Introduction to American Government: Theory and Politics – PSC 141.20
Department of Government – Stephen F. Austin State University
Fall 2017 – MWF 10:00 to 10:50 – Business/McGee 269

Instructor: Dr. Peyton Gooch
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Office: Vera Dugas Liberal Arts North 112 (first floor of the Liberal Arts Building)
Office Hours: Tuesday 12:30-2:30pm
Wednesday 8:30-9:30am
Thursday 12:30-2:30pm

Course description:

SFA’s official description of the course reads, “Origins and development of American and Texas government systems; federalism; civil liberties and civil rights; and interest groups, political parties and elections. This course meets the legislative requirements for a course on the constitutions of the United States and Texas” (SFA’s General Bulletin 2015-2016, p. 324). There are no prerequisites for this three credit hour course.

Course Communication:

Email and/or visiting office hours are the best ways to contact me. I will respond to email as soon as possible. Typically, I respond within one business day, but it may take as many as two business days.

Familiarize yourself with D2L. Check the course’s D2L newsfeed and your D2L email frequently for course updates, particularly syllabus updates. Several course readings will appear on D2L under the Content tab.

To learn more about using D2L, visit http://sfaonline.sfasu.edu. For technical support, contact the Office of Instructional Technology at d2l@sfasu.edu or 936-468-1919. For general computer support (not D2L related), contact the Technical Support Center at 936-468-4357 or helpdesk@sfasu.edu.

Books:

1) American Government: Readings and Cases by Peter Woll (You’ll need the 19th edition)
   a. ISBN: 9780205116140
2) Texas Government: Theory and Politics edited by Alan Baily
   a. ISBN: 9781524922351

Both texts are required. Chapter and item numbers may differ in older editions. If you use older editions, you are responsible for reading the correct content if/when chapter and item numbers differ from those listed on the syllabus.
Course Components:

Each course component is a percentage (or weight) of your final course grade. See tables below. Grades are non-negotiable. Late assignments are not accepted. Extra credit is not offered. I expect you to have read and understood SFA’s academic honesty policies (see below). The penalties for plagiarism, cheating, and other failures of academic integrity are outlined in the Academic Honesty section of this syllabus (see below).

**Class Engagement – 30%**

Engaging in civil discourse, the respectful exchange of ideas, is a course requirement. To this end, I encourage you to ask questions and think aloud in class discussion. If followed, the guidelines for class meetings described below will facilitate civil discourse. I expect you to have read and understood the information in the Guidelines for Class Meetings section of this syllabus (see below). Failure to follow these guidelines will negatively impact your grade in the course.

Expect unannounced (i.e., pop) quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes are administered in class. Students who arrive late or leave early will earn a zero on that day’s quiz. Quizzes include multiple choice and short answer questions. To prepare for quizzes, complete the required reading, review D2L materials, review notes from the previous class, and otherwise retain and engage with the course material.

**Study Questions – 30%**

You will submit a series of graded study questions about the assigned readings. See D2L for more information. Please review the sample study questions for information about formatting, length, and style. Bring a typed copy of your completed study questions to class according to the course schedule (see below). **Study questions that appear in my department mailbox, under my office door, or in my email inbox will earn a grade of zero.** Use study questions as opportunities to practice expressing yourself in English prose. Proofread your work. Avoid violating the rules of usage and principles of composition. Do not include outside research or a works cited, bibliography, or foot/endnotes. However, if you quote from the assigned reading, I expect you to provide the page number. See below for information about what constitutes plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.

**Exams – 40%**

Unless I notify you otherwise, exam will be administered according to the course schedule (see below). Each exam will include multiple choice and short answer questions drawn from required reading, lesson material, and class discussion. You are responsible for all of these components.

**Early Submission and Makeup Work**

Avoid missing class. Meet the deadlines outlined in the course schedule. If you miss coursework due to documented illness, documented emergency, or a documented University-related activity, it is your responsibility to request makeup work. Acceptable documentation, evaluated on a case-by-case basis, is required to complete make up work or submit late work. It is your responsibility to provide this documentation. If the absence meets the above criteria, we will discuss options for completing the missed coursework. If you know you will miss class or coursework ahead of time for unavoidable medical, personal, or University-related reasons, it is your responsibility to notify me as soon as possible, provide documentation, and submit any missed coursework either early or upon your return to class. Once you return, we can discuss options for missed quizzes and/or exams. Select examples of these situations include surgery, military service, jury duty, and intercollegiate athletic events.
Guidelines for Class Meetings:

Professional engagement in class requires consistent preparation, attendance, punctuality, and attentiveness.

**Preparedness:** Meaningful participation during class depends on reading the assigned material *before* class and having that material with you *in* class for reference. Complete the required reading and assignments *before* class begins. Bring all readings with you. Print D2L readings and bring them to class.

**Attendance:** Students with ten (10) or more absences will automatically fail the course.

**Punctuality and Attentiveness:** I expect you be ready to take notes and participate in each class meeting from start to finish. Unless you have discussed it with me beforehand, late arrivals and/or early departures are prohibited. Students who arrive late or depart early will be counted absent and earn a zero for the day’s quiz.

