**Course Description**

Origins and development of American and Texas government systems; federalism; civil liberties and civil rights; interest groups, political parties, and elections.

**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.

**Required Books**


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

**Grading Policy**

**Examinations:** Examinations (except makeup exams) will consist of 50 multiple-choice and/or true/false questions. There will be three 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 11 AM and close at 12:15 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.

33.3%. These grades will be averaged to calculate your final grade.

A = 90 – 100%
B = 80 – 89%
C = 70 – 79%
D = 60 – 69%
F = Less than 60%

**Attendance:** Attendance will not be taken.

**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

**General Education Core Curriculum Objectives**

In any given semester, one or more of the following Exemplary Educational Objectives for the political science/government Foundational Component may be assessed.

- **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 and no specific program learning outcomes for a political science major are addressed in this course.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, you should be able to

- To describe the basic themes and concepts related to the study of American and Texas political behavior
- To examine the relationship between political behavior and political institutions, especially the interdependence of behavior and institutions
- To think critically about American and Texas politics, especially the theoretical foundations of both systems
- To discuss the foundations of the US and Texas Constitutions
- To identify the key schools of thought regarding voting behavior and electoral processes
- To explain the roles and functions of political parties, interest groups, and media in a democratic political system
- 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/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**SI Leader:** I am happy to announce that Daniel Greco will be 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. Location and time of SI sessions forthcoming.

**Tentative Class Schedule**

Please note that the textbook titles are abbreviated below. *Keeping the Republic* is abbreviated *KTR*, and *Texas Government: Theory and Politics* is abbreviated *TG*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>American Government (<em>KTR</em>, Chp. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>US Political Culture (<em>KTR</em>, Chp. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Texas Political Culture (<em>TG</em>, Chp. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>US Constitution (<em>KTR</em>, Chp. 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Texas Constitution (<em>TG</em>, Chp. 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>Opens Thursday, September 27 @ 11am, closes September 27 @ 12:15pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Civil Liberties (<em>KTR</em>, Chp. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Civil Liberties &amp; Civil Rights (<em>KTR</em>, Chps. 4 &amp; 5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Civil Rights (<em>KTR</em>, Chp. 5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>US Elections (<em>KTR</em>, Chp. 12)</td>
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Week 10  Texas Elections ($TG$, Chp. 4)
Exam II  Opens Thursday, November 1 @ 11am, closes November 1 @ 12:15pm
Week 11  Federalism ($KTR$, Chp. 3)
Week 12  US Parties & Interest Groups ($KTR$, Chp. 11)
Week 13  Texas Parties & Interest Groups ($TG$, Chps. 6 & 7)
Week 14  Public Opinion ($KTR$, Chp. 10; $TG$, Chp. 5)
Week 15  Media ($KTR$, Chp. 13)
Exam III Opens, Thursday 6 @ 11am, closes December 6 @ 12:15pm

<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>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas though written, oral, and visual communication.</td>
<td>Not assessed this semester</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 this semester</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 this semester</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 this semester</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 this semester</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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