Instructor: Lee W. Payne  
Email: paynelee@sfasu.edu  
Office: Liberal Arts North 138  
Department: Department of Government  
Office Hours:  
T/Th: 8:30 - 9:30 & 12:30 - 1:30  
W-Online: 12:00 - 1:00  
Telephone: (936) 468-2183

Course Description

Legislative, executive, and judicial functions in American and Texas governments; public policy areas such as finance, social services, and foreign policy; Texas local and county governments.

Requirements of the Course

First, you are expected to come to class. Second, you are expected to read the assigned material before class. Third, you are expected to discuss the assigned readings in class. By “discuss” I mean to engage in active, in-depth, conversations with your classmates and me over the assigned readings. Finally, you are expected to stay informed on current political events by reading the paper, watching the news, browsing political websites, etc. It is sometimes easier to understand political concepts and theories when you can relate them to current political activities. Therefore, we will discuss current events in class as well.

On Liberty: Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion – “[T]he peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race … . If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth produced by its collision with error” (76).

Please feel free to voice your opinions (as long as you do not intentionally insult your fellow classmates). Opinions generate class discussions and class discussions generate knowledge and understanding. This class does not have to be boring but participation is needed to keep it from being so. Therefore, how boring this class is depends on you.

Grading Policy

Grades for this course will come from four exams (25% each).

Examinations: Examinations (except makeup exams) will consist of 50 multiple-choice and/or true/false questions. There will be four exams. The exams will only cover the information in each segment. You will not come to class to take the exams; they will be posted on D2L. The day of the exam, it will open at 8 AM and close at 8 PM. You will have 60 minutes to take each exam. Exams will cover reading, lecture, and movie material. You are responsible for each of these. Tentative exam dates are noted below.

Ten (10) questions from the Texas Government: Structures and Functions textbook will be on each of your exams. You should use the Texas Government: Structures and Functions questions as study material to prepare for your exams.

Make-up exams will be given only in the case of documented illness, documented emergencies, or University related absences. Make-up exams may be more difficult than scheduled exams (e.g., essay). If you miss an exam, it is your responsibility to inform me as to the nature of your absence. If the absence is excused, we will schedule a time to take the make-up exam. No exams will be given early.
**Attendance:** Attendance will not be taken.

**Required Books**


I have included a link to this textbook on Amazon because it is offering the best price I have found.

Note: Outside readings may be assigned throughout the semester.

**Policy on Academic Dishonesty**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in many 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](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes**

In any given semester, one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for political science/government Foundational Component Area may be assessed in this course.

- Critical Thinking Skills – creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
- Communication Skills – effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
- Social Responsibility – intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to effectively engage in regional, national, and global communities
- Personal Responsibility – the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making
Program Learning Outcomes

This course is a general education core curriculum course. No specific program learning outcomes for a political science major are addressed in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able:

- to describe the basic themes and concepts related to the study of American and Texas political institutions;
- to examine the relationship between political behavior and political institutions, especially the interdependence of behavior and institutions;
- to think critical thinking about American and Texas politics, especially the institutional framework of the system;
- to discuss the salient features of political institutions as understood by political scientists;
- to understand citizenship in the American political system more completely.

Additional Points

- Be on time! If you arrive late for class, quietly take a seat at the back of the room.
- Be polite! Do not talk over your classmates or me.
- Turn off your cell phones. If your cell phone goes off in class, you will be required to perform an embarrassing task in front of the class (hint: learn the words and motions to “I’m a Little Teapot”). If you are texting, your cell phone is on and chances are you are not paying attention in class. Therefore, texting is a punishable offense. If caught, you will be required to sing something in front of the class.
- I reserve the right to eject any student who violates these or other rules.

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy: 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/.

SI Leader: I am happy to announce that Ryan Maher will be returning as my SI Leader this semester. Please take advantage of this resource. Students who attend SI tend to make a letter-grade higher than those who don’t. The time and location of the SI meeting will be announced by Ryan on the first day of class.
Tentative Class Schedule

Week 1  Introduction (*HE*, Chapter 1)
Week 2  U.S. Congress (*KTR*, Chapter 6 and *HE*, Chapter 2)
Week 3  U.S. Congress (*KTR*, Chapter 6 and *HE*, Chapter 3)
Week 4  Texas Legislature (*TG*, Chapter 1 and *HE*, Chapter 4)

**TEST 1  Thursday, September 21**

Week 5  President (*KTR*, Chapter 7 and *HE*, Chapter 5)
Week 6  President (*KTR*, Chapter 7 and *HE*, Chapter 6)
Week 7  Federal Bureaucracy (*KTR*, Chapter 8 and *HE*, Chapter 7)
Week 8  Texas Governor & Bureaucracy (*TG*, Chapters 2 & 3 and *HE*, Chapter 8)

**TEST 2  Thursday, October 19**

Week 9  Federal Courts (*KTR*, Chapter 9 and *HE*, Chapter 9)
Week 10  Federal Courts (*KTR*, Chapter 9 and *HE*, Chapter 10)
Week 11  Texas Courts (*TG*, Chapters 4 & 5 and *HE*, Chapter 11)

**TEST 3  Thursday, November 9**

Week 12  Domestic Policy (*KTR*, Chapter 14 and *HE*, Chapter 12)
Week 13  Thanksgiving Week Break!! (*HE*, Chapter 13)
Week 14  Foreign Policy (*KTR*, Chapter 14 and *HE*, Chapter 14)
Week 15  Local Government (*TG*, Chapter 6 and *HE*, Chapter 15)
Week 16  **FINAL EXAM: TBA**
Course Syllabus Appendix

General Education Core Curriculum

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>Not assessed this semester</td>
<td>December 1, 2017</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>Writing Assignment #3</td>
<td>Not applicable</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>
<td>Not assessed in Political Science 142</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<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>
<td>Not assessed in Political Science 142</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.</td>
<td>Not assessed in Political Science 142</td>
<td>Not applicable</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>Not assessed in Political Science 142</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public Policy Writing Assignment:

For this assignment, each student will select a specific area of public policy, for example the issue of the national debt and budget deficit. You will develop a well-written essay on that public policy issue. Your assignment must include one or more graphic representations of some aspect of the material that you are discussing. A chart or a graph of data showing trends in the size of the national debt, spending priorities of the national government, etc. are examples. This assignment will directly assess your mastery of one or both of the two Core Curriculum Objectives assigned to this course: critical thinking and communication skills. To this end, your assignment, including the graphic representation, must address each of the following issues.

Mastery of critical thinking is demonstrated by:
• Clear and concise definitions of key terms in the public policy selected, for example defining the national debt and budget deficit
• Correctly identifying and evaluating explanations for the public policy issue, for example identifying reasons for the national debt and budget deficit and evaluating explanations for the existence of the national debt and deficit.
• Evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of the explanation(s) related to the public policy and the construction of a logical conclusion. For example, discussing advantages of solving the national debt through spending cuts, or by raising taxes, or by reforming entitlement programs and discussing the disadvantages associated with the selected solution.

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