



Political Science 2305.01H: U.S. Government and Politics

Fall 2019

Instructor: Dr. Jeffrey C. Herndon

Office Location: 162 Ferguson Social Sciences

Office Hours: 8:30-9:30 M-TH; 3:00-4:00 W; by appointment

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Course Information

Textbooks Required

Campbell, Andrea et.al. 2018. *We the People*, essentials 12th edition. W.W. Norton. New York. [ISBN: 978-0-393-69613-4] [WTP]

Canon, David T. et. al. 2017. *Faultlines: Debating the Issues in American Politics*, 5th edition. W.W. Norton. New York. [ISBN: 978-0-393-60344-6] [FL]

In addition, material and documents will be posted to D2L. It is also advisable that you acquaint yourself with a reliable news source (e.g. CNN, MSNBC, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Dallas Morning News, KETR, etc.) as there will be current events quizzes from time to time.

Course Description

Designed to introduce the students to the principles and function of the government of the United States, this course examines the principles underlying the development of the U.S. Constitution, the operations of the U.S. government under the Constitution, and the opportunities and constraints imposed by and on the political system in the U.S. Topics to be covered include the philosophical preconditions of the American experiment in self-government with justice, the documentary history of American government, the actual function and practice of government under the Constitution, and the actors engaged in the American political system.

Student Learning Outcomes

Core

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.

Content

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.
6. Analyze the election process.
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens
8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

Course Requirements

Instructional Methods

This course is a traditional university class that will consist of lectures and interactive discussion. The degree to which students contribute to the overall discussion will determine how much lecture/presentation will be required. In addition, students will undertake basic research to develop academically and increase understanding of the government of the United States.

Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for completing assigned readings and or homework prior to the class for which they are assigned.

Students will succeed to the degree that they apply themselves to the material. Ultimately, a university education is up to the student—you own it. It is the recommendation of your instructor that you review materials developed in class on the day that it is presented as well as periodically throughout the semester. Experience has demonstrated that attempting to “cram” for tests rarely works

Grading and Assessment

Your grade will be determined using the following assessment tools that taken together total 600 possible points:

Test One	100	Quizzes	100
Test Two	100	Attendance/Participation	50
Test Three	100	Brief Papers	50
Congressional Paper/Presentation	100		

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

546-600	A	360-419	D
486-545	B	0-359	F
420-485	C		

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY 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. With this in mind, the attendance policy is relatively simple. Each of you has four absences with which to do whatever you want without incurring a penalty. If you don't feel well, you can miss class. If you oversleep, you can miss class. If you would rather do something else, you can miss class. There is no requirement for notes from doctors, parents,

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pastors, or friends. However, every absence over four will incur a five point penalty off of your final grade. And again, notes for absences over four will not be accepted. Four absences in a Tuesday/Thursday class is equivalent to two weeks—and if you miss two weeks of class you should probably drop the course.

Let me reiterate: **You may use your four absences for any purpose or reason that you choose.** **Do not** bring notes and/or excuses as they are unnecessary under the terms of the generous attendance policy in this class and will not be accepted. (At the discretion of the professor, under extreme circumstances that are verifiable, an exception may be granted—but the circumstance must be extreme in the judgment of your professor.)

The only exceptions to the allowed absence policy are test dates. You are expected to be in class for exams. Make-up exams will only be given under the most extreme circumstances.

In addition, current events and readings quizzes given on particular class days may not be made up. There will be multiple opportunities to take quizzes and, depending upon the actual number of quizzes given, numerous opportunities to drop the lowest quiz grades (see section on “Academic Dishonesty” for the exception).

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. If there is a problem with students interrupting the class with persistent tardiness, your professor reserves the right to deny admittance.

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.

Electronics Policy: Experience has demonstrated that students do not really understand appropriate ways to use technology while in class.

Cell phones

Numerous studies have demonstrated a strong correlation between phone use in class and poor academic performance (at least three different studies have determined that phone use in class may result in the drop of an entire letter grade for students who insist that the world will end if they aren’t engaged in texting or scrolling through social media). For this reason, the following guidelines are in effect for this class.

You are not allowed to use your phone during class—there are **no exceptions** to this rule (please do not ask your professor to make an exception in your case as it will not be granted).

Students are expected to place their phones face down on the desk in front of them where the phone itself is visible. Once placed there, you should not touch it again until class is dismissed.

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Failure to comply with this dictate will result in the imposition of a “telephone tax.” If you are seen touching or using your phone in class you will be assessed a five point penalty off of your grade for each infraction. There is no appeal or excuse that is acceptable, so please do not attempt to make such an appeal or excuse.

Laptops and Tablets

The use of laptops and tablets for note-taking must be approved by the professor. Again, science indicates that taking notes by hand is more effective at helping students retain information. This, in turn, assists in developing analytical and critical thinking skills appropriate to the university as a learning environment and for persons receiving a university degree.

Earbuds, Media Players, and Other Electronic Devices

While it is possible to carry your entertainment options wherever you go and wherever you happen to be, this class is not such a venue. Earbuds, headphones, etc. are a distraction for both you, as a student who is supposed to be actively engaged and responsible for your own education, and your professor. Put simply, it is rude to be listening to something else when you are ostensibly engaged in listening to someone else or in a conversation. Failure to remove such distractions will incur a tonal tariff. That is to say that for each infraction you will have five points deducted from your overall grade.

