Political Science 142.001: American Government – Structure and Function

Fall Semester 2018
Department of Government, SFASU
Course Meeting Times: MWF 9:00 – 9:50 a.m.
Course Location: Ferguson 371
Instructor: Dr. Steven E. Galatas
Office Location: Dugas LAN 134
Office Hours: MWF 10:00 – 10:50 a.m. and MTWR 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.; or by appointment.
E-mail: galatasse@sfasu.edu
SI Leader: Mr. Christian Wood
SI Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.
SI Location: Lumberjack Landing #139C

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. Meets the state requirement for Texas Government.” General Bulletin, 2017-2018, p.337.

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives:
In any given semester, one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for the political science / government Foundational Component Area 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
- Critically evaluate political science theories and approaches to institutional arrangements of the U.S. and Texas political systems, to national public policy, and to state public policy
- Communicate your understanding and interpretation of institutional arrangements of the U.S. and Texas political systems, and well as key domestic and foreign policy issues
- Understand social responsibility by examining national and / or state policy choices as they effect various regional, national, and global communities
- Understand, connect, and evaluate individual choices associated with national or state public policy options and / or theories and approaches to institutional design of political systems

Students are expected to go beyond rhetoric and ideology to develop critical thinking about the American political system. As a result, students are encouraged to ask questions and to challenge assumptions of class discussions while respecting the logical and reasoned positions of others.
Textbooks:
Two textbooks are required for this class:
You will also be required to read Federalist #78 by Alexander Hamilton. This assignment is available for free at http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html from the Library of Congress.

The professor reserves the right to add other readings at any time during the semester.

Grades:
Grades for the course will be drawn from the following sources:

Exams:
- Exam #1 80 points
- Exam #2 80 points
- Exam #3 80 points
- Exam #4 80 points

Other Assignments:
- Writing Assignment #1 75 points
- Writing Assignment #2 75 points
- Homework #1 30 points

TOTAL 500 points

Point values will be converted to letter grades using a standard 90% -- 80% -- 70% scale:
A: 450 – 500 points (90% and above)
B: 400 – 449 points (80% and above)
C: 350 – 399 points (70% and above)
D: 300 – 349 points (60% and above)
F: 0 – 299 points (below 60%)

Course grades for the entire class are not curved or adjusted at the end of the semester. Extra credit work is not permitted. To receive a particular letter grade in the class, the student must earn at least the minimum number of points for that grade.

Exams:
You will take four exams during the semester.
- All exams consist of forty (40) multiple-choice questions worth two (2) points each. Thus, each of these exams is worth a total of eighty (80) points.
  - Material for the exams comes from classroom discussions as well as the assigned readings from your textbooks.
  - Class sessions will not cover all material from the assigned readings, but all assigned readings, regardless of whether the material is discussed in class, may be covered on the exams.
- Make-up exams are given only under the most extreme circumstances (e.g., a serious illness or a death in the family).
  - You must notify your professor ahead of time if you are going to miss an exam.
  - You must provide written documentation to substantiate your absence.
- Failure to inform your professor of an absence prior to the exam or failure to provide adequate documentation will result in a score of zero points (0) on the exam.
- Your professor determines what constitutes adequate documentation to qualify for a make-up.
- During exams, cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off and stored away.
- For each exam, you must bring a Scantron 882-E form and a pencil.

Writing Assignments:

During the semester, you will complete two (2) writing assignments. These assignments provide an opportunity for you to go beyond the classroom lectures and discussions and to apply their knowledge to new situations. All assignments will be provided online through the course’s Brightspace by D2L website.

Writing Assignment #1

The first writing assignment is a writing assignment that covers Federalist #78 by Alexander Hamilton. The assignment consists of a series of questions to guide you through Federalist #78. You will compose well-written, thoughtful answers to the questions. Additional details regarding this assignment will be being to you later during the semester. The assignment is worth seventy-five (75) points. You will turn this assignment into your professor at the beginning of class on September 17, 2018.

Writing Assignment #2

For this assignment, you will examine the national debt and budget deficit and will develop a well-written essay on these public policy issues. Your assignment must include one or more graphical representations of some aspect of the material that you are discussing. The graphical representation, and all other parts of the assignment, must contain proper citations of any extra-course material that you consult. This assignment will directly assess your mastery of the Core Curriculum Objective of written and visual communication skills.

