Introduction to Course

Syllabus: PSC 142.502

Introduction to American Government: Structures & Functions

Fall 2019 Online Course

Department: Government
Instructor: Dr. Cindy Davis
Office: Liberal Arts North 132
Email: cindy.davis@sfasu.edu or through D2L (preferred)
Skype: CL Davis
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:** American Government
- **Edition:** 2016
- **Authors:** Krutz and Waskiewicz
- **ISBN:** 978-1-938168-17-8
- This is an open source (free) textbook. The pdf is available in the Course Documents section so you can view it there however it is a very large document since it is a textbook so I do not suggest trying to print the entire document. You can also view it online or download it as a pdf from the following website: https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government

- **Title:** Texas Government: Structures & Functions
Course Requirements:

- **11 Lessons; 440 Points (each lesson is worth 40 points):** Each lesson contains a set of readings, one discussion question that you will respond to and will then reply to a fellow student’s response, and one quiz (5 multiple choice questions; 3 true/false questions). The lessons will be available beginning on Monday at 8am and will close on Sunday at 11pm unless otherwise noted in the course calendar.

- **Three Exams; 300 Points: (each exam is worth 100 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). Exams are available beginning on Monday of the exam week and must be taken by Sunday of the exam week by 11pm (other than exam three which must be completed by Thursday of finals week). Exams are timed (60 minutes) and once you log on you must take the exam. You will only have one opportunity to take the exam. You cannot log on, view the exam and then take the exam at a later time. Exams can only be taken once.

- **Three Writing Assignments; 255 Points (85 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 the Introduction to Course materials.

- **Introduction to Course Quiz: 5 points**

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 (Mon. 8/26 - Sun. 9/1):** Introduction to Course
  - Reading: American Government Chapter 11

- **Week 2 (Mon. 9/2 - Sun. 9/8):** Lesson One: US Legislature
  - Reading: American Government Chapter 11

- **Week 3 (Mon. 9/9 - Sun. 9/15):** Lesson Two: US Presidency & Bureaucracy
  - Reading: American Government Chapters 12 & 15

- **Week 4 (Mon. 9/16 - Sun. 9/22):** Lesson Three: US Judiciary
  - Reading: American Government Chapter 13
• Week 5 (Mon. 9/23 - Sun 9/29): Exam One; Writing Assignment One: Federal Government Due Sun. Sept. 29th by 11pm
• Week 6 (Mon. 9/30 - Sun. 10/6): Lesson Four: Public Policy Process & Economic Policy
  o Reading: American Government Chapter 16
• Week 7 (Mon. 10/7 - Sun. 10/13): Lesson Five: Social/Welfare Policy
  o Reading: Readings found within lesson
• Week 8 (Mon. 10/14 - Sun 10/20): Lesson Six: Miscellaneous Domestic Policy
  o Reading: Provided within lesson
• Week 9 (Mon. 10/21 - Sun. 10/27): Lesson Seven: Foreign/Military Policy
  o Reading: American Government Chapter 17
• Week 10 (Mon. 10/28 - Sun. 11/3): Exam Two; Writing Assignment Two: Public Policy Due Sun. Nov. 3rd by 11pm
• Week 11 (Mon. 11/4 - Sun. 11/10): Lesson Eight: Texas Legislature
  o Reading: Texas Government Chapter 1
• Week 12 (Mon. 11/11 - Sun. 11/17): Lesson Nine: Texas Governor & Texas Bureaucracy
  o Reading: Texas Government Chapters 2 & 3
• Week 13 (Mon. 11/18 – Sun. 11/24): Lesson Ten: Texas Judiciary & Local Government
  o Reading: Texas Government Chapters 4 & 5
• Week 14 (Mon. 12/2 - Sun. 12/8): Final Lesson Eleven: Texas Policy
  o Reading: Texas Government Chapters 6 & 7
  o Writing Assignment Three: Texas Government/Policy Due Sun. Dec. 8th by 11pm
• Finals Week: (Mon 12/9 - Fri 12/13): Finals Week: Exam Three (must be taken by Thurs. Dec. 13 by 11pm)

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 throughout the semester through D2L email. A due date timeline is posted in the course documents section of the course, and I will post announcements on the News tab when necessary.

• Late assignments are not accepted. Make-up exams 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).

**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)

**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/](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.

**Technical Support:**

- For D2L technical support, contact student support in the Office of Instructional
  Technology (OIT) at [d2l@sfasu.edu](mailto: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 Hours Justification:** This is a 3-credit hour, fully online course over a 15-week duration. During the course students examine and review extensive written material that addresses the same information students receive in a face-to-face lecture style course. Students are expected to engage with the learning modules for a minimum of three hours per week. Learning modules contain additional information often in a variety of formats addressing the module topic. Online discussions with class colleagues of learning module material is required. Students are required to read two texts, complete three exams over the course material, as well as three written assignments. For every hour a student spends engaging with the content, he/she spends at least two hours completing associated activities and assessments.
“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.”

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

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>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
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