For further reading:

Cell phone use in class

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2158244015573169>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01443410.2018.1489046>

<https://www.psypost.org/2018/05/just-cell-phone-possession-can-impair-learning-study-suggests-51228>

<http://www.longwood.edu/news/2015/college-students-test-scores-suffer/>

<https://www.mnn.com/family/family-activities/blogs/students-get-better-grades-when-phones-are-banned>

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/cellphones-classrooms-contribute-failing-grades-study/story?id=56837614>

<https://news.rutgers.edu/cellphone-distraction-classroom-can-lead-lower-grades-rutgers-study-finds/20180723#.XMju4P1Kipp>

Note-taking

<https://linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/Teaching/papers/MuellerAndOppenheimer2014OnTakingNotesByHand.pdf>

<https://www.collegeraptor.com/find-colleges/articles/tips-tools-advice/laptop-vs-notebook-better-take-notes/>

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https://www.eecs.yorku.ca/course_archive/2015-16/F/2011/laptop%20in%20classroom%20article.pdf

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/SingleStudyReviews/wwc_carter_022217.pdf

https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/03/science/whats-lost-as-handwriting-fades.html?_r=0

Active listening

<https://www.thoughtco.com/how-to-be-a-good-listener-31438>

<https://www.educationcorner.com/listening-skills.html>

<https://blog.cengage.com/tips-students-become-better-listener/>

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/communication-activities-adults-students/>

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty consists of any form of cheating or academic misconduct related to your role as a student. Examples of academic dishonesty may include, but is not limited to, plagiarism, copying another student's work, cheating on exams, quizzes, and/or assignments.

The penalty for academic dishonesty in this class is an immediate "0" on the graded material on which the cheating was discovered. For those assignments that might otherwise be among grades dropped in the calculation of final grades (readings quizzes for example), the "0" recorded for academic dishonesty will not be among those dropped.

In addition, in accordance with university procedure [13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty](#), you will be reported to the academic dean of the college in which your major department is housed and the department head in your major department so that a record of your offense may be maintained for purposes of future disciplinary action should it be required.

Under the policy, repeat instances of academic dishonesty may, under university policy and procedure, result your expulsion from the university. With this in mind, consider that any short-term gain that you hope to attain by engaging in unethical behavior is simply not worth it.

Conduct

Student conduct in the university is governed by university procedure [13.02.99.R0.06 Standards of Student Conduct](#). The university requires that all syllabi include a statement from section 2.2 of that procedure. Section 2.2 of the policy deals with student "obligations and responsibilities." Under the terms of the procedure, students have the obligation "to follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior commensurate with aspiration implied by a college education."

Bear in mind that your behavior reflects not only upon you, but also upon the university. You are expected to demonstrate respect for the institution, your professors, and your fellow students in addition to your own education. This is true even in the context of courses in which controversial topics and issues (such as a political science course) may be discussed.

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Your professor will serve as the arbiter of what constitutes appropriate respect and behavior in the context of this class. Students who fail to treat the institution, class, professor, and/or other students appropriately may be dropped from the class and reported to the Dean of Students for further disciplinary action should it be required.

Contrary to what many people seem to believe, a university education is not a right. Rather it is privilege—and it ought to be treated as such. You should remember that this course is part of YOUR education. And your education is, in turn, ultimately your responsibility. Experience demonstrates that some students seek to shift responsibility to others: faculty, other students, etc. This is unfortunate and demonstrates an unwillingness to own that which is yours to own. Your professors and other university staff are here to help you to succeed, but it is up to you to decide that you are going to succeed and take the steps necessary to make that happen.

Your professor cannot force you to do your homework, read the material assigned for class, or study material presented in class, etc.—that is up to you. But it is true that your success is dependent upon you doing those sorts of things. If you choose not to and your academic performance is less than adequate, it is not the fault of your professor or anyone else. It is yours.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

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 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<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.

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Campus Concealed Carry Statement

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 the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

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.

COURSE OUTLINE / READINGS CALENDAR

Thinking About Politics

08/27 Plato, "Allegory of the Cave"
08/29 Locke, "excerpt from the Second Treatise"

Citizenship, Popular Sovereignty, and the American Founding

09/03 WTP, Chapter One/FL, Chapter One
09/05 Declaration of Independence
09/10 WTP, Chapter Two
09/12 Federalist 10

Federalism, Separation of Powers, and the U.S. Constitution

09/17 Federalist 51/FL Chapter 5
09/19 WTP, Chapter Three
09/24 FL, Chapter Three

09/26 Test One

American Institutions and Constitutional Construction

10/01 WTP, Chapter Nine
10/03 WTP, Chapter Nine
10/08 WTP, Chapter Ten
10/10 WTP, Chapter Ten/FL Chapter Six
10/15 WTP, Chapter Eleven
10/17 WTP, Chapter Eleven/FL Chapter Seven
10/22 WTP, Chapter Twelve
10/24 WTP, Chapter Twelve/FL Chapter Eight
10/29 WTP, Chapter Five

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10/31 Test Two

Domestic Public Policy

11/05 WTP, Chapter Thirteen/FL Chapters 13 and 14

The Bill of Rights and Civil Liberties

11/07 WTP, Chapter Three

11/12 WTP, Chapter Three

11/14 WTP, Chapter Three

The Struggle for Equality and Equity: Civil Rights in America

11/19 WTP, Chapter Four

11/21 WTP, Chapter Four

11/26 WTP, Chapter Four/FL, Chapter Four

Political Parties and Elections

12/03 WTP, Chapter 7

From Global Power to International Pariah: U.S. Foreign Policy

12/05 WTP, Chapter 14

12/10 8:00 a.m. Test 3

Technology Requirements

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

Access and Navigation

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection 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, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

Communication and Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

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