



Political Science 2301
Principles of U.S. and Texas Government
Spring 2019

Professor: Dr. Jeffrey C. Herndon
Email: Jeffrey.Herndon@tamuc.edu
Office Location: Ferguson Social Science Building, 160
Office Hours: 8:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m., Mon-Thurs,
And by appointment

COURSE INFORMATION

Books Required

Bellamy. 2008. *Citizenship: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford.

Bodenhamer. 2018. *The U.S. Constitution: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford.
978019537832

Beeman, Richard. 2010. *The Penguin Guide to the United States Constitution*. Penguin Books.
9780143118107
(This is the only book that you will be required to bring to class every day.)

Bodenhamer. 2018. *The U.S. Constitution: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford.
978019537832

Champagne, Anthony, Edward Harpham, and Jason Cassellas. 2012. *Governing Texas*, 3rd ed.
Pearson. WW Norton.
9780393283679

Maisel. 2016. *American Political Parties and Elections*. Oxford
978019045816

Warburton. 2009. *Free Speech: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford.
978019923235

In addition to the above materials, you will be required to keep up with your MyLeo email to receive material. For this reason, it is highly recommended that you purchase a 1 ¼ inch binder

to keep primary documents as assigned. You will also have to access at least one major news source every day in order to keep up with current events in order to fulfill the requirements of the course. Your professor reserves the right to assign additional readings as required.

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

1. Critical Thinking—Students will be able to differentiate between fact and opinion.
2. Communications—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.

The following content oriented learning objectives will also be achieved:

1. Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain the political institutions and processes of the government of the United States.
2. Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain the political institutions and processes of the state of Texas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional Methods

This section is a traditional university course that will consist of lectures and interactive discussion. In addition, you are responsible for readings assigned for a particular day and to the tests.

GRADING

There will be three tests in this course. In addition, there may be a series of current events/readings quizzes depending upon the news of the day and whether or not it is apparent that the class has been doing the assigned readings in preparation for class. Finally, there will be at least two reaction papers to external readings assigned to the class.

The following is a breakdown of your final grade:

Test 1:	100 points		
Test 2:	100 points	Quizzes/Reaction papers:	50 points
Test 3:	100 points	Attendance and Participation:	50 points

The scale used in calculating final grades is as follows:

364-400	A	240-280	D
324-363	B	000-239	F
280-323	C		

COURSE PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Attendance: Attendance will be taken daily and you would be well-advised to attend every class—if for no other reason than the fact that experience demonstrates that you will not do well if you are not here. You should make every effort to be present for tests. If an absence happens to coincide with a test or a quiz, that test or quiz cannot be made-up except under the most extreme circumstances (as determined by the instructor). Furthermore, if you do miss class, it is your responsibility to prevail upon your classmates to share their materials with you. Your instructor is happy to sit down with you to discuss the notes you receive from your classmates in case of an absence.

Of course attendance is more than merely being in your seat on time (although timeliness is a virtue). You are expected to come to class prepared for class. Readings assigned for particular dates should be completed prior to coming to class. You will have quizzes over the readings and current events, so it is important that you arrive at class on time and that you have adequately prepared for class prior to attending.

You should not arrive late to class. Most importantly do NOT be late for exams! Tardiness for a quiz or exam may result in not receiving credit for it. Needless to say, this might have a deleterious effect on your final grade.

Finally, if you need to leave the class for any reason while it is in session, please make sure to take your belongings with you, as you will not be readmitted to class on that day. If you have to use the restroom you may do so before and after class, but not during. If you do have to leave class, you will, of course, be marked “absent” for that day.

Given the size of this section, we will use a “sign in” sheet that you will initial in the appropriate column. Students begin the semester with 50 points devoted to attendance. Students with less than three absences (you DO NOT need to justify them) will receive the entire 50 points. Every absence over three will result in a reduction of five points from the attendance and participation grade. IF [AND THIS IS IMPORTANT] there appears to be a disparity between the number of students actually in class and the number of students who signed the attendance sheet your instructor may call roll. If you are signed into the class and you are not present, that will count as TWO ABSENCES (one for being absent and one for lying to me). In other words, you will not be helping your friend by signing for them.

Electronics Policy: We are fortunate to live in a technologically advanced time. With that said, the following guidelines must be observed. First, laptop computers are wonderful things—but their use is must be in relation to the class while in class. Do not, under any circumstances, engage in “social networking” during class.

[I also recommend you read [this blog post](#) before using tech in the classroom.]

With regard to cellular telephones: one person in this class has permission to leave his on during class—and it is not you. It is entirely possible that you will survive for two hours without using your telephone. Your instructor reserves the right to answer any telephone that rings during class or respond to any text that is received. Texting during class is prohibited. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in your being removed from the course. [Your instructor realizes that enforcing this classroom policy is VERY difficult given the ubiquity smart phones I believe I should remind you that “dividing” your attention between your phone and the class will probably have a negative effect on performance. A [recent study](#) found that students using their phones in classes often earned a letter grade less than students who did not.]

COURSE OUTLINE / READINGS CALENDAR

(All dates and content are subject to revision.)

Weeks One and Two

Introduction to the Course

Thinking About “Politics”

Plato, “Allegory of the Cave”

Aristotle’s *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, selections

John Locke’s *Second Treatise of Government*, selections

Weeks Three and Four

The Development of American Constitutionalism

The Mayflower Compact

The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut

The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution

The Federalist Number 10 and Number 51

Burke, “Speech to the Electors of Bristol”

Federalism

Weeks Five and Six

Deconstructing the U.S. Constitution

The U.S. Constitution

Weeks Seven and Eight

The Constitution in Practice

Civil Liberties

Civil Rights

Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

Weeks Nine and Ten

Actors in the U.S. Political System

Public Opinion

Political Parties and Ideology

Campaigns and Elections

Weeks 11 and 12

Popular Sovereignty in Action
Political Participation
The Politics of Interest

Weeks 13 and 14

Texas—Like a Whole ‘nother country!
Texas Political Culture and the Constitution
Who should govern and why?

Week 15

Prospects for the American Republic
George Washington, “Farewell Address”
Abraham Lincoln, “Second Inaugural”
Ronald Reagan, “National Address on the Challenger Explosion”
Barak Obama, “A More Perfect Union”

Your instructor reserves the right to make appropriate changes to this syllabus on the basis of exigent circumstances. Should such changes be required, you will be informed.

TEST DATES

2/14 Test One
3/28 Test Two
5/7, 10:30 am Test Three

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

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.

Conduct: "All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment."

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.

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Student statement of understanding

I, _____, 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.”

X _____

Date: _____