

United States and Texas Government: Institutions and Policies
[PSCI 2302 US/TX Gov; INSTS & POLS]
Spring 2019
Tuesdays/Thursdays (11:00am-12:15pm)
BA 257

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Office Hours: T/Th 10:30am-11:00am and 1:45pm-3:15pm; W 5:00pm-6:00pm; or by appointment

The BEST way to contact me is via email.

Course Description:

This course is an examination of the United States and Texas political systems with emphasis 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 (formulation and implementation).

Format:

Each class session will involve lectures and discussions about the assigned readings. Please note that 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*.

You will regularly be asked to contribute your opinions about the assigned readings and answer questions about the readings. In addition to the assigned readings listed in the syllabus, we will regularly discuss current political events, since developments in American politics occur on a daily basis.

This syllabus is subject to change at any time at the professor's discretion.

NO PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES ARE ALLOWED IN CLASS AT ANY TIME.

THIS INCLUDES (BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO):

CELL PHONES,

LAPTOPS,

iPADS,

iPODS,

MP3 Players/Recorders,

Translation Devices

VIDEO CAMERAS

OR ANY OTHER AUDIO AND/OR VIDEO RECORDERS OF ANY KIND

IF ANY OF THESE DEVICES ARE PRESENT IN CLASS THE ENTIRE CLASS WILL HAVE A POP QUIZ AND THE INDIVIDUAL(S) RESPONSIBLE MAY BE DIRECTED TO LEAVE THE CLASSROOM IMMEDIATELY.

Requirements/Assignments

Examinations: In this course, **all students are required to take three exams**, each of which will consist of 50 questions in a multiple-choice format. Together, these exams will comprise **90%** of your grade (each exam is worth 30%). The exams are NOT comprehensive. **Although Exam 3 will be given during Finals Week, there is NOT a comprehensive final exam in this course.**

If you miss an exam, you will receive 0% for that exam.

If you have a **legitimate reason** for missing an exam (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 absence, then you may **request** taking the **MAKE-UP EXAM**, which will take place at a mutually agreed upon time-**ONLY IF APPROVED**. Since Exam 3 will be held during Finals Week, make-up exams will be scheduled in the most extraordinary, legitimate, and documented circumstances.

Requests for taking the make-up exam must be **submitted in writing within 24 hours of the scheduled exam AND include documentation** explaining and substantiating why the absence was legitimate. An approval to take the make-up exam will be based solely upon the professor's evaluation of your request and any supporting documentation.

In-Class Writing Assignment: You will have **ONE** required writing assignment that is worth a total of **4%** of your grade. The writing assignment will take place during class on **Thursday, May 2, 2019** and requires you to write about issues that address **your awareness of societal and/or civic issues, critical thinking, and communication** skills. **NOTE: If you miss this class session, you will only be allowed to make up the writing assignment in the most extraordinary of circumstances, with a legitimate reason AND supporting documentation (same policy for making up missed exams). The make-up for the writing assignment will only be given immediately after Exam 3 during finals week.**

Attendance: Attendance is critical, discussions are irreplaceable, and course sessions cannot be "made up." It will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for you to succeed in this course if you do not attend all –or nearly all- class sessions. **Attendance will be taken** during each class session using a sign-in sheet for financial aid and other documentation purposes, however **it will not directly affect your grade**. Signing in a student who is not present or asking a student to sign you in when you are absent constitutes academic dishonesty (see p.3). Since your attendance will not be used to calculate your grade, ***it is not necessary to provide me with any excuses for absences (unless you are absent during an examination or the in-class writing assignment – read the previous sections).***

Attendance Note 1: If a pop quiz or any other assignment is given when you are absent, you CANNOT make it up, regardless of the reason for your absence (excused or unexcused).

Attendance Note 2: I will NOT reply to any emails asking what we did in class during your absence- We will follow the syllabus. If you miss class, get notes from a classmate and ask him/her if there were any announcements.

Attendance Note 3: ARRIVE ON TIME! The classroom door will not be opened for late arrivals 15 minutes after class starts. Notify the professor in advance if you need to arrive late or leave early.

Participation: Your participation in this class is worth up to **4%** of your grade.

Your contributions to the class discussions are highly desirable and will make class sessions more interesting. Positive participation includes responding to my questions, asking your own questions, and contributing to class discussions. All of these activities will *positively* impact your participation grade.

Negative participation includes: sleeping in class, side-talk with your neighbors, coming to class late, and any other class disruptions- any of these activities will *negatively* impact your participation grade, even if you contribute to class discussions. If you use personal electronic devices in class that will result in a pop quiz for the entire class and your removal from the classroom, and it will negatively impact your participation grade. Also, if you misbehave in class or disrupt class in any way you may be directed to leave the classroom and your participation grade will be negatively impacted.

Your participation grade will be calculated as follows:

- Never Contributes to Class Discussions: 0%
- Rarely/Sometimes Contributes to Class Discussions: 1%
- Often Contributes to Class Discussions: 2%
- Almost Always Contributes to Class Discussions: 3%
- Always Contributes to Class Discussions: 4%

Pop Quizzes: These will be assigned only if anyone is found to be using an electronic device in class, and will count for a total of **2%** of your grade. Pop quizzes will be very difficult to pass. If you are *absent* when a pop quiz is given, you **cannot** make it up, irrespective of the circumstances, and will earn 0% for any quiz you miss. Pop quizzes will be graded on the basis of the content and clarity of your answers.

