COURSE SYLLABUS
United States and Texas Government:
Institutions and Policies
PSCI 2302.01W US/TX GOV; INSTS & POLS
ONLINE CLASS
SUMMER II 2015
July 13 – August 13 2015

Instructor: Dr. Robert G. Rodríguez, Assistant Professor, Political Science

Office Location: Ferguson Social Science Building 149
NOT APPLICABLE DURING SUMMER SESSION

Office Hours: The ONLY way to contact me is via email

Office Phone: (903) 468-3094
NOT APPLICABLE DURING SUMMER SESSION

University Email Address: robert.rodriguez@tamuc.edu
Check the Syllabus to see if your question is answered FIRST.

Preferred Form of Communication: The ONLY way to contact me is via email.

Communication Response Time: I will usually respond to emails within 24 hours (48 hours maximum).

**CHECK ANNOUNCEMENTS SECTION IN COURSE DAILY**

This syllabus is subject to change at any time at the professor’s discretion.
COURSE INFORMATION

Textbooks Required
There are TWO required texts for this course. MAKE SURE TO PURCHASE THE CORRECT EDITIONS:

- We the People: An Introduction to American Politics
  by Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, Tolbert, Spitzer
  ISBN: 978-0-393-93705-3

- Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation in Texas
  FOURTH Edition 2016, CQ Press
  by Ken Collier, Steven Galatas, Julie Harrelson-Stephens
  ISBN: 978-1-4833-5277-0

Course Description
Welcome to United States and Texas Government! The purpose of this course is to study the political systems in the United States and Texas. This course will introduce you to the formal and informal institutions of national and state governments and the roles they play in the creation and implementation of public policy. Please note you will not be taught what to think about political issues in this course. Rather, you will be provided with the knowledge base to determine how to think about political issues for yourself.

First, we will examine the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the United States and Texas State Governments, in addition to federal and state bureaucracies. Then, we will analyze the formulation and implementation of public policies at the national and state levels.

Format:
This is a FULLY ONLINE course that is ONLY accessible by logging in through your MyLEO account and selecting the “eCollege” tab. The course is instructor-led, with a schedule that is organized into four learning modules (Units). Learning activities for each unit include an online discussion and an online exam.
The course materials are divided into FOUR units:

**Unit 1: The Legislative Branch (July 13-21)**
**Unit 2: The Executive Branch and Bureaucracy (July 20-28)**
**Unit 3: The Judicial Branch (July 27-August 4)**
**Unit 4: Public Policy (August 3-13)**

Each unit contains chapter PowerPoint slides, links to chapter outlines and summaries, a discussion and an examination.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. **Critical Thinking:** Students will be able to differentiate between fact and opinion.
2. **Communication:** 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.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS/ASSIGNMENTS**

**Examinations:** In this course, all students are required to take FOUR exams, each of which will consist of 50 questions in a multiple choice format. Exams are “open book,” HOWEVER, you MUST NOT RECEIVE ASSISTANCE IN ANY WAY FROM ANYONE WHILE COMPLETING THE EXAM. You will have 60 minutes to complete each exam online. Together, these exams will comprise 92% of your grade (each exam is worth 23%). The exams are NOT comprehensive. **There is NOT a final exam in this course.**

You will have a 48 hour period to complete each exam. **If you do not complete an exam during the designated 48 hour period, you will receive 0% for that exam.**
If you have a legitimate reason for not completing an exam during the designated period (e.g. severe illness or injury requiring professional medical care, emergencies in your immediate family, participation in official university activities, legal obligations) AND you have supporting documentation for your inability to take the exam, then you may request an extension of the period to take the exam.

Requests for taking the make-up exam must be submitted in writing VIA EMAIL and include SCANNED documentation explaining and substantiating why your inability to take the exam during the designated period was legitimate. An approval to extend the period for you to complete the exam will be based solely upon the professor’s evaluation of your request and any supporting documentation.

