PSC 142.001 Fall 2019 Syllabus

Introduction to American Government: Structures & Functions

TR 11am-12:15pm

Ferguson 377

Department: Government
Instructor: Dr. Cindy Davis
Office: Liberal Arts North 132
Email: pressleyc@sfasu.edu or through D2L (preferred)
Office Number: 936-468-2424
Office Hours: In office: Thursday 12:30-3:30

Virtual: Monday 1:00-2:30pm, Wednesday 11am-1:30pm. I can be contacted by email, instant messaging through the D2L system, and by cell phone (call or text) during office hours. If you text be sure to include your name. I will try to be available by Skype during my office hours as well.

Office hours can be made by appointment if you cannot make the listed hours. Please contact me by email if you would like to set up a virtual or face to face meeting.

Catalog 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.

Grading Scale: A (1000 points-900 points); B (899 points -800 points); C (799 points -700 points); D (699 points -600 points); F (599 points and below)

Required Materials: [2 Required Books; you are responsible for acquiring the books for this course]

- Title: Keeping the Republic
- Edition: 8th Brief Edition
- Authors: Barbour

- Title: Texas Government: Structures & Functions
- Edition: 2017
- Authors: Baily (Editor)
- ISBN: 978-1-5249-2248-1
Course Requirements:

- **Attendance**: 210 Points: Attendance will be taken every day except for the first week of class and on review and exam days.
- **Research Assignment**: 20 Points: Due Thursday 9/17; Assignment will be provided on Thursday 9/12 during Library Research Session.
- **Meeting/Event Assignment**: 20 Points: Provide a one-page discussion/summary (double spaced, 12 point times new roman font) of a meeting or event in some way related to political science/government. For example, you could attend a meeting of your SFA Student Government Association, attend a Nacogdoches City Council meeting, or attend a speaker event on campus related to political science or a government issue. You will provide (1) a written summary of the event, (2) details on the date/time/location of the event, and (3) either a copy of the agenda or a photo of yourself at the event.
- **Three Exams**: 450 Points: (each exam is worth 150 points): Each exam contains 35 multiple choice questions, 10 true/false questions and 2 short answer questions. Each exam is based on the set of material covered during that portion of the semester (so not comprehensive).
- **Three Writing Assignments**: 300 Points (100 points each): 2-3 written pages (double spaced, 3 required academic references). I will provide you with the topic for each of the writing assignments. I highly suggest that you do not attempt to submit all writing assignments at the beginning of the semester as each assignment correlates with subject matter in the course that you should examine prior to completing the assignment. Additional information on the format for the writing assignments is provided, along with the topics, in Brightspace by D2L.

Course Schedule (Subject to change; Chapters should be read to prepare for the lesson for that week. There may be additional readings found within the lesson. Some assignments for the week will connect to the readings so be sure to get the books and complete the readings):

- **Week 1 (T/R 8/27 & 8/29)**: Introduction to Course
- **Week 2 (T/R 9/3 & 9/5)**: US Legislature
  - Reading: Keeping the Republic Chapter 6
- **Week 3 (T/R 9/10 & 9/12)**: US Presidency & Bureaucracy
  - Reading: Keeping the Republic Chapters 7 & 8
  - Thursday 9/12: Meet in library Infolab 1 for research workshop
- **Week 4 (T/R 9/17 & 9/19)**: US Judiciary
  - Reading: Keeping the Republic Chapter 9
  - Research Assignment: Due Tuesday 9/17
- **Week 5 (T/R 9/24 & 9/26)**
  - Tuesday 9/24 – Review
Thursday 9/26 - Exam One and Writing Assignment One: Federal Government Due

- **Week 6 (T/R 10/1 & 10/3):** Public Policy Process & Economic Policy
  - **Reading:** Keeping the Republic Chapter 14

- **Week 7 (T/R 10/8 & 10/10):** Social/Welfare Policy
  - **Reading:** Readings provided on D2L

- **Week 8 (T/R 10/15 & 10/17):** Miscellaneous Domestic Policy
  - **Reading:** Readings provided on D2L

- **Week 9 (T/R 10/22 & 10/24):** Foreign/Military Policy
  - **Reading:** Readings provided on D2L

- **Week 10 (T/R 10/29 & 10/31):**
  - **Tuesday 10/29 – Review**
  - **Thursday 10/31 - Exam Two and Writing Assignment Two: Public Policy Due**

- **Week 11 (T/R 11/5 & 11/7):** Texas Legislature
  - **Reading:** Texas Government Chapter 1

- **Week 12 (11/12 & 11/14):** Texas Governor & Texas Bureaucracy
  - **Reading:** Texas Government Chapters 2 & 3

- **Week 13 (T/R 11/19 & 11/21):** Texas Judiciary & Local Government
  - **Reading:** Texas Government Chapters 4 & 5
  - **Meeting/Event Assignment due Thursday 11/21**

- **Week 14 (T/R 12/3 & 12/5):** Texas Policy
  - **Reading:** Texas Government Chapters 6 & 7
  - **Thursday 12/5 – Review and Writing Assignment Three: Texas Government/Policy Due**

- **Finals Week:** Tuesday December 12th 10:30am – 12:30pm

*Classroom Policies:*

- Cell phones, pda’s, I-pods, etc shall be turned off during class. Laptops are acceptable for the purpose of taking notes. *Use of any of these devices during an exam will constitute a failing grade on that exam, no exceptions! The devices must not be in your view. Devices in view will also constitute a failing grade.*

- Punctuality is preferred. I realize unforeseen circumstances arise, but please try to be on time. Disruptions affect not only me, but your fellow classmates as well.

