Introduction to American Government: Theory and Politics – PSC 141.010  
Department of Government – Stephen F. Austin State University  
Fall 2018 – MWF 12pm – Ferguson 377

Instructor: Dr. Peyton Wofford Gooch  
E-mail: woffordpe@sfasu.edu  Email is the best way to reach me.  
Phone: 936-468-4408  
Office: Vera Dugas Liberal Arts North 112 (first floor of the Liberal Arts Building)  
Office Hours: Monday: 1pm to 3pm  Tuesday: noon to 3pm  Wednesday: 1pm to 3pm

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. Typically, I respond to email within one business day, but it may take as many as two business days in certain circumstances.

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) Philosophy, Politics, and Economics by Anomaly, Brennan, Munger, and Sayre-McCord  
   a. ISBN: 9780190207311

2) Texas Government: Theory and Politics edited by Alan Baily  
   a. ISBN: 9781524922351

Both texts are required. 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. See the link on D2L to purchase both books from SFA’s bookstore.
Course Components:

Each course component is a percentage 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), including the penalties for academic dishonesty. I share Professor Melerovsky’s conviction about grading. He explains,

I care about whether or not you understand the arguments, see their importance, and can engage with the ideas. For this reason, you should spend time thinking about the arguments rather than memorizing facts. Do the arguments sense to you? What’s wrong with them? In all grading assignments, I will be looking to see that you can both correctly represent the basic claims and come to your own judgment about the issues.¹

Class Engagement – 35%
Engaging in civil discourse, the respectful exchange of ideas, is a course requirement. To this end, I encourage you to ask questions, think aloud, and otherwise be intellectually present during class. This is not a participation grade – that is, talking frequently does not mean you are intellectually present. I expect you to have read and understood the information in the Guidelines for Class Meetings section of this syllabus (see below). If followed, these guidelines for class meetings will facilitate civil discourse. I’ve also uploaded an engagement rubric to D2L. Please review it. 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 – 35%
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.

Exam – 30%
Unless I notify you otherwise, a comprehensive final exam will be administered according to SFA’s final exam schedule. Exam questions drawn from required readings, lesson material, and class discussion.

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 makeup 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.

¹ If you’re interested in Melerovsky’s work, come see me.
Weighting (or Percentage) Scale

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Component</th>
<th>Percentage of Student’s Final Course Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Engagement</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study Questions</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Final Grade Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Course Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90% and up</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80% - 89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% - 79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and lower</td>
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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.

**Attendance:** Attendance is expected. Any more than three (3) unexcused absences will lower your grade.

**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.
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
To obtain disability related accommodations, 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. – SFASU’s Policy Manual (2011), “Semester Grades Policy” (A-54)

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.
**Tentative Course Schedule**

This calendar is subject to change. Complete all reading and writing assignments before class. Bring your texts. Print assigned excerpts from D2L’s content tab and bring your printed copy to class. In short, have a hard copy of everything.

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**Week 1: Wednesday, August 29 and Friday, August 31 – Our Project**

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

**Week 2: Monday, September 3 – Our Project**

**Read:**
- *Reread all* pieces in the **Week 1** folder

**Week 2: Wednesday, September 5 through Friday, September 7 – Political Authority**

**Read:**
- *All* readings in **Chapter 1 – Political Authority** and in the D2L folder labeled **Week 2**

**Write:**
- **SQ 1** due in class on Wednesday, September 5

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 3: Monday, September 10 through Friday, September 14 – Political Authority**

**Read:**
- *All* readings in **Chapter 1 – Political Authority** and in the D2L folder labeled **Week 2**
- *Chapters 1 and 2 in Texas Government: Theory & Politics*

**Week 4: Monday, September 17 through Friday, September 21 – Property, Money, and Happiness**

**Read:**
- *All* readings in **Chapter 4 – Property** and in the D2L folder labeled **Week 4**

**Write:**
- **SQ 2** due in class on Monday, September 17

**Week 5: Monday, September 24 through Friday, September 28 – Justice**

**Read:**
- *All* readings in **Chapter 7 – Justice** and the folder labeled **Week 5**

**Week 6: Monday, October 1 through Friday, October 5 – Equality**

**Read:**
- *All* readings in **Chapter 8 – Equality** and the folder labeled **Week 6**

**Write:**
- **SQ 3** due in class on Monday, October 1

**Week 7:** No class
Week 8: Monday, October 15 through Friday, October 19 – Reasons to Vote

Read:  
* All readings in Chapter 11 – Reasons to Vote and the folder labeled Week 8  
* Chapters 6 and 7 in Texas Government: Theory & Politics

Week 9: Monday, October 22 through Friday, October 26 – Liberty and Paternalism (civil liberties and civil rights)

Read:  
* All readings in Chapter 12 – Liberty and Paternalism and the folder labeled Week 9
Write:  
SQ 4 due in class on Monday, October 22

Week 10: Monday, October 29 through Friday, November 2 – Liberty and Paternalism (civil liberties and civil rights)

Read:  
* All readings in the folder labeled Week 10 under D2L’s content tab

Weeks 11 & 12: Monday, Nov. 5 through Friday, Nov. 16 – Liberty and Paternalism (civil liberties and civil rights)

Read:  
* All readings in the folder labeled Week 11 under D2L’s content tab  
* Chapter 3 in Texas Government: Theory & Politics
Write:  
SQ 5 due in class on Monday, November 5

Week 13: Monday, November 19 through Friday, November 23 – No class – Happy Thanksgiving!

Week 14: Monday, November 26 through Friday, November 30 – Markets on the Margin

Read:  
* All readings in Chapter 13 – Markets on the Margin and the folder labeled Week 14  
* Chapters 4 and 5 in Texas Government: Theory & Politics
Write:  
SQ 6 due in class on Friday, November 30

Week 15: Monday, December 3 through Friday, December 7 – Markets on the Margin

Read:  
* All readings in Chapter 13 – Markets on the Margin and the folder labeled Week 15  
* Chapters 4 and 5 in Texas Government: Theory & Politics

Final Exam – Wednesday, December 12 from 1pm to 3pm