IF YOU RECEIVE ASSISTANCE ON THE EXAM FROM ANYONE IN ANY WAY, THIS CONSTITUTES ACADEMIC DISHONESTY, AND YOU WILL RECEIVE AN AUTOMATIC “F” IN THIS COURSE. YOU MAY ALSO FACE FURTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTION (SEE “POLICIES” SECTION IN THIS SYLLABUS).

EXAM DATES & TIMES:

UNIT 1, EXAM 1: Monday, July 20, 12:00 a.m.-Tuesday, July 21, 11:59 p.m.

UNIT 2, EXAM 2: Monday, July 27, 12:00 a.m.-Tuesday, July 28, 11:59 p.m.

UNIT 3, EXAM 3: Monday, August 3, 12:00 a.m.-Tuesday, August 4, 11:59 p.m.

UNIT 4, EXAM 4: Monday, August 10, 12:00 a.m.-Tuesday, August 11, 11:59 p.m.
Participation in ONLINE DISCUSSIONS: A topic of discussion will be assigned to the class for each UNIT. Students must make one (1) LONG POST (two-three paragraphs or 8-12 sentences) AND AT LEAST one (1) SHORT RESPONSE (one-paragraph or 4-6 sentences) to another student’s post, for each UNIT (each week). Your POSTS and RESPONSES MUST BE MEANINGFUL. In other words, it is not sufficient to simply state you agree or disagree. You must explain why in 4 sentences. You are ONLY required to respond to ONE long post each week. However, you may respond to up to THREE long posts, if you wish. (Note: You will NOT receive extra points for responding to more than one long post.)

YOUR POSTS AND RESPONSES ARE NOT GROUP PROJECTS, AND THEY MUST NOT BE PLAGIARIZED.

IF YOU CUT AND PASTE OR PARAPHRASE SOMEONE ELSE’S WRITING IN YOUR POSTS OR RESPONSES, THIS CONSTITUTES ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND YOU WILL RECEIVE AN AUTOMATIC “F” IN THIS COURSE AND POTENTIALLY FACE FURTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTION. (SEE THE “POLICIES” SECTION IN THIS SYLLABUS)

Regardless of the reason, there will be no make-up opportunities for online discussion assignments, and students will not receive any credit for posts made after the deadline.

You must post your LONG POST by WEDNESDAY OF EACH WEEK

UNIT 1, LONG POST 1: Monday, July 13, 12:00 a.m.-Wednesday, July 15, 11:59 p.m.

UNIT 2, LONG POST 2: Monday, July 20, 12:00 a.m.-Wednesday, July 22, 11:59 p.m.

UNIT 3, LONG POST 3: Monday, July 27, 12:00 a.m.-Wednesday, July 29, 11:59 p.m.

UNIT 4, LONG POST 4: Monday, August 3, 12:00 a.m.-Wednesday, August 5, 11:59 p.m.
You must post your SHORT RESPONSE by **SUNDAY OF EACH WEEK**

**UNIT 1, RESPONSE 1:** Thursday, July 16, 12:00 a.m.-Sunday, July 19, 11:59 p.m.

**UNIT 2, RESPONSE 2:** Thursday, July 23, 12:00 a.m.-Sunday, July 26, 11:59 p.m.

**UNIT 3, RESPONSE 3:** Thursday, July 30, 12:00 a.m.-Sunday, August 2, 11:59 p.m.

**UNIT 4, RESPONSE 4:** Thursday, August 6, 12:00 a.m.-Sunday, August 9, 11:59 p.m.

**ONLINE DISCUSSION RUBRIC:**

Each LONG POST is worth up to 1% of your grade, while each SHORT RESPONSE is worth up to .5% of your grade, for a total of **6%** of your grade. In order to receive FULL CREDIT for your LONG POSTS and SHORT RESPONSES, they must:

A. Fulfill the length requirements - **LONG POST** (two-three paragraphs or 8-12 sentences); **SHORT RESPONSE** (one-paragraph or 4-6 sentences)
B. Use correct spelling and grammar. (Do not write like you are texting on your phone.)
C. Demonstrate knowledge of the readings and topic. (Show you have completed the assigned readings.)
D. Be respectful of others points of view and use appropriate language (**RUDE OR DISRESPECTFUL COMMENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED**. You are free to disagree or agree with anyone, but your writing MUST demonstrate respect and civility at ALL times.)
E. Use references and support. (Without DATA, all you have is an opinion.)
Writing Assignment:

You will have **ONE** required writing assignment worth a total of **2%** of your grade. You will be provided the guidelines and topics for your writing assignment on Monday, August 10. The assignment will require you to write about issues addressing **critical thinking**, **communication** and **social responsibility** learned in this course.

