**Instructor:** Katie C. McClain  
**Email:** countsks@sfasu.edu  
**Office:** Ferguson 478  
**Department:** Government

**Office Hours:**  
W/Th: 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.  
Online M-F: 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.  
**Telephone:** 936.468.1494

**Course Description**

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.

**Requirements of the Course**

You are expected to read the assigned material before coming to class; doing so will help you understand the material. You should also stay informed of current political events by watching the news, browsing political websites, etc. Relating current events to the class material may help you make sense of the material.

**Required Books**

ISBN: 9781483352893

ISBN: 9781524922351

**Course Objectives**

**General Education Core Curriculum Objectives**

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.

PSC 141 is a general education core curriculum course and fulfills the Social Responsibility general education core curriculum requirement. Another, “shell” course has been created to collect student artifacts to meet this state requirement. You will see this course on your Desire2Learn (D2L) list.
During this 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 the Social Responsibility dropbox located within the “shell” course as well as the dropbox located within the PSC 141 course on D2L. 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 University Assessment Specialist at 936.468.1267 or jstringfield@sfasu.edu.

The chart below indicates the core objectives addressed by this course, the assignment that will be used to assess the objectives in this course and uploaded to the D2L Social Responsibility dropbox this semester, and the date the assignment should be uploaded to the D2L Social Responsibility dropbox. Not every assignment will be submitted for core assessment every semester. Your instructor will notify you which assignment must be submitted for assessment in the D2L Social Responsibility dropbox.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Course Assignment Title</th>
<th>Date Due in D2L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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 Spring 2018</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>Constitutional Principles Writing Assignment</td>
<td>March 25, 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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:
- Describe the basic themes and concepts related to the study of American and Texas political behavior
- Examine the relationship between political behavior and political institutions, especially the interdependence of behavior and institutions
- Think critically about American and Texas politics, especially the theoretical foundations of both systems
- Discuss the foundations of the US and Texas Constitutions
- Identify the key schools of thought regarding voting behavior and electoral processes
- Explain the roles and functions of voters, political parties, interest groups, and media in a democratic political system
- Understand citizenship in the American political system more completely
Classroom Policies

Academic Integrity
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 on any class assignment or exam; (2) falsifying or inventing of any information, including citations, on an assignment; (3) 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: (1) submitting an assignment as one’s own work when it is at least partly the work of another person; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source; (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper or presentation without giving the author credit.

Please read the complete policy: Student Academic Dishonesty, policy 4.1

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 Student Code of Conduct, policy 10.4). 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 Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

Attendance
You are expected to attend class and arrive on time. A strong correlation exists between your attendance and your performance in the course. Thus, attendance is required for this course. Moreover, regular attendance makes a clear and distinct statement about your personal responsibility; habits developed during your time at SFA carry over to the postuniversity world of employment. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Students who have not arrived to class at the time that attendance is taken will be counted absent. You may miss class up to three (3) times without penalty. Students who miss more than three class meetings may face a five (5) percent deduction from their final grade from the course for each additional absence. Absences shall be excused for documented emergencies or official university events (also documented) only.

Email
Email is the best way to reach me. While I will check D2L’s self-contained email regularly, I prefer that you email me directly at countsks@sfasu.edu. Please use descriptive subject lines on your emails and refrain from using test message acronyms. I will not respond to emails asking questions the answers to which can be found in the syllabus, catalog, or course schedule or emails requesting a summary of material covered during a class meeting that a student
Grading Policy
Grades will be determined by three (3) examinations (70%), three (3) writing assignments (10%), quizzes (10%), and participation (5%). Thus, each component is a percentage (or weight) of your final grade. Within each component, grades will be averaged to calculate the overall percentage of your final grade associated with that component.

Grade Point Average (GPA) for this course is assessed using the following scale:

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

Participation (5 percent): Participation will be assessed based on attendance and in-class performance. You are expected to come to class prepared to engage in critical evaluation of the topic of the day. At a minimum, you must complete the assigned readings before the start of class on the day that the reading is scheduled. In addition, you should be prepared to contribute voluntarily to class discussion, participate in any in-class activities and experiential learning exercises, and make meaningful contributions to the learning experience. Participation grades will be based on the following scale: 5% - superb; 4% - excellent; 3% - good; 2% - satisfactory; 1% - inadequate; 0% - unacceptable or disruptive behavior

Quizzes (10 percent): Quizzes will be administered in class and will review content from the assigned readings and/or previous lectures. Of the administered quizzes, the ten (10) quizzes with the highest grades will be used for determining the final grade for this course.

Writing Assignments (15 percent): There will be three writing assignments (one of which is the student artifact required for general education core curriculum objective assessment). Writing assignments will be announced online via D2L and in class. Completed writing assignments must be submitted in the appropriate course dropbox by the due date. Assignments must adhere to APA guidelines. Writing assignments will be assessed based on quality of response to the prompt, format, and grammar. Late assignments will not be accepted.

Examinations (70 percent): There will be three section (noncumulative) examinations. Exams (except makeup exams) will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, and/or short answer questions. Material for the exams comes from classroom discussions as well as the assigned readings. You are responsible for each of these. Class sessions do not cover all material from the assigned readings, but all assigned readings, regardless of whether the material is discussed in class, are incorporated into the exams. Exams will be administered during the first 60 minutes of the scheduled class. The remaining class time on the day of an exam will be spent on lecture and/or other course related activities.

Make-up exams will be given only in the case of documented illness, documented emergencies, or university related absences. Make-up exams may differ in format from scheduled exams (e.g., part essay). If you miss an exam, it is your responsibility to inform the instructor as to the nature of your absence and to provide the necessary documentation. Failure to inform the instructor or provide adequate documentation will result in a score of zero points (0) on the exam.
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, visit the Disability Services website

Technical Support
D2L: http://sfaonline.sfasu.edu/; d2l@sfasu.edu; 936.468.1919
Technical Support Center: helpdesk@sfasu.edu; 936.468.4357

Use of Mobile Electronic Communications/Entertainment Devices in Class
Unless otherwise indicated by the instructor, the use of mobile electronic
communications/entertainment devices, including, but not limited to, cell-phones, blackberries,
pagers, and ipods is prohibited and will be considered disruptive behavior (which will negatively
impact your participation grade). Please silence your phone when you arrive for class.

Withheld Grades
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.
Tentative Course Schedule

**Week 1** (Jan 16) – US Government & Politics
Barbour and Wright, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-16)

**Week 2** (Jan 23) – US Political Culture
Barbour and Wright, Ch. 1 (pp. 17-29)

**Week 3** (Jan 30) – Texas Political Culture
Baily, Ch. 1

**Week 4** (Feb 6) – US Constitution
Barbour and Wright, Ch. 2

**Week 5** (Feb 13) – Texas Constitution
Baily, Ch. 2

**Week 6** (Feb 20) – Exam # 1; Civil Liberties
Barbour and Wright, Ch. 4; Baily, Ch. 3

**Week 7** (Feb 27) – Civil Liberties & Civil Rights
Barbour and Wright, Ch. 4 & Ch. 5; Baily, Ch. 3

**Week 8** (Mar 6) – US Elections
Barbour and Wright, Ch. 12

**Spring Break**

**Week 9** (Mar 20) – Texas Elections
Baily, Ch. 4

**Week 10** (Mar 27) – Federalism
Barbour and Wright, Ch. 3

**Week 11** (Apr 3) – Exam # 2; US Parties & Interest Groups
Barbour and Wright, Ch. 11

**Week 12** (Apr 10) – US Parties & Interest Groups
Barbour and Wright, Ch. 11

**Week 13** (Apr 17) – Texas Parties & Interest Groups
Baily, Ch. 5, Ch. 6, & Ch. 7

**Week 14** (Apr 24) – Public Opinion
Barbour and Wright, Ch. 10

**Week 15** (May 1) – Media
Barbour and Wright, Ch. 13

**FINAL EXAM**: Tuesday, May 8, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.