

Political Science 2302
U.S. and Texas Government: Institutions and Policies
Spring 2018
MWF 12:00 pm – 12:50 pm

Professor Information:

Megan Todd
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Email: Megan.Todd@tamuc.edu
Office Hours: MW 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Course Description:

In this course, you will examine the political systems in the United States and the state of Texas. You will learn about the formal and informal institutions of our national and state government and what roles they play in the creation and implementation of public policy.

The purpose of this class is to provide you with the knowledge you need in order to be an informed citizen who is capable of understanding how the legislative, executive, and judicial branches along with federal and state bureaucracies develop policies that will impact your life.

You will not be taught *what* to think about political issues. You will be provided the knowledge base to determine *how* to think about political issues for *yourself*.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will be able to differentiate between fact and opinion.
2. Student communication will be clear, purposeful, and make appropriate use of evidence, data and technology as applicable.
3. Students will be able to understand their role in their own education.
4. Students will demonstrate awareness of societal and/or civic issues.

Required Text:

ISBN: 9781452287300
Abernathy, Scott F. American Government: Stories of a Nation. Essentials Ed. Sage.

ISBN: 9781506346298
Collier, Ken, Steven Galatas, and Julie Harrelson-Stephens. Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation to Texas. Fifth Edition. CQ Press.

Please note that electronic books (**e-books**) are not acceptable for this course.

Assignments and Grades:

1. Examinations: There will be three examinations for a total of 300 points.

If you miss an exam, you will receive a 0 for that exam. If you have a legitimate reason for missing an exam (illness, family emergency, etc) and you have *supporting documentation* for your absence, then you may *request* a make-up exam. You are not guaranteed a make-up exam. *Make-up exams are permitted at the sole discretion of the instructor.*

2. Participation: 25 points.

Participation is not simply showing up to class and entertaining yourself on an electronic device. Participation consists of having read the material and being prepared to answer questions and contribute to meaningful class discussion over the readings.

Participation levels include:

1. Always contributes to class discussion
2. Regularly contributes to class discussion
3. Sometimes contributes to class discussion
4. Never to rarely contributes to class discussion

Your participation grade may be severely reduced by the way you act in class.

For example: sleeping, disturbing your classmates by having a private discussion with your friends, consistently being late to class, or anything else that would have me believe that you are not fully engaged with our class discussion.

3. Attendance: 25 points.

Students are required to attend class and attendance will be taken during each class session using a sign-in sheet. You can miss up to three class sessions on non-exam days without penalty. **More than three absences will result in a reduction in your grade.** *The only absences that will not be counted against you are those directly related to school activities when I am provided with a note from the appropriate department.* **If you have another student sign in for you, there will be serious repercussions. Please refer to the academic dishonesty section.** Your education is your responsibility and if you would like to know what you missed, please inquire from one of your fellow students. I will not send you notes over what was discussed.

Attendance Grade Scale

0 absences = add 10 points to your grade

1-3 absences = no penalty

4-6 absences = deduct 7.5 points from your grade

7-9 absences = deduct 12.5 points from your grade

10 or more absences = deduct 25 points from your grade

4. Quizzes/Writing Assignments: 50 points.

There will be a quiz or writing assignments given over the course of the semester. Pop quizzes may be given in class in the event of a violation of the electronics policy or improper class behavior. **If you are not in class, you will not receive credit for the assignment missed.** *If you show up after the quiz has started, you cannot receive credit for that quiz.*

The scale used in calculating final grades is as follows:

- A: 360-400 points
- B: 320-359 points
- C: 280-319 points
- D: 240-279 points
- F: 000-239 points

Caveat: As instructor, I reserve the right to amend, modify, or adjust this syllabus as needed.

Electronics Policy: Cellular telephones, tablets, laptops, and other such devices must be turned off and put away during class. Man lived without the internet and cell phones for thousands of years. You *will* survive one class period. If you are caught using a device, it may be taken from you. If you are repeatedly caught using a device, it may result in a deduction from your participation grade and your attendance you will be kicked out of class for that day and will count as an absence. As your instructor, I reserve the right to respond to any phone call, text message, or social media post that is “important” enough to interrupt class.

Academic Dishonesty: Any student who is caught committing any kind of academic dishonesty will receive an “F” in this course and will 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), signing the attendance sheet for a student who is absent (or asking another student to sign you in when you are absent), 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.

Campus Carry: Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf> (and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Code of 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 Student’s Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, 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, your immediate removal from the class, being immediately dropped from the class, and/or a review by an appropriate university disciplinary agency.

Non-Discrimination Notice: A&M–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.

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
Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Course Calendar

(All dates and content are subject to change.)

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Topic/Class Info</u> | <u>Readings</u> |
|------------------|---|-----------------|
| JAN 17 | Introduction | Syllabus |
| JAN 19-26 | Congress: Representation, Organization, and Legislation | AG 12 |
| JAN 29-31 | Texas Legislature | LS 3 |
| FEB 2 | Texas Legislature | LS 3 |
| FEB 5-9 | Legislative Organization and Process | LS 4 |
| FEB 12-14 | Fiscal Policy | LS 13 |
| FEB 16 | <i>Review Day</i> | |
| FEB 19 | Exam One | |
| FEB 21-26 | The American Presidency: Individuals, Institutions, & Executive Powers | AG 13 |
| FEB 28 | Texas Governors | LS 5 |
| MAR 2-5 | Texas Governors | LS 5 |
| MAR 7-9 | The Plural Executive & Bureaucracy in Texas | LS 6 |
| MAR 12-16 | Spring Break | |
| MAR 19 | The Plural Executive & Bureaucracy in Texas | LS 6 |
| MAR 21-26 | Federal Bureaucracy: Putting the Nation's Laws into Effect | AG 14 |
| MAR 28 | <i>Review Day</i> | |
| MAR 30 | Exam Two | |
| APR 2-6 | Social Policy: Education and Health | LS 14 |
| APR 9-13 | Federal Judiciary: Politics, Power, & the "Least Dangerous" Branch | AG 15 |
| APR 16-20 | Texas Judicial System | LS 7 |
| APR 23-30 | Texas-Sized Justice | LS 8 |
| MAY 2 | <i>Review Day</i> | |
| MAY 4 | Exam Three | |
| <i>Finals</i> | <i>Make-up Exam*</i> | |

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Ms. Megan Todd

Student Statement of Understanding

I, _____ (print name), have read the syllabus and understand the guidelines and policies therein. I understand that this contract is a condition of the course and that if I do not sign it and turn it in I will be dropped from the class or receive an “F” as my final grade. Furthermore, I understand my obligation to adhere to the guidelines and policies contained in the syllabus and that failure to do so could result in my being dropped from the course or receiving a final grade of an “F.”

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Failure to return this signed statement by Monday, January 29, 2018 may result in your being dropped from this course.