POLITICAL SCIENCE 447.001 (F-377, T/Th 9:30 – 10:45)
The United States Congress
Stephen F. Austin State University
Fall 2017 (8.28.17 – 12.15.17)

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Office Hours:
T/Th: 8:30 - 9:30 & 12:30 – 1:30
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Course Description

This course is intended to introduce you to the structure, powers, organization, political control, and procedures of Congress. Prerequisites: PSC 141 & 142.

Course Expectations

First, you are expected to come to class. Second, you are expected to read the assigned material before class. I cannot stress the importance of this point enough. Failure to read the assigned material before class will result in poor pop-quiz grades. 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.

You should 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.

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. 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.

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).

Course Grading Policy

Grades for this course will come from four sources: one exam (40%), homework assignments (40%), simulation (10%), and reading pop-quizzes (10%).
**Exam:** The exam question(s) will be posted on D2L prior to the class start time (9:30 AM) on Thursday, November 9. You are required to email me your exam by the start of class (9:30 AM) on Thursday, November 16. I will not accept late exams. If your exam is not time stamped in my Inbox prior to 9:30 AM on November 16, you will receive a zero on the exam. I want to grade your exams blindly, so you are to save your Word document (if you do not have Word, convert your exam to Word in the library before emailing it to me) as your SFA student identification number. Do NOT put your name anywhere within the text of your exam. I reserve the right to deduct ten points (one letter grade) from any exam with identifying markers.

The exam question(s) will require you to critically analyze congressional theories and practices and apply this knowledge to the question(s) in essay form. Your essay answers are to be double-spaced, use 12 point Times New Roman font, have 1” margins on all four sides, no extra space between paragraphs, and be a minimum of five and a maximum of six pages in length. You are expected to reference and properly cite (parenthetical citations) relevant material. You are expected to turn in university quality work! I will count off for spelling and grammar mistakes. Also, I reserve the right to deduct ten points (one letter grade) for each formatting error in your exam essay. You are all adults and it’s time you learned how to follow directions.

Make-up exams shouldn’t be necessary since the exams are week-long, home assignments. However, accommodations may be made in the case of documented illness, documented emergencies, or University related absences. If you have a problem during the exam, it is your responsibility to inform me as to the nature of your problem.

**Simulation:** You will be required to participate in a simulated Congress. You will select a member of Congress to represent, participate in caucuses, write and introduce legislation, debate legislation, serve on committees, and vote on legislation; some of you will have leadership roles. Unexcused absences on simulation days will count against your role-play grade.

Your simulation grade has two parts: worksheet assignments that you turn in will account for 50% of your simulation grade; and actual in-class simulation role-play will account for 50% of your simulation grade. Note – some worksheet assignments will be done in class; others will require you to work on them outside of class. The outside worksheet assignments are not counted as part of your homework grade and I will not accept late simulation assignments without a documented, excused absence.

Note: I will take attendance during the simulation. If you have unexcused absences during the simulation, you will lose ten (10) points off your simulation grade for each absence.

**Homework Assignments:** You will be given five homework assignments throughout the course of the semester. These assignments will require you to conduct some research, crunch some numbers, and report your findings – same font, margin, etc. rules for the exams apply here. Your papers must be a minimum of two-pages and cannot exceed three pages in length. Homework assignments will be graded for content as well as spelling, grammar, etc. Without documentation of an excused absence on the day homework assignments are due, I will not accept late homework.
**Reading Pop-Quizzes:** Throughout the course of this semester you will be given a number of reading pop-quizzes at the beginning of class. These pop-quizzes will be somewhat random but the probability of having a reading pop-quiz is directly related to the amount of reading related discussions in class. If I feel like most students are not reading, I will administer a number of pop-quizzes to generate renewed interest in reading. The quizzes will cover material from previous reading assignments. The questions will require short written answers. If you are absent during a pop quiz, you will be given a different set of questions – but only if you have a legitimate excuse that is dated and time stamped prior to the time class started on day you missed class. Unexcused absences on pop quiz days will result in a zero for that quiz.

**Attendance:** Attendance will not be taken. That said, I will not allow homework to be turned in or pop-quizzes to be made up if your absences is unexcused. It is your responsibility to inform me of, and provide evidence of, excused absences.

**Required Books**


**Policy on Academic Dishonesty**

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](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)
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. As such, no EEOs or SLOs are required for this course.

Additional Points

- I will not accept any unstapled homework assignments, papers, etc.
- 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 or I catch you texting 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”)
- 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/.
**Tentative Class Schedule**

**Week 1**  
Aug. 29  General Introduction and Writing for Political Science  
Aug. 31  Chapter 1

**Week 2**  
Sep. 05  Chapter 2  
Sep. 07  Chapter 2  

**Week 3**  
Sep. 12  Chapter 3 (41-56)  
Sep. 14  Chapter 4 (86-96)  

**Week 4**  
Sep. 19  Chapter 5 (117-128)  
Sep. 21  Chapter 6  

**Week 5**  
Sep. 26  Chapter 7  
Sep. 28  Chapter 7  

**Week 6**  
Oct. 03  Chapter 8  
Oct. 05  Chapter 8  

**Week 7**  
Oct. 10  Chapter 9 (255-273)  
Oct. 12  Chapter 10 (275-291 & 299-301)  

**Week 8**  
Oct. 17  Chapter 11  
Oct. 19  Chapter 12 (342-362)  

**Week 9**  
Oct. 24  Chapter 13  
Oct. 26  Chapter 13  

**Week 10**  
Oct. 31  Chapter 14  
Nov. 02  Chapter 14  

**Week 11**  
Nov. 07  Chapter 15  
Nov. 09  Chapter 15  

Exam posted
**Week 12**
Nov. 14    Party Caucuses Exercise
Nov. 16    Committee Meeting Exercise
                      Exam due

**Week 13**
Nov. 21    Thanksgiving Holiday!
Nov. 23    Thanksgiving Holiday!

**Week 14**
Nov. 29    Committee Meeting Exercise
Dec. 01    Second Party Caucuses Exercise

**Week 15**
Dec. 06    Floor Debate and Voting Exercise
Dec. 08    Floor Debate Worksheet due

**Note:** I may assign additional reading sources throughout the semester.