Political Science 142.009
Introduction to American Government: Structure and Functions

Fall 2019
Department of Government
Course Meeting Times: Monday and Wednesday 1:00-2:15
Course Location: Ferguson 371
Instructor: Dr. Richard J. Herzog
Quote: I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts.
       – Will Rogers
Office Location: Vera Dugas Liberal Arts North 139
Office Hours: MW 11:15-12:45, & 6:00-7:00 and by appointment
Phone: 468-2446
E-mail: Desire2Learn only

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. Meets the state requirement for Texas Government.

Required Textbooks
We the People: An Introduction to American Politics, (2017) Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, & Caroline Tolbert, W.W. Norton & Company (American)


Additional Required Readings
Sources for contemporary political news (e.g., newspapers, magazines, news pages on the Internet, television programs, social media, and radio broadcasts)

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 is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for this major are addressed in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will:
1. better understand how governments affect their lives
2. have learned about American, Texas, and local political systems
3. understand the structure and functions of the five branches of national and state governments: executive, legislative, judicial, the bureaucracy, and the media
4. have used research skills to gather governmental information
5. gain greater interest in contemporary political issues
6. become knowledgeable about public policies
7. develop the ability to critically analyze information
8. have intellectually discussed and presented contemporary political issues
9. have gained insights into practical politics
10. have researched and written a quality public policy paper

Course Requirements/Grading

Exams: There will be four (4) timed exams. You can earn more than 100 points on each exam. The exams will consist of true/false statements and multiple choice questions. The exams will test your knowledge of class materials (about 75 percent of the exam) and Textbook readings in Introduction to American Government Structure and Functions and the Texas Politics Workbook (about 25 percent of the exam). Our first exam will be on Monday, September 16. You need to bring three things to each exam: a Scantron Form No. 882-E, a No. 2 pencil, and a head full of political science knowledge. The final exam will not be comprehensive.

Class Preparation/Required & Bonus Points: You can earn up to 25 required and bonus points for class preparation. Students should carefully read, digest, and critically consider the assigned reading materials before attending class. Students should be fully prepared not only for getting good grades, but for successful careers. To assist in your preparation, you are to take multiple choice quizzes on D2L over the assigned readings and contemporary political news prior to attending class. The quizzes will coincide with a reading designated by "Quiz #" under date of class, on the calendar section of this syllabus. Quizzes will be available 24 hours in advance and must be submitted 30 minutes before class starts (12:30 p.m.). Quiz #1 is to be submitted before 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 28. Quiz #1 will cover Texas Chapter 5 and a few contemporary political news items—it will be a bonus quiz. To receive credit for quizzes you must attend the entire class period after the quiz.

Discussion and Presentation (D&Ps)/Required Points: You can earn up to 80 points on discussion and presentations (D&Ps). There will be four (4) D&Ps, each worth up to 20 points. Starting Wednesday, September 11, you will meet with your group to discuss a contemporary political issue and prepare a five (5) to six (6) minute presentation. Topics for these D&Ps will be decided/approved by Dr. Herzog prior to the D&P. Dr. Herzog will grade each D&P using a rubric with 13 items and the main emphasis will
be on delivery, organization and content. Dr. Herzog may deduct multiple points for any particular item on the rubric. To assist in the accuracy of grading, Dr. Herzog will record the presentations.

**Interesting/Informative D&Ps:** The format of your presentations can use a variety of presentation techniques including, debates, role-playing, game shows, editorial, different perspectives, and opposing viewpoints. Avoid descriptive presentations that involve reading your research.

**D&Ps/Bonus Points:** After each group gives their presentation, you will cast an individual ballot to vote on the BEST group presentation based on delivery, organization, and content. Individuals cannot vote for their own group’s presentation. Dr. Herzog will cast an equal number of votes as the number of student votes. Members of a group cannot vote if they do not participate in discussions and help with the presentation. The members of the group with the most votes will receive four (4) BONUS POINTS. The group members with the second most votes will receive two (2) BONUS POINTS. In case of a tie for first, the groups will divide six (6) points equally and no points will be awarded to second place. In case of a tie for second, the two (2) points will be divided equally. (In all cases, Dr. Herzog will round up.) You will be awarded two (2) BONUS POINTS for each D&P if you submit to Dr. Herzog, via D2L Dropbox, evidence of research on your topic (e.g., articles from news pages, typed notes) with 50 to 100 words of text and proper citation, are prepared to contribute to the discussion. Your Dropbox submissions will be due at 11:00 a.m. on D&P days. You will be awarded two (2) BONUS POINTS if you submit a signed ballot, with insightful notes and a justification for your vote at the end of a D&P class.

D&P groups will be initially assigned on Wednesday, August 28. Our first discussion and presentation (D&P) will be on Wednesday, September 11.

**Why D&Ps?**
1. to allow you to contribute to the educational process in the classroom
2. to improve your research skills
3. to experience working with other classmates to prepare for and deliver presentations
4. to refine your oral presentation skills
5. to allow you to discuss and present contemporary political topics that pique your interest

**Please Note:** You may not like the D&Ps because the voting is not always fair, they become very political, favoritism may rule over objectivity, and some presentations will appear to waste valuable class time. If some of these reasons become valid, you will have learned valuable lessons about politics.

