**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

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Email is the best way to reach me.  
Office: Vera Dugas Liberal Arts North 112  
Phone: 936-468-4408  
Office Hours: Tuesday 11:00am to 3pm  
                        Wednesday 9am to 10:45am  
                        Thursday 11:00am to 12:30pm and 2pm to 3pm

**COURSE INFORMATION**

Name: Introduction to American Government: Theory and Politics  
Prefix and Number: PSC 142  
Sections: 502  
SFA Prerequisites: None  
Unofficial prereqs: Common sense, time management skills, stick-to-itnessness and a sense of humor  
Semester Credit Hrs: 3

**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.” – From SFA’s *General Bulletin 2015-2016*, p. 324.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

1. *The American Political System* by Ken Kollman  
   ISBN: 9780393921854  
   ISBN: 9781524922481

**NOTE:** I will refer to our two texts as *APS* and *TG* in emails, newsfeed items, discussion questions, and such. **Both texts are required.** To put it another way, in my experience, these two texts are necessary or essential to the aim of earning a passing grade in this course. The SFA Campus Bookstore has ISBN information for both texts.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

*General Education Core Curriculum Objectives*

In any given semester, one or more of the Core Curriculum Objectives for the political science Foundational Component Area may be assessed. See the Texas-Mandated Assessment Rubric below for more information.

*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.
CLASSROOM POLICIES

This is an online course, so you will be required to engage in self-study and utilize self-reminders about deadlines and requirements. Please review the course schedule below. We will maintain regular contact throughout the semester through D2L email and the course’s newsfeed. Check both frequently.

Late assignments are not accepted. Make-up exams will only be allowed under exceptional circumstances (see evaluation section below). Having another exam or paper due that day is not an exceptional circumstance. Grades are non-negotiable.

Let’s take a moment to address civil discourse. The respectful exchange of ideas is a requirement of this course. Make it a goal to develop critical thinking about the American political system. As such, I encourage you to ask questions and to (respectfully) challenge assumptions of class discussions. You are allowed to express your opinion. Please do so in a reasoned, professional manner. Please also remember that your fellow students are allowed to express their (potentially different) opinions. Stated another way, discussion posts and other online behavior should not interfere with my ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be subject to penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the class.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

To learn more about using D2L, visit http://sfaonline.sfasu.edu. For technical support, contact the Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) at d2l@sfasu.edu or 936-468-1919. For general computer support (not related to D2L), contact the Technical Support Center (TSC) at 936-468-HELP (4357) or helpdesk@sfasu.edu.

EVALUATION (aka grades)

Grades will be determined by the weekly discussions, weekly quizzes, and one final examination. All deadlines are available in the course schedule below.

Lessons

Unless otherwise indicated in either the course schedule or D2L correspondence, lessons will open each week (excluding SFA holidays) at 8am on Saturday and close at 11pm the following Friday. Each lesson includes a reading assignment, lecture notes (think of these as outlines of the lectures you would have heard in a live course), discussions, and a quiz. All parts of the lesson are required.

Discussions

You will be required to participate in multiple discussion activities each week. For each activity, please submit one post and two replies/responses. The discussions will require you to analyze the material presented and, at times, offer an argument about a particular component of the material. Treat your posts and replies as small writing assignments. Use proper punctuation and spelling. Pay close attention to grammar and word choice. The quality of your writing impacts your ability to present an argument. As such, I may deduct points for low quality writing.
Quizzes
Each lesson will include one quiz. These weekly quizzes will include about 15 multiple-choice and true/false questions. Some quizzes will also include a short answer bonus question. You will have 20 minutes to complete the quiz. Late quizzes will not be accepted.

Comprehensive Final Exam
The final exam will include 80-100 multiple-choice and true/false questions. The final exam may also include short answer bonus questions. You will have 75 minutes to complete the exam. The exam will cover material presented over the entire semester. This includes lecture notes and required reading.

A make up final exam will only be given only in the case of documented illness, documented emergencies or University related absences. The make up exam may be more difficult than scheduled exam – that is, it may include short answer questions or essay questions. If you miss the final exam and would like to take a make up exam, it is your responsibility to inform me why you were absent and to provide documentation. If the absence meets the above criteria, we will schedule a make up exam. The final exam will not be given early.

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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.

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 (2017), 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 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.

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 COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: This calendar is subject to change.

APS = American Political System
TG = Texas Government: Structures and Functions

Getting Started (course introduction) and LESSON/MODULE 1 – U.S. Congress

- Readings: APS 1 and 5
- Quiz and Discussions due on Friday, 1/26 by 11pm

NOTE: The course introduction and Lesson 1 are combined to give you time to adjust to the reading material (you’ll need to read the chapters more than once) and familiarize yourself with D2L. Future lessons will open and close within about one week. The terms lesson and module are interchangeable in this course. That is, a lesson is a module and a module is a lesson.

LESSON 2 - US Presidency

- Readings: APS 6
- Quiz and Discussions due Friday, 2/2 by 11pm

LESSON 3 - US Bureaucracy

- Readings: APS 7
- Quiz and Discussions due Friday, 2/9 by 11pm

LESSON 4 - US Judiciary

- Readings: APS 8
- Quiz and Discussions due Friday, 2/16 by 11pm

LESSON 5 - Public Policy I

- Reading: APS 15 and 16
- Quiz and Discussions due Friday, 2/23 by 11pm

LESSON 6 - Public Policy II

- Reading: APS 17
- Quiz and Discussions due Friday, 3/2 by 11pm
LESSON 7 - TX Legislature
- Readings: TG 1
- Quiz and Discussions due Friday, 3/9 by 11pm

LESSON 8 - TX Governor
- Readings: TG 2
- Quiz and Discussions due Friday, 3/23 by 11pm

LESSON 9 - TX Bureaucracy
- Readings: TG 3
- Quiz and Discussions due Friday, 4/6 by 11pm

LESSON 10 - TX Judiciary
- Readings: TG 4
- Quiz and Discussions due Friday, 4/13 by 11pm

LESSON 11 - Texas Law
- Readings: TG 4 (reread)
- Quiz and Discussions due Friday, 4/20 by 11pm

LESSON 12 - Texas Local Government
- Readings: TG 5
- Quiz and Discussions due Friday, 4/27 by 11pm

LESSON 13 - Texas Policy
- Readings: TG 6 & 7
- Quiz and Discussions due Friday, 5/4 by 11pm

The final exam opens at 8am on Monday, 5/7 and closes at 11pm on Wednesday, 5/9.