Grades:

Your grade in this course will be determined by the criteria listed below. The following scale will be used to determine your grade:

- Exam #1 (**February 14**): 30%
- Exam #2 (**March 15**): 30%
- Exam #3 (**May 7**): 30%
- In-Class Writing Assignment (**May 2**): 4%
- Participation: 4%
- Pop Quizzes: 2%

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

Student Learning Outcomes for the Core Curriculum:

1. **Critical Thinking:** Students will be able to analyze, evaluate, or solve problems when given a set of circumstances, data, texts, or art.
2. **Communication:** In written, oral, and/or visual communication, A&M-Commerce students will communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion, with an evident message and organizational structure.
3. **Personal Responsibility:** Students will understand and practice academic honesty.
4. **Social Responsibility:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of societal and/or civic issues.

Policies:

Notes on Academic Dishonesty of ANY kind: 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.

Notes on plagiarism: All research papers will be submitted to *turnitin.com*, a digital plagiarism detection system. Any student who is caught plagiarizing will receive an “F” in this course and will be reported to the University administration for academic dishonesty. If you have any doubt as to what may constitute plagiarism, please consult me prior to submitting any written work.

Email Policy: 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-Friday. Emails sent to me over weekends will be replied to on Mondays. I do not reply to emails that ask 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 week.

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. *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. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.

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-0Commerce Rule 34.06.02R1, 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/34.06.02R1.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.

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 discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Note to Students with Disabilities: The American 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
Gege Library Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

In order to maximize your performance in this course, you must:

- ***TURN OFF ALL PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES BEFORE CLASS BEGINS. THIS INCLUDES (BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO): CELL PHONES, LAPTOPS, iPADS, IPODS, MP3 Players/Recorders, Translation devices, VIDEO CAMERAS, OR ANY OTHER AUDIO AND/OR VIDEO RECORDERS OF ANY KIND***
- ***IF ANYONE IS FOUND TO BE LOOKING AT THEIR CELL PHONE IN ANY WAY DURING CLASS, THE ENTIRE CLASS WILL TAKE A POP QUIZ ON THE SPOT.***
- **Read** the assigned material before class;
- Be **prepared to discuss** the topics presented in class;
- **Refrain from** reading materials or working on other homework during class;
- **Do NOT get up in the middle of class** to go to the bathroom unless absolutely necessary;
- **Be courteous to -and respectful of-** your fellow students and professor.

Required Readings:

There are **TWO** required textbooks for this course. *MAKE SURE TO PURCHASE THE CORRECT EDITIONS*:

- **We the People: An Introduction to American Politics**
ELEVENTH ESSENTIALS Edition, 2017, W.W. Norton and Co.
by Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, Tolbert, Spitzer
ISBN: 978-0-393-28364-8
- **Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation in Texas**
FIFTH Edition 2018, CQ Press
by Ken Collier, Steven Galatas, Julie Harrelson-Stephens
ISBN: 978-1-5063-4629-8

****ELECTRONIC BOOKS (e-books) ARE NOT RECOMMENDED FOR THIS COURSE, AS YOU ARE PROHIBITED FROM USING YOUR ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS****

Course Schedule:

Week 1 Introduction to Course; U.S. Congress

January 15, 17

Read:

- *Buy your books*
- We the People, Chapter 9

Week 2 U.S. Congress; *Statement of Personal Responsibility DUE*

January 22, 24

Read:

- We the People, Chapter 9
- *Statement of Personal Responsibility DUE ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 24*

Week 3 U.S. Presidency

January 29, 31

Read:

- We the People, Chapter 10

Week 4 U.S. Presidency

February 5, 7

Read:

- We the People, Chapter 10

Week 5 Exam 1

February 12, 14

Read:

- *Exam #1 will take place at the beginning of class on THURSDAY, the 14th of February. You will have the entire class period to complete it. The exam will cover:*
 - We The People, Chapter 9 and 10

Week 6 U.S. Bureaucracy

February 19, 21

Read:

- We The People, Chapter 11

Week 7 U.S. Federal Courts

February 26, 28

Read:

- We The People, Chapter 12

Week 8 U.S. Domestic Policy

March 5, 7

Read:

- We The People, Chapter 13

Week 9 Exam 2

March 13, 15

Read:

- *Exam #2 will take place at the beginning of class on THURSDAY, the 15th of March. You will have the entire class period to complete it. The exam will cover:*
 - We The People, Chapters 11, 12, & 13

Week 10 SPRING BREAK (No Classes)

March 19, 21

Read:

- Nothing.

Week 11 Texas Legislature

March 26, 28

Read:

- Lone Star Politics, Chapter 3

Week 12 Texas Legislature; Texas Legislative Organization and Process

April 2, 4

Read:

- Lone Star Politics, Chapter 3
- Lone Star Politics, Chapter 4

Week 13 Texas Governors

April 9, 11

Read:

- Lone Star Politics, Chapter 5

Week 14 Texas Plural Executive and Bureaucracy

April 16, 18

Read:

- Lone Star Politics, Chapter 6

Week 15 Texas Judicial System; Texas Justice

April 23, 25

Read:

- Lone Star Politics, Chapter 7
- Lone Star Politics, Chapter 8

Week 16 Texas Justice; *In-Class Writing Assignment; Course Evaluations*

April 30, May 2

Read:

- Lone Star Politics, Chapter 8
- *The In-Class Writing Assignment will take place in class on THURSDAY, May 2nd. If you miss this class session for ANY reason, you will NOT be able to make up the assignment without a legitimate reason AND supporting documentation.*

Finals Week Exam #3

May 7

- *Exam #3 will take place during the final exam time designated for our class: TUESDAY, MAY 7th from 10:30am-11:45. The exam will cover:*
 - Lone Star Politics, Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

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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.

Student Signature: _____

Student PRINTED Name: _____

Date of Signature: _____

**FAILURE TO RETURN THIS SIGNED STATEMENT BY THE FOURTH CLASS SESSION
(January 24, 2019) WILL RESULT IN YOUR BEING DROPPED FROM THIS COURSE.**