**Introduction to American Government: Structure and Function**

**Course Description**
This course covers the legislative, executive, and judicial functions of American and Texas governments as well as the functions of local and county governments. The course also introduces students to public policy areas such as economic policy, social services, and foreign policy.

**Required Texts**
- *Keeping the Republic, Brief Seventh Edition* by Christine Barbour and Gerald Wright.

**Course Requirements and Grading**
There will be three in-class exams and a final. Each is worth 50 points. Students will drop their lowest exam score and use the scores from their best three exams.

Class attendance will count for as much as 25 points. A seating chart will be used to take attendance. Students not in their seats will be counted absent. Students will lose at least one point for each time they miss class, arrive late, leave early, sleep during class, or disrupt class by talking.

In addition, a total of 24 points will be based on 2 short homework exercises submitted through Desire2Learn.

**Point System**
- Best 3 exams: 50 points each
- 2 exercises: 12 points each
- Attendance: 25 points
- Online evaluation: 1 point

**Grading Scale**
- A: 180+ points
- B: 160-179 points
- C: 140-159
- D: 120-139
- F: less than 120 points

This 3 credit hour face-to-face course requires approximate 150 minutes of classroom time/direct instruction as well as at least 6 hours of out-of-class reading, writing, and studying each week over the fifteen weeks of the semester.

**Office Hours**
Students may stop by my office anytime. However, I am most likely to be in my office during office hours:
- Mondays and Wednesdays: 9:30 – 11:30 AM
- Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays: 2:00 – 3:00 PM

Office hours end on the last day of classes. I will not hold regular office hours during finals week.

**Attendance Policy**
Students are **required** to attend class and attendance will be taken daily using a seating chart. I will deduct at least one point from the 25 points based on attendance for each unexcused absence. I will count you as absent if at any point during class time you are not in your seat, conscious, and reasonably quiet by the beginning of class. Sleeping, talking or other disruptive or disrespectful behavior will count against you. Please find another class if you consider this an inconvenience. Absences may be excused with a valid, documented excuse submitted in a timely manner.

**Exam Schedule**
- Exam #1: February 21
- Exam #2: March 28
- Exam #3: May 2
- Test #4: May 16 at 10:30 AM
Course Outline & Readings

I. Introduction

II. Legislative Politics
   Congress
   The Texas Legislature

III. Executive Leadership
   The President
   The Texas Executive

IV. The Bureaucracy
   Federal Agencies
   State Agencies

V. The Legal System
   Federal Courts
   Texas State Courts
   Justice

VI. Local Governments

VII. Policy
   Economic Policy
   Social policy
   Foreign policy

VIII. Conclusion

Lecture notes and review sheets as well as additional information will be available online through Desire2Learn.
**Exam Policy**
Students will be allowed to make up missed exams due to: a death in the family, illness, university-sponsored conferences or competitions, mandatory court appearances, or similar unavoidable conflicts. Students must provide documentation before exams can be made up.

Students are expected to be on time for exams. Students arriving after the first student finishes their exam will not be allowed to take the exam. Students may not leave the room during the exam. All electronic devices must be turned off and put away.

**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.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp.

**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/.

**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**
This course is designed to introduce students to the qualitative and quantitative analysis of U.S. and Texas politics. The course will help students develop the capacity to reflect and act upon political and social issues in order to increase meaningful participation in democratic society. The course assignments also help students develop critical thinking and communication skills needed to