INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
STRUCTURE & FUNCTION
Stephen F. Austin State University
Department of Government
FALL 2019

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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COURSE INFORMATION

Course Number: PSC 142
Section: 501
Prerequisites: N/A
Semester Credit Hours: 3

Course Description: “Origins and development of American and Texas government systems; federalism; civil liberties and civil rights; interest groups, political parties and elections. Meets the state requirement for American Government. This course meets the legislative requirements for a course on the Constitutions of the United States and Texas.” General Bulletin, 2014-2015.

Class Meeting Days & Times: ONLINE
Room: N/A

REQUIRED TEXTS


Wofford, Peyton. "A Well Constructed Union" University Readers Custom.
“Wherever the real power in a Government lies, there is the danger of oppression. In our Governments, the real power lies in the majority of the Community, and the invasion of private rights is chiefly to be apprehended, not from the acts of Government contrary to the sense of its constituents, but from acts in which the Government is the mere instrument of the major number of the constituents.”

- James Madison, Letters and Other Writings of James Madison Volume 3

“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.”

Ronald Reagan, 40th President of the United States

**Course Objectives**

**General Education Core Curriculum Objectives:**
This course has been selected to be part of Stephen F. Austin State University’s core curriculum. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six objectives for all core courses: 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.

**Course Commitment:**
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.

**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, students will be able to…

- describe the basic themes and concepts related to the study of American and Texas political institutions
- examine the relationship between political behavior and political institutions, especially the interdependence of behavior and institutions
- engage in critical thinking about American & Texas politics, especial the institutional framework of the system
- discuss salient features of political institutions as understood by political science.
- understand citizenship in the American political system more completely

**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.
### Core Objective | Definition | Course Assignment | Date Due in D2L
--- | --- | --- | ---
Critical Thinking Skills | To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information. | Assignment Name | 
Communication Skills | To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas though written, oral, and visual communication. | Not Assessed in Fall 2019 | Not Assessed in Fall 2019

**CLASS POLICIES**

- This is an online course, so you will be required to engage in self-study and self-reminders as to when assignments are due and what is required of you. We will maintain regular contact through D2L email. Assignment due dates are posted to the D2L calendar. You are responsible for turning your work in on time.

- I have a 48-hour response policy for emails. Keep in mind that emails sometimes do not reach their intended destination. If you have not heard from me within 48 hours of having sent an email to me – send another email and/or attempt another contact.

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

- The open exchange of ideas will be respected by all students. Respectful discussion is required. While you are allowed to express your opinions during the discussions remember that other students may have different opinions and have the right to have and express those opinions. Personal attacks are not allowed as they do not promote civilized debate (one of the main purposes of the required discussions).
1) Lessons: 900 Points (each lesson is worth 60 points): There are 15 lessons for the course. Three lessons a week, for five weeks of the summer session. Note, the last week is shortened, with lessons due on Thursday of week five, and the final exam is on Friday of week five. Each lesson contains a set of readings and lectures on the major institutions and powers of the federal and Texas government. Lessons will be made available on Monday and will close on Sunday at 11pm. Lessons correspond to weeks (see schedule). You will read the assigned readings from the textbook and lessons on D2L in preparation for the weekly evaluations for the lesson. Those evaluations break down as follows:

a. Structured D2L Discussions (10 points per lesson): Each lesson has two sets of discussion questions on D2L designed to help you better understand the information and concepts contained in the lesson, to better apply that information, and to think critically about it. You must both respond to the discussion questions with specific and concrete answers and reply to a fellow student’s response once you have posted your own answers (1 set of answers + 1 reply = 2 total posts satisfying the minimum lesson requirement).

b. Lesson Quiz (50 points per lesson): Generally, the quizzes will consist of a mix of multiple choice and true/false questions for a total of ten to fifteen questions per quiz. However, the number of questions and points per question may vary per lesson. Also, there are a few lessons which contain open-ended questions which require short answer responses (one or two paragraphs). NOTE: open-ended questions must be hand-graded by the instructor – those grades will be updated by the instructor accordingly.