**Electronics:** Personal electronics have a negative impact on attentiveness and retention. As such, no phones and no laptops. Take notes with pen and paper. Phones tend to be the biggest temptation, so the following penalties describe phone use explicitly. These penalties, however, apply to the use of any electronic device, including recording audio or images. Students who use their phone, check their phone, have their phone in their lap/on their desk, or allow their phone to ring/vibrate (or be otherwise disruptive) during class will be counted absent, earn a zero on that day’s quiz, and be asked to leave the class. Students who ignore/violate the electronics policy a second time will earn a zero for the class engagement course component. To minimize disruption, circumstances that require phone use must be cleared with me before class begins.

**Inappropriate Conduct:** According to SFA’s Student Conduct Code (D-34.1), your behavior in class should not interfere with my ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program. Students who disrupt the learning environment will be subject to penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums. The instructor has full discretion over what classroom behavior is (in)appropriate.
**Tentative Course Schedule**

This calendar is subject to change. Complete all reading and writing assignments **before** class.

AG = *American Government: Readings and Cases* – Pay close attention to the assigned items/subsections
TG = *Texas Government: Theory & Politics*
D2L = Print the excerpt from under D2L’s content tab. Bring your printed copy to class.

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**SECTION I**

**Week 1:** Wednesday, August 30 and Friday, Sept. 1 – Our Project

Read: *All readings in the folder labeled **Week 1** under D2L’s content tab

Write: 

*SQ 1* due in class on Friday, September 1

See D2L for detailed instructions. Be sure to bring a hard copy of your typed responses to class. Late study questions (SQs) earn a grade of zero. Emailed or other electronic submissions of SQs earn a grade of zero.

**Week 2:** Wednesday, Sept. 6 and Friday, Sept. 8 – Political Culture

Read: *All readings in the folder labeled **Week 2** under D2L’s content tab

**Week 3:** Monday, Sept. 11 through Friday, Sept. 15 – Political Culture

Read: *All readings in the folder labeled **Week 3** under D2L’s content tab

*Chapter 1 in *American Government: Readings and Cases*, items 1 through 5

Write: 

*SQ 2* due in class on Monday, September 11

**Week 4:** Monday, Sept. 18 through Friday, Sept. 22 – Political Culture

Read: *All readings in the folder labeled **Week 4** under D2L’s content tab

*Chapters 1 and 2 in *Texas Government: Theory & Politics*

**Week 5:** Monday, Sept. 25 through Friday, Sept. 29 – Federalism

Read: *All readings in the folder labeled **Week 5** under D2L’s content tab

*Chapter 2 in *American Government: Readings and Cases*, items 6 and 7

**Week 6:** Monday, Oct. 2 through Friday, Oct. 6 – Federalism

Read: 

*Chapter 2 in *American Government: Readings and Cases*, items 8 and 13

Write: 

*SQ 3* due in class on Monday, September 25

**Week 7:** Monday, Oct. 9 through Friday, Oct. 13 – Federalism

Read: 

*Chapter 2 in *American Government: Readings and Cases*, items 14 through 16

*All readings in the folder labeled **Week 7** under D2L’s content tab

**Week 8:** Monday, Oct. 16 – **Exam I**
Wednesday, Oct. 18 and Friday, Oct. 20 - Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Read:  
* All readings in the folder labeled Week 8 under D2L’s content tab 
* Chapter 3 in American Government: Readings and Cases, item 17

Week 9: Monday, Oct. 23 through Friday, Oct. 27 – Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Read:  
* Chapter 3 in American Government: Readings and Cases, items 19, 20, 25, 30, and 73 
* All readings in the folder labeled Week 9 under D2L’s content tab

Write:  
SQ 4 due in class on Monday, October 23

Week 10: Monday, Oct. 30 through Friday, Nov. 3 – Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Read:  
* All readings in the folder labeled Week 10 under D2L’s content tab 
* Chapter 3 in Texas Government: Theory & Politics 
* Chapter 3 in American Government: Readings and Cases, items 24 and 29

Week 11: Monday, Nov. 6 through Friday, Nov. 10 – Parties, Interest Groups, and the Electorate

Read:  
* Chapter 4 in American Government: Readings and Cases, items 31, 39, 43, 44, 32, 33

Write:  
SQ 5 due in class on Monday, November 6

Week 12: Monday, Nov. 13 through Friday, Nov. 17 – Parties, Interest Groups, and the Electorate

Read:  
* Chapter 4 in American Government: Readings and Cases, items 34 through 36 
* Chapters 6 and 7 in Texas Government: Theory & Politics

Week 13: Thanksgiving Break – no class

Week 14: Monday, Nov. 27 through Friday, Dec. 1 – Parties, Interest Groups, and the Electorate

Read:  
* Chapter 4 in American Government: Readings and Cases, items 37 and 38 
* Chapters 4 and 5 in Texas Government: Theory & Politics

Write:  
SQ 6 due in class on Monday, November 27

Week 15: Monday, December 4 through Friday, December 8 – Loose Ends

Wednesday, December 13 from 10:30am to 12:30pm – Exam II

NOTE: Exam II is not comprehensive. Questions will only be drawn from Section II.
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/.

WITHHELD GRADES
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 semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

ACADEMIC HONESTY
“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.” - SFASU’s Policy Manual (2011), section on “Academic Integrity” (A-9)

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. All cases of academic dishonesty will be handled according to University policies and procedures (A-9.1). The consequences for academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarizing or cheating) may range from a score of zero (0) on the assignment to an “F” for the course. For details, students should refer to the SFA Policy Manual (2015) or the University’s General Bulletin, 2014 – 2015 section entitled “Academic Integrity” and other sources of University policy.