The specific assignment will be provided on-line through the Brightspace by D2L website associated with this course. You will upload this assignment to both the course Brightspace by D2L website and the Core Curriculum Brightspace by D2L website by the beginning of class on December 3, 2018. This assignment is worth seventy-five (75) points. Your assignment must be uploaded to both Brightspace locations in order to be graded.

Homework #1

The homework assignment is an exercise related to redistricting of the Texas legislature. The assignment will be provided on-line though the Brightspace by D2L website associated with this course. This assignment is worth thirty (30) points. You will turn this assignment into your professor at the beginning of class on October 10, 2018.

Participation:

Students are expected to come to class prepared to engage in a critical evaluation of the topic of the day. At a minimum, participation entails preparation for class by completing the assigned readings before the start of class on the day that the reading is scheduled. In addition, students should be prepared to contribute voluntarily to class discussion. Although participation does not make up a portion of the final grade for the course, participation may prove to be a significant factor in determining borderline grades. For example, participation may be used as a criterion for a student whose final grade in the class is a 89.6% (B). A student who participated often in class discussions may receive an A as the final course grade.
Classroom Etiquette:
Please demonstrate common courtesy for your fellow students by avoiding the following during class:
• Working on assignments for your other courses
• Engaging in text messaging, Facebooking, and similar activities
• Watching movies, television shows, and other media
• Playing games
• Answering cell phone calls
Engaging in any or all of these activities during class presents an unprofessional personal statement on your part. Such behavior is disrespectful to your fellow students. If you engage in any of these activities, you will be asked to leave the classroom for the day, and you will be recorded as absent for the day.

Attendance:
You are expected to attend class. A strong correlation exists between attendance and student performance in the course. Thus, attendance is required for this course. Moreover, regular attendance makes a clear and distinct statement about personal responsibility; habits developed during a student’s career at SFA carry over to the post-university world of employment.
• During each class session, a sign-in sheet will be passed around.
  • You will sign for yourself only
  • If you sign the attendance sheet for another student, you will have ten (10) points deducted from your final grade for the course
  • If another student signs your name, you will have ten (10) points deducted from your final grade for the course
• You may miss up to nine (9) times without penalty.
  • After the ninth absence, you will lose five (5) points for each additional absence
  • No distinction exists for “excused” or “unexcused” absences; you are either in class or not in class
  • You DO NOT need to tell your professor why you missed class
• Class begins promptly at 9:00 a.m.
  • You are expected to be in class for the entire class session
  • Late arrivals and early departures are not tolerated
  • If tardiness or early departure on your part becomes an issue, remedial action will be taken.

Student Academic Dishonesty:
The following is taken from SFASU’s Policy Manual (2017), section on “Student Academic Dishonesty.” “Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members must promote the components of academic integrity in their instruction, and course syllabi are required to provide information about penalties for cheating and plagiarism, as well as the appeal process.
Definition of Academic Dishonesty:
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: using or attempting to use unauthorized materials on any class assignment or exam; falsifying or inventing of any information, including citations, on an assignment; helping or attempting to help other student(s) in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to: submitting an assignment as one's own work when it is at least partly the work of another person; submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source; incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author credit.
Penalties for Academic Dishonesty:
Penalties may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, resubmission of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university.
Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf.
All cases of academic dishonesty will be handled according to University policies and procedures in the SFASU Policy Manual and other sources of policy. The consequences for academic dishonesty 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 (2017) or the University’s General Bulletin, 2017 – 2018 section entitled “Academic Integrity” and other sources of University policy.

**Withheld Grades:**

The following is taken from SFASU’s Policy Manual (2017), “Course Grades Policy.” (Policy 5.5)

“At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic unit head, 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, except as allowed through policy [i.e., Active Military Service (6.14)]. 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.”

