will be discussed in class. Extra credit opportunities to accommodate student specific circumstances will not be offered. Do not ask for extra credit opportunities.

9. **Academic Honesty Policy:** Students are expected to follow the norms and rules that govern academic integrity. No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Students will be held accountable according to University policies on this matter. Texas A&M University-Commerce (Procedures A13.12) defines academic dishonesty as follows: "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." All cases of academic dishonesty will be reported. Be aware that failure to comply with the University's academic honesty policy may result in significant penalties.

   The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as needed throughout the semester. Students will be notified in class of any changes.

University Specific Procedures/Policies

ADA Statement

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

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook).*

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week	Topic	Assigned Reading/Reference
1	Introduction to the Course - Making Sense of Government and Politics	*We the People* Ch 1
2	American Political Culture **(First Activity Assigned)**	*We the People* Ch 1
3	U.S. Founding and Constitution	*We the People* Ch 2
4	Federalism	*We the People* Ch 3
5	Discussion and Review **(Exam 1)**	
6	Civil Liberties	*We the People* Ch 4
7	Civil Rights **(Second Activity Assigned)**	*We the People* Ch 5
8	Intro to Texas Government and Political Culture	*We the People* Ch 19
9	The Texas State Constitution	*We the People* Ch 20
10	Discussion and Review **(Exam 2)**	
11	Public Opinion and Media **(Third Activity Assigned)**	*We the People* Ch 6 and 7
12	Political Participation, Voting and Elections	*We the People* Ch 8 and 10
13	Political Parties and Interest Groups	*We the People* Ch 9 and 11
14	Participation, Interests, and Political Behavior in Texas Politics	*We the People* Ch 21 and 22
15	Discussion and Review	
16	**Final Exam** (see university final exam schedule for date and time)	