Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you. -Pericles (430 B.C.)

Course Description: Origins and development of American and Texas government systems; federalism; civil liberties and civil rights; interest groups, political parties and elections. Meets the state requirement for American Government. This course meets the legislative requirements for a course on the Constitutions of the United States and Texas.

Purpose: This course is the first of two required political science courses designed to be an introduction to American Politics. The focus of this first course is the inputs into the political process, and to some extent the political process itself. Although many of you are not majoring in political science, all of you will be affected by the political process. Hopefully by the end of this course you will not only be more informed about the political process, but also more interested and involved in it.


Collier, Ken, Steven Galatas and Julie Harrelson-Stephens. 2014. Lone Star Politics (LSP) 3rd edition.

Grading: Course grades of 90 – 100 will be scored an A; 80-89is a B; 70-79 is a C; 60-69 is a D; below 60 is an F.

If you think that an error has been made in calculating your grade, it is your responsibility to provide me with all of your work. To that end, it would be prudent to save anything that is handed back to you until you get your final grade report.

Course Requirements: There will be three exams given during the semester as well as a cumulative final. You must complete three exams, each worth 32%. If you complete all four exams I will drop the lowest grade. Tests will cover material from the lecture and the reading. In addition, supplemental reading material may be periodically assigned during the semester. The final 4% of your course grade will come from the Constitutional Principles writing assignment (at the end of this syllabus).
There are No Make-up exams allowed. In the event that you get sick or oversleep and miss an exam, I drop one test grade. If you miss two exams, you get a ZERO on the second test. If you know you will miss an exam due to an excused absence (i.e. athletic trip, medical issue with documentation) you must make arrangements with me at least two days prior to the scheduled exam date to take the exam early.

**Attendance:**
It has been my experience that poor attendance will result in a poor grade in the class. Thus, you are strongly encouraged to attend regularly. Please be on time to class and plan to stay, as entering a class late or leaving early is always disruptive and will result in you being counted absent.

**Participation:**
Participation in class discussions is strongly encouraged. As students, you will get the most out of this class if you engage in the discussions. I ask that you respect the diverse backgrounds and views of your fellow students, and employ common courtesies during class.

**Other policies:**
In addition, any cell phones, beepers or other electronic devices that ring/beep/click/ect. or any talking or behaviour that disrupts other students or your instructor will result in a five point grade reduction on your next exam.

Anyone having problems in this course is strongly encouraged to contact the instructor as early as possible. I will be happy to meet you and help you in any way possible. I may be able to help you study more effectively or recommend other assistance. Remember, I want you to do well in this class!

The Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 restricts release of certain student information, such as grades. In accordance with the law, I will not be able to give grades out over the phone or e-mail. Please – **DO NOT ASK.** I will be happy to discuss your grades with you in person, during office hours or by appointment.

Class information, including changes of dates, review sheets, or other information will be posted on the class D2L site.

This syllabus should be seen as a rough guide for the coming semester. I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus throughout the semester.
**Program Learning Outcomes:**
This is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for this major are addressed in this course.

**General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes:**
This course has been selected to be part of Stephen F. Austin State University’s core curriculum. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six objectives for all core courses: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives.

Assessment of these objectives at SFA will be based on student work from all core curriculum courses. This student work will be collected in D2L through LiveText, the assessment management system selected by SFA to collect student work for core assessment. LiveText accounts will be provided to all students enrolled in core courses through the university technology fee. You will be required to register your LiveText account, and you will be notified how to register your account through your SFA e-mail account. If you forward your SFA e-mail to another account and do not receive an e-mail concerning LiveText registration, please be sure to check your junk mail folder and your spam filter for these e-mails. If you have questions about LiveText call Ext. 1267 or e-mail SFALiveText@sfasu.edu.

The chart below indicates the core objectives addressed by this course, the assignment(s) that will be used to assess the objectives in this course and uploaded to LiveText this semester, and the date the assignment(s) should be uploaded to LiveText. Not every assignment will be collected for assessment every semester. Your instructor will notify you which assignment(s) must be submitted for assessment in LiveText this semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Course Assignment Title</th>
<th>Date Due in LiveText</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Skills</td>
<td>To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.</td>
<td>Constitutional Principles Assignment</td>
<td>April 6th 5:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.</td>
<td>Constitutional Principles Assignment</td>
<td>April 6th 5:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empirical and Quantitative Skills</td>
<td>To include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.</td>
<td>Constitutional Principles Assignment</td>
<td>April 6th 5:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.</td>
<td>Constitutional Principles Assignment</td>
<td>April 6th 5:00pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Learning Outcomes:
By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Examine the relationship between political culture and policy
- Describe the basic features of the U.S. and the Texas constitutions
- Understand the inputs into the political process (participation, parties, interest groups) and how these inputs theoretically and practically affect the political system
- Understand the concept and importance of federalism for the American political system