**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. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**Acceptable Student Behavior:**

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the iCare program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Readings* and Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08/27</td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/29</td>
<td>Background and Basic Concepts</td>
<td>Read <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/31</td>
<td>Background and Basic Concepts</td>
<td>Review <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/03</td>
<td>U.S. Congress</td>
<td>Read <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/05</td>
<td>U.S. Congress</td>
<td>Review <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/07</td>
<td>U.S. Congress</td>
<td>Review <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/10</td>
<td>U.S. Congress</td>
<td>Review <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/12</td>
<td>U.S. Congress</td>
<td>Review <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/14</td>
<td>U.S. Courts and Judiciary</td>
<td>Read <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/17</td>
<td>U.S. Courts and Judiciary</td>
<td><em>Federalist #78</em>*, Writing Assignment #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/19</td>
<td>U.S. Courts and Judiciary</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/21</td>
<td><strong>EXAM #1</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>09/24</td>
<td>U.S. President</td>
<td>Read <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/26</td>
<td>U.S. President</td>
<td>Review <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/28</td>
<td>U.S. President</td>
<td>Review <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/01</td>
<td>U.S. President</td>
<td>Review <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/03</td>
<td>Texas Legislature</td>
<td>Read <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/05</td>
<td>Texas Legislature</td>
<td>Review <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/08</td>
<td>Texas Legislature</td>
<td>Review <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>Texas Legislature</td>
<td>Read <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 4; <strong>Homework #1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/12</td>
<td>Texas Legislature</td>
<td>Review <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td><strong>EXAM #2</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/17</td>
<td>Texas Plural Executive</td>
<td>Read <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/19</td>
<td>Texas Governor</td>
<td>Read <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/22</td>
<td>Texas Governor</td>
<td>Review <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24</td>
<td>Texas Local Government</td>
<td>Read <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/26</td>
<td>Texas Local Government</td>
<td>Review <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>Texas Local Government</td>
<td>Review <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>Texas Courts</td>
<td>Read <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/02</td>
<td>Texas Criminal Justice Policy</td>
<td>Review <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/05</td>
<td>Texas Criminal Justice Policy</td>
<td>Review <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/07</td>
<td><strong>EXAM #3</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/09</td>
<td>U.S. Bureaucracy</td>
<td>Read <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>U.S. Bureaucracy</td>
<td>Review <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/14</td>
<td>U.S. Fiscal and Economic Policy</td>
<td>Read <em>Keeping the Republic</em>, Ch. 14 (pp. 469-502)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/03</td>
<td>U.S. National Security Policy</td>
<td>Writing Assignment #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/05</td>
<td>U.S. National Security Policy</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/07</td>
<td>Texas Education Policy</td>
<td>Read <em>Lone Star Politics</em>, Ch. 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/10</td>
<td><strong>EXAM #4 at 8:00 a.m.</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* You should complete readings prior to class each day.

** *Federalist #78* is available online at https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers.
Course Syllabus Appendix

The following information is required by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost for inclusion in the syllabus for this course:

General Education Core Curriculum
The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six core learning objectives: 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.

By enrolling in PSC 142: American Government – Structure and Function you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Communication Skills – Written and Visual requirement. You will see this course on your Brightspace by D2L list.

At one point during the semester, you will receive an assignment that fulfills both the requirements of this course and the needs of Stephen F. Austin State University’s Core Curriculum Assessment Plan with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. When you complete this one assignment, you need to upload the assignment to both your standard course dropbox determined by your Instructor and the “Core Curriculum” dropbox. The Core Curriculum dropbox will be identified by the Objective for which work is being collected. (Examples: Critical Thinking, Teamwork, Social Responsibility Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Personal Responsibility, Communication Skills-Written, Communication Skills-Written and Visual, and Communication Skills- Oral and Visual.) Please note that this only applies to the approved assignment. All other assignments should be submitted according to regular class operations. If you have any questions, please see your Instructor or the Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment.

When you complete the assignment mentioned above, you will upload the assignment to both the PSC 142 dropbox and the core objective dropbox.

Please note that this only applies to the specific assignment listed in the matrix below. All other assignments should be submitted according to regular class operations.

If you have any questions, please see your instructor or contact the Institutional Effectiveness Office at (936) 468-1130.

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 the Brightspace by D2L Communication Skills – Written and Visual dropbox this semester, and the date the assignment(s) should be uploaded to the D2L Communication Skills – Written and Visual dropbox. Not every assignment will be submitted for core assessment every semester. Your instructor will notify you which assignment(s) must be submitted for assessment in the Brightspace by D2L Communication Skills – Written and Visual dropbox.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Course Assignment Title</th>
<th>Date Due in Brightspace by D2L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas though written, oral, and visual communication.</td>
<td>Writing Assignment #2</td>
<td>December 3, 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>