- The open exchange of ideas will be respected by all students. Respectful discussion is expected.

- You must be able to access Brightspace by D2L in order to view lecture outlines and to turn in assignments

- **Turn it in software is used to view all assignments.**
• Make-up exams will only be allowed under exceptional circumstances. Having another exam that day is not an exceptional circumstance. If you have a game, extracurricular activity, have to work, a wedding to go to, etc. on the day of the exam (none are exceptional circumstances) then you may take the exam early. You may not leave during an exam to answer your phone, get water, go to the restroom, etc. If you leave during the exam, I will take your exam as is even if unfinished. Arriving more than 15 minutes late to an exam will constitute a 0 on that exam. You will not be given extra time on the exam if you are late.

• Late assignments are not accepted. If you have a game, extracurricular activity, have to work, a wedding to go to, etc. on the day an assignment is due than you may turn the assignment in early. Otherwise, it will be counted as late.

• Grades are non-negotiable.

University Policies:

• “Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54) 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.”

• “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, policy D-34.1). 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.”

• Excused Absences: In order to have your absences excused, you must provide either notification from your coach/faculty club advisor or have a notice sent from the judicial office. “Absence Notifications: Students missing classes for legitimate reasons other than University-sponsored trips may contact the Judicial Office and request an absence notification be sent to their instructors. These notifications are not excuses. They are provided as a courtesy to the student and the student's instructor(s) and are not an evaluation of the information received by this office. Students requesting an absence notification should be prepared to give the Judicial Office their name, ID number, date(s) of the absence, reason for the absence, and a contact phone number. Students should also be prepared to offer documentation of the absence to their instructors. As per University policy Class Attendance and Excused Absence A-10, an instructor may determine the
nature of satisfactory documentation.” Contact information for the judicial office is: 315 Rusk Building, 936-468-2703

- **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/”. If modifications or accommodations are needed due to disability, please make an appointment with me as early as possible so arrangements can be made.

**Academic Integrity:** An individual’s integrity is a reflection not only on themselves, but on the reputation of their profession as well. The standards you hold in your academic career will weigh heavily on those you retain throughout life. Your professional reputation is of the utmost importance in maintaining a positive career path. Thus, your academic integrity will be held to the highest possible standard while in this classroom. Zero tolerance will be given for academic irregularities. If I catch you violating this policy, you will be reported. If another student accuses you and there is no other evidence, you will be required to resubmit a new assignment or take a new exam. If you choose not to, you will be reported. According to the university: “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](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**Technical Support:**

- For D2L technical support, contact student support in the Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) at d2l@sfasu.edu or 936-468-1919. If you call after regular business hours or on a weekend, please leave a voicemail.
For general computer support (not related to D2L), contact the Technical Support Center (TSC) at 936-468-HELP (4357) or at helpdesk@sfasu.edu.

To learn more about using D2L, visit SFA ONLINE at http://sfaonline.sfasu.edu, where you’ll find written instructions and video tutorials.

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 Objectives:

- To examine the major structural and functional concepts underlying American and Texas government.
- To be able to identify and discuss important trends in American and Texas public policies.
- To gain the ability to critically analyze issues facing American and Texas government.

Course Credit Hour Justification: This three-credit hour face-to-face course requires approximate 150 minutes of classroom time/direct instruction as well as at least six hours of out-of-class reading and studying each week in preparation for exams and completion of writing assignments.

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 listed at the front of this syllabus. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives. PSC 142: American Government: Structure and Functions is a general education core curriculum course and fulfills the Critical Thinking Skills general education core curriculum requirement.

During the semester, you will receive an assignment associated with general education core curriculum assessment. When you complete the assignment you will upload the assignment to the “Core Curriculum – Critical Thinking Skills” dropbox that you will find on your account in Brightspace by D2L. This dropbox is for core curriculum assessment only. Your course instructor may provide another set of instructions for submitting this assignment for your course grade.

If you have any questions, please see your instructor or contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at (936) 468-1038 or assessment@sfasu.edu.

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 Critical Thinking Skills dropbox this semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Course Assignment</th>
<th>Date Due in D2L</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>Writing Assignment Two</td>
<td>Nov. 3rd 2019</td>
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<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 in Fall 2019</td>
<td>Not Assessed in Fall 2019</td>
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</tbody>
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