**IF YOU CUT AND PASTE OR PARAPHRASE SOMEONE ELSE’S WRITING IN YOUR POSTS OR RESPONSES, THIS CONSTITUTES ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND YOU WILL RECEIVE AN AUTOMATIC “F” IN THIS COURSE AND POTENTIALLY FACE FURTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTION. (SEE THE “POLICIES” SECTION IN THIS SYLLABUS)**

Your writing assignment is **SUBMITTED THROUGH THE DROPBOX** on the last day of the course (Thursday, August 13). **PLEASE DO NOT EMAIL YOUR WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT:** Monday, August 10, 12:00 a.m.-Thursday, August 13, 11:59 p.m.

Policies:

**Academic Dishonesty of ANY kind:** Any student who is caught committing any kind of academic dishonesty will receive an “F” in this course and be reported to the University administration. “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” (Texas A&M University-Commerce Procedures A13.12).

*If you have any doubt as to what may constitute academic dishonesty, please consult with me prior to submitting any assignments.*

**Email:** Before you ask me a question in an email, check to see if the syllabus answers your question FIRST. I generally reply to emails within 24 hours, Monday-Thursday. Emails sent to me over weekends will be replied to on Mondays. I do not reply to emails asking questions about items covered in the syllabus, such as what chapters are covered on an exam or what the assigned readings are for a given class session.
**Code of Student Conduct:** Faculty have the authority to request students who exhibit inappropriate behavior to leave the class and may refer serious offenses to the University Police Department and/or the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. Failure to comply with the Code of Student Conduct and commonsensical directions listed above may result in a verbal request to cease inappropriate behavior, being immediately dropped from the class, and/or a review by an appropriate university disciplinary agency. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.

**AS THIS IS AN ONLINE COURSE, THIS CODE MOST SPECIFICALLY APPLIES TO YOUR WRITING IN THE ONLINE DISCUSSIONS.** Consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: Netiquette [http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html](http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html)

**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
Rebecca.tuerk@tamuc.edu
[http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)

**Nondiscrimination Notice**
Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.
GRADING

Your grade in this course will be determined by the following scale and criteria:

- Exams: 92%
- Discussions: 6%
- Writing Assignment: 2%
- TOTAL: 100%

A  90-100%; B  80-89.9%; C  70-79.9%; D  60-69.9%; F Below 60%

Detailed Grade Criteria and DUE DATES:

- Exam #1 (July 20-21): 23%
- Exam #2 (July 27-28): 23%
- Exam #3 (August 3-4): 23%
- Exam #4 (August 10-11): 23%
- Participation in Online Discussions (LONG POST #1) July 13-15: 1%
- Participation in Online Discussions (LONG POST #2) July 20-22: 1%
- Participation in Online Discussions (LONG POST #3) July 27-29: 1%
- Participation in Online Discussions (LONG POST #4) August 3-5: 1%
- Participation in Online Discussions (RESPONSE #1) July 16-19: .5%
- Participation in Online Discussions (RESPONSE #2) July 23-26: .5%
- Participation in Online Discussions (RESPONSE #3) July 30-August 2: .5%
- Participation in Online Discussions (RESPONSE #4) August 6-9: .5%
- Writing Assignment (August 10-13): 2%

STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY: I have read the syllabus in its entirety, and understand the guidelines and agree to the policies detailed therein as a condition of being enrolled in this course. I understand my obligation to adhere to these guidelines and policies in this course, and that failure to do so may result in serious consequences, including (but not limited to) being dropped from the course, and/or receiving a grade of “F” in the course.

YOU MUST SEND ME AN EMAIL ACKNOWLEDGING YOU HAVE READ AND AGREE TO THE STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY (written above) BY THURSDAY JULY 16, 2015 at 11:59 p.m., OR YOU WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE COURSE.
COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Unit 1: The Legislative Branch (July 13-21)

Required Reading:

We The People Chapter 9 CONGRESS
Lone Star Politics Chapter 3 TEXAS LEGISLATURE
Lone Star Politics Chapter 4 LEGISLATIVE ORGANIZATION AND PROCESS

Required Activities:

✓ Purchase your books
✓ Send me an email acknowledging that you have read and agree to the Student Statement of Personal Responsibility (July 13-16)
✓ Introduce yourself in the Online Discussion section (STUDENT LOUNGE) (July 13-15)
✓ Participation in Online Discussions (LONG POST #1) July 13-15: 1%
✓ Participation in Online Discussions (RESPONSE #1) July 16-19: .5%
✓ Exam #1 (July 20-21): 23%

Unit 2: The Executive Branch and Bureaucracy (July 20-28)

Required Reading:

We The People Chapter 10 THE PRESIDENCY
We The People Chapter 11 BUREAUCRACY
Lone Star Politics Chapter 5 TEXAS GOVERNORS
Lone Star Politics Chapter 6 THE PLURAL EXECUTIVE AND BUREAUCRACY IN TEXAS

Required Activities:

✓ Participation in Online Discussions (LONG POST #2) July 20-22: 1%
✓ Participation in Online Discussions (RESPONSE #2) July 23-26: .5%
✓ Exam #2 (July 27-28): 23%
**Unit 3: The Judicial Branch (July 27-August 4)**

Required Reading:

We The People Chapter 12 THE FEDERAL COURTS
Lone Star Politics Chapter 7 TEXAS JUDICIAL SYSTEM
Lone Star Politics Chapter 8 TEXAS-SIZED JUSTICE

Required Activities:

- ✓ Participation in Online Discussions (LONG POST #3) **July 27-29**: 1%
- ✓ Participation in Online Discussions (RESPONSE #3) **July 30-August 2**: .5%
- ✓ Exam #3 (**August 3-4**): 23%

**Unit 4: Public Policy (August 3-13)**

Required Readings:

We The People Chapter 14 FOREIGN POLICY
Lone Star Politics Chapter 13 FISCAL POLICY
Lone Star Politics Chapter 14 EDUCATION AND SOCIAL POLICY

Required Activities:

- ✓ Participation in Online Discussions (LONG POST #4) **August 3-5**: 1%
- ✓ Participation in Online Discussions (RESPONSE #4) **August 6-9**: .5%
- ✓ Exam #4 (**August 10-11**): 23%
- ✓ Writing Assignment (**August 10-13**): 2%
TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

• To fully participate in online courses you will need to use a current Flash enabled browser. For PC users, the suggested browser is Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox. For Mac users, the most current update of Firefox is suggested.

• You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:
  o 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
  o Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
  o Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution

• You must have a:
  o Sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
  o Speakers or headphones.
  o *For courses utilizing video-conferencing tools and/or an online proctoring solution, a webcam and microphone are required.

• Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. At a minimum Java 7, update 51, is required to support the learning management system. The most current version of Java can be downloaded at: JAVA web site http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp

• Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.


Running the browser check will ensure your internet browser is supported.
  Pop-ups are allowed.
  JavaScript is enabled.
  Cookies are enabled.
• You will need some additional free software (plug-ins) for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
  o Adobe Reader  https://get.adobe.com/reader/
  o Adobe Flash Player (version 17 or later) https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/
  o Adobe Shockwave Player  https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/
  o Apple Quick Time  http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

• At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

• For additional information about system requirements, please see: System Requirements for LearningStudio https://secure.ecollege.com/tamuc/index.learn?action=technical

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

Pearson LearningStudio (eCollege) Access and Log in Information

This course will be facilitated using Pearson LearningStudio, the learning management system used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to myLeo. http://www.tamuc.edu/myleo.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@tamuc.edu.

It is strongly recommended that you perform a “Browser Test” prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login to Pearson LearningStudio, click on the “My Courses” tab, and then select the “Browser Test” link under Support Services.
Pearson Learning Studio (eCollege) Student Technical Support

Texas A&M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of Pearson LearningStudio.

Technical assistance is available 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week.

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 Pearson LearningStudio Help Desk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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 a Pearson Learning Studio Representative.

- **Phone:** 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with Pearson Learning Studio Technical Support Representative.

- **Email:** helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with Pearson LearningStudio Technical Support Representative.

**Accessing Help from within Your Course:** Click on the 'Tech Support' icon on the upper left side of the screen inside the course. You then will be able to get assistance via online chat, email or by phone by calling the Help Desk number noted below.

**Note:** Personal computer problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, an Internet cafe, or a bookstore, such as Barnes & Noble, etc.
POLICY FOR REPORTING PROBLEMS WITH PEARSON LearningStudio (eCollege)

Should students encounter Pearson LearningStudio based problems while submitting assignments/discussions/comments/exams, the following procedure MUST be followed:

1. Students must report the problem to the help desk. You may reach the helpdesk at helpdesk@online.tamuc.org or 1-866-656-5511
2. Students MUST file their problem with the helpdesk and obtain a helpdesk ticket number
3. Once a helpdesk ticket number is in your possession, students should email me to advise me of the problem and to provide me with the helpdesk ticket number
4. At that time, I will call the helpdesk to confirm your problem and follow up with you

PLEASE NOTE: Your personal computer/access problems are not a legitimate excuse for filing a ticket with the Pearson LearningStudio Help Desk. You are strongly encouraged to check for compatibility of your browser BEFORE the course begins and to take the Pearson LearningStudio tutorial offered for students who may require some extra assistance in navigating the Pearson LearningStudio platform. ONLY Pearson LearningStudio based problems are legitimate.

Internet Access
An Internet connection is necessary to participate in discussions and assignments, access readings, transfer course work, and receive feedback from your professor. View the requirements as outlined in Technology Requirements above for more information.

myLeo Support
Your myLeo email address is required to send and receive all student correspondence. Please email helpdesk@tamuc.edu or call us at 903-468-6000 with any questions about setting up your myLeo email account. You may also access information at myLeo. https://leo.tamuc.edu

Learner Support
Go to the following link One Stop Shop- created to serve you by attempting to provide as many resources as possible in one location. http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/onestopshop/
Go to the following link Academic Success Center- focused on providing academic resources to help you achieve academic success.
http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/academicSuccessCenter

**FREE MOBILE APPS**

The Courses apps for phones have been adapted to support the tasks students can easily complete on a smaller device. Due to the smaller screen size course content is not presented.

The Courses app is free of charge. The mobile Courses Apps are designed and adapted for different devices.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>App Title:</th>
<th>iPhone – Pearson LearningStudio Courses for iPhone</th>
<th>Android – LearningStudio Courses - Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating System:</td>
<td>iPhone - OS 6 and above</td>
<td>Android – Jelly Bean, Kitkat, and Lollipop OS</td>
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<td>iPhone App URL:</td>
<td><a href="https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/pearson-learningstudio-courses/id977280011?mt=8">https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/pearson-learningstudio-courses/id977280011?mt=8</a></td>
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Once downloaded, search for Texas A&M University-Commerce, and it should appear on the list. Then you will need to sign into the myLeo Mobile portal.

The Courses App for Android and iPhone contain the following feature set:

- View titles/code/Instructor of all Courses enrolled in online
- View and respond to all discussions in individual Courses
- View Instructor Announcements in individual Courses
- View Graded items, Grades and comments in individual Courses
- Grade to Date
- View Events (assignments) and Calendar in individual Courses
- View Activity Feed for all courses
- View course filters on activities
- View link to Privacy Policy
- Ability to Sign out
- Send Feedback