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Students with Disabilities
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.
Course Schedule

I. Introduction; Political Culture
   KTR Chapter 1; LSP Chapter 1; The Declaration of Independence.

II. The U.S. Constitution
    KTR Chapter 2; The U.S. Constitution.

Exam 1: Tuesday February 17th

III. The Texas Constitution
     LSP Chapter 2

IV. Federalism
    KTR Chapter 3

V. Public Opinion
   KTR Chapter 10

Spring Break: No class 3/17

Exam 2: Tuesday March 24

VI. Political Parties and Interest Groups
    KTR Chapter 11

April 6th Constitutional Principles Writing Assignment due in LiveText by 5:00pm

VII. Parties and Interest Groups in Texas
     LSP Chapter 10 & Chapter 11

VIII. Voting, Campaigns and Elections
      KTR Chapter 12; LSP Chapter 9

Exam 3: Tuesday April 21st

IX. Civil Rights
    KTR Chapter 5, the 13th, 14th, 15th, 19th, 24th, and 26th Amendments

X. Civil Liberties
    KTR Chapter 4, the Bill of Rights

Tuesday May 12, 6:45-8:45: Cumulative Final Exam in the regular classroom.
Constitutional Principles Writing Assignment: 

This assignment requires you to select a civil liberty (e.g. the right to privacy, right to bear arms, or freedom of speech); or a civil right (e.g. the right to vote or due process. You will develop a well-written essay on the constitutional principle that you select. Your assignment must include a graphic representation of some aspect of the material that you are discussing, for example a chart or graph of data that helps to demonstrate your understanding of the constitutional principle. The assignment will directly assess your mastery of all four Core Curriculum Objectives assigned to this course: critical thinking, communication skills, social responsibility, and personal responsibility. To this end, you assignment, including the graphic representation, must address each of the following issues.

Mastery of critical thinking is demonstrated by:
- Clear and concise conceptualization of the constitutional principle (for example an attempt to define free speech)
- Correctly identifying points of contention or debate over the constitutional principle (e.g. what is hate speech, when may speech be limited, the “Clear and Present Danger” test, etc.) and collection of relevant sources.
- Evaluation of relevant arguments and construction of a logical conclusion

Mastery of communication is demonstrated by:
- Organization and clarity in writing
- Content and accuracy of the information
- Correct use of grammar and syntax
- Use of appropriate sources for your assignment
- Extent to which visual aids (such as charts, graphs, etc.) support your ideas
- Extent to which visual aids are seamlessly integrated into your assignment

Mastery of social responsibility is demonstrated by:
- Clearly and precisely discussing the impact of one’s own culture or subculture associated with the key constitutional principle (e.g. why was you perceive to be “hate speech” may be freedom of expression for another).
- Identifying the role of civic responsibility and the complexity of civic responsibility as they relate to the key constitutional principle (e.g. what is the responsibility of gun owners who exercise their second amendment rights to the larger community)
- Discussing how individuals in regional or national communities affect the constitutional principle you selected (e.g. how do understandings of the right to bear arms differ from the American South versus the urban centers of the Northeast versus the Pacific Northwest; and how do individuals in these communities shape understandings of constitutional principle you selected)

Mastery of personal responsibility is demonstrated by:
- Evaluating your personal beliefs regarding the constitutional principle and how those beliefs affect others (e.g. what is your personal position on “hate speech” and why do you hold that perspective)
- Explaining how the context of your life and the lives of others influence your position on the constitutional principle (e.g. how would your perspective on freedom of religion vary if you lived in an Evangelical Christian majority area or a Muslim majority community within the U.S.)
- Evaluating the perspectives of other viewpoints associated with the constitutional principle (e.g. how do you view those who disagree with your position on the right to bear arms)
- Do your conclusions about your own personal beliefs point toward a full consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of alternative viewpoints or of the application of the constitutional principle to a new setting (e.g. How does fourth amendment search and seizure apply to cell phone conversations held in public while walking across campus)

The specific assignment will be provided on-line through the course D2L website. You will upload this assignment to LiveText through the course D2L website 5:00p.m. on April 6th. Late assignments will be penalized ten points per day. This assignment is required by the state of Texas.