**Public Policy Assignment:** There will be a public policy paper assignment in this course that is due on Friday, November 15. The specifics of this assignment will be announced. You can earn up to 20 points on this assignment.

**Course Evaluation/Bonus Points:** At the end of the semester you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous course evaluation. If you complete the multiple choice and comments sections of the course evaluation, you will be able to earn four (4) BONUS POINTS.

**Final Grades:** This course is graded on a cumulative point system with final grades determined on the following scale:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 472.5</td>
<td>&gt; 90</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>420-472</td>
<td>80 to 89.9</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>367.5-419.5</td>
<td>70 to 79.9</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>315-367</td>
<td>60 to 69.9</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 315</td>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

With multiple opportunities for bonus points in this course, there will be no consideration of borderline grades. You will receive the grade that you earn.

Grades will be posted on D2L as earned, and students can monitor their cumulative points and current percentage of points earning in the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Item</th>
<th>Number of Grades (Total Points Possible)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>4 (400)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>13 (25 plus bonus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D&amp;P</td>
<td>4 (80 plus bonus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy Paper</td>
<td>1 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Evaluation</td>
<td>1 (4 bonus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23 (525)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Make-up Policies**

To take a make-up exam, you must have a legitimate reason (for example, illness, personal matters, and other required university activities). You must contact Dr. Herzog BEFORE the scheduled exam to legitimize your reason. Make-up exams will not be FUN. However, DO NOT attempt to take a scheduled exam on your DEATHBED. There will be limited make-up opportunities on quizzes and D&P opportunities.

**Proper/Mandatory E-mail Etiquette**

If you are responding to the contents of a D2L e-mail I have sent, you do not have to change the subject line. If your message does not relate to the contents of an e-mail that I have sent or if you are e-mailing on a new topic, you need to compose a new D2L e-mail with a descriptive subject line that alludes to the content of the e-mail. Please note that e-mail is NOT a text message as it is more formal communication. You should start every e-mail to me with Dr. Herzog, and I will address you as Ms. or Mr. I will respond to your e-mail after I receive it. Please remember to only use D2L e-mail when using this medium to communicate with Dr. Herzog.

**Attendance/Cell Phones/Electronic Devices**

Students are required to attend class and arrive on time. The use of cell phones, even to check the time, during class presentations is prohibited. If Dr. Herzog sees you using a cell phone in class, it is considered unacceptable and disruptive behavior. Please turn your cell phone off or to silent when you arrive for class.
Other electronic devices (e.g., laptops and iPads) may not be used during class presentations. On D&P class days, when your group is preparing your presentation, you may use electronic devices to conduct additional research, review a presentation (e.g., PowerPoint or Prezi), or call a public official to get information. When your classmates’ D&P presentations start, all electronic devices must not be used.

**Course Calendar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>8/26</td>
<td>Syllabus and Schedule&lt;br&gt;Reading Student Evaluations Spring 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>8/28</td>
<td>Introduction&lt;br&gt;<strong>Reading:</strong> Texas, Chapter 5, pp. 79-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>The Media and Politics&lt;br&gt;<strong>Reading:</strong> American, Chapter 7, pp. 248-281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>The Functions of Congress&lt;br&gt;<strong>Reading:</strong> American, Chapter 12, pp. 456-499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>The Functions of Congress Continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>9/11</td>
<td><strong>Discussion and Presentation #1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>9/16</td>
<td><strong>Exam I</strong>&lt;br&gt;This exam will test your knowledge of class materials (about 75 percent of the exam) and readings in Texas and American (about 25 percent of the exam).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>The Texas Legislature&lt;br&gt;<strong>Reading:</strong> Texas, Chapter 1, pp 1-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>9/23</td>
<td>Reforming the Texas Legislature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>9/25</td>
<td><strong>Quiz #5</strong>&lt;br&gt;A Model of the Public Policy Process&lt;br&gt;<strong>Reading:</strong> Texas, Chapter 7, pp. 115-128&lt;br&gt;<strong>Reading:</strong> American, Chapter 17, pp. 670-705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>9/30</td>
<td>Texas Criminal Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>10/2</td>
<td><strong>Discussion and Presentation #2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>10/7</td>
<td>The Presidency and The Many Roles of the President&lt;br&gt;<strong>Reading:</strong> American, Chapter 13, pp. 504-539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>10/9</td>
<td>The Presidency and The Many Roles of the President Continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>10/14</td>
<td><strong>Exam II</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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.
Course Credit Justification

This three-credit hour face-to-face course requires approximate 150 minutes of classroom time/direct instruction each week at least six hours of out-of-class reading and studying each week in preparation for quizzes, exams, and completion of discussion & presentation assignments.

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)

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.


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.

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/).
General Education Core Curriculum Assessment

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>Public Policy Paper</td>
<td>Friday, November 15</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>
</table>