2) Comprehensive Final Exam: 200 Points: The comprehensive final exam contains 66 multiple-choice questions, 21 true/false questions and 5 short answer questions. You will have 90 minutes to complete the final, the final must be taken continuously in one sitting (no starting and stopping), and you will have only one attempt at the final. You must take the final on the Friday of Exam Week between 8am and 11pm.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LESSONS</td>
<td>900 (60 per)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL POINTS</td>
<td>1100</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90% and up</td>
<td>990 – 1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80% - 89%</td>
<td>880 – 989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% - 79%</td>
<td>770 – 879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 69%</td>
<td>660 – 769</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and down</td>
<td>0 – 659</td>
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The following is taken from SFASU’s Policy Manual (2011), section on “Academic Integrity” (A-9) 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.

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 (2011) or the University’s General Bulletin, 2016 – 2017 section entitled “Academic Integrity” and other sources of University policy.

WITHHELD GRADES

The following is taken from SFASU’s Policy Manual (2011), “Semester Grades Policy” (A-54). 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.

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/.

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.
### Schedule of Activities | Assignments | Examinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION</th>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>LECTURE TOPICS</th>
<th>READING ASSIGNMENTS &amp; EVALUATIONS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 1</td>
<td>WEEK 1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>FSGA, Chapter 1&lt;br&gt;Lesson 1 due Sunday 9/01 by 11pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>SECTION 2</td>
<td>WEEK 1</td>
<td>Poli Sci &amp; Collective Action</td>
<td>FSGA, Chapters 2 &amp; 3&lt;br&gt;Lesson 2 due Sunday 9/08 by 11pm</td>
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<td>U.S. Legislature</td>
<td>FSGA, Chapter 5&lt;br&gt;Lesson 3 due Sunday 9/15 by 11pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>SECTION 3</td>
<td>WEEK 2</td>
<td>U.S. Presidency</td>
<td>FSGA, Chapter 4&lt;br&gt;Lesson 4 due Sunday 9/22 by 11pm</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>U.S. Bureaucracy</td>
<td>Readings: N/A&lt;br&gt;Lesson 5 due Sunday 9/29 by 11pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Judiciary</td>
<td>FSGA, Chapter 6&lt;br&gt;Lesson 6 due Sunday 10/06 by 11pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>SECTION 4</td>
<td>WEEK 3</td>
<td>Public Policy I</td>
<td>Readings: N/A&lt;br&gt;Lesson 7 due Sunday 10/13 by 11pm</td>
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<td>Public Policy II</td>
<td>Readings: N/A&lt;br&gt;Lesson 8 due Sunday 10/20 by 11pm</td>
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<td>TX Legislature</td>
<td>TGSF, Chapter 1&lt;br&gt;Lesson 9 due Sunday 10/27 by 11pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>SECTION 5</td>
<td>WEEK 4</td>
<td>TX Governor</td>
<td>TGSF, Chapter 2&lt;br&gt;Lesson 10 due Sunday 11/03 by 11pm</td>
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<td>TX Bureaucracy</td>
<td>TGSF, Chapter 3&lt;br&gt;Lesson 11 due Sunday 11/10 by 11pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>SECTION 6</td>
<td>WEEK 5</td>
<td>TX Judiciary</td>
<td>TGSF, Chapter 4&lt;br&gt;Lesson 12 due Sunday 11/17 by 11pm</td>
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<td>TX Policy &amp; Law</td>
<td>TGSF, Chapter 5&lt;br&gt;Lesson 14 due Thursday 11/24 by 11pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>SECTION 7</td>
<td>WEEK 5</td>
<td>TX Local Government</td>
<td>TGSF, Chapter 5&lt;br&gt;Lesson 14 due Thursday 12/08 by 11pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TX Public Policy</td>
<td>TGSF, Chapter 6; Chapter 7&lt;br&gt;Lesson 15 due Thursday 12/08 by 11pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
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<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
<td>EXAM PERIOD&lt;br&gt;Friday December 13th 8am – 11:50pm</td>
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**NOTE:** “FSGA” refers to the main text, “Federal and State Government in America” while “TGSF” refers to the main Texas government text, “Texas Government: Structures & Functions.”

The reading assignments for “A Well Constructed Union” are posted separately under the “Readings” tab on D2L.

**THIS IS A PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE ONLY. THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE CHANGES TO THIS SCHEDULE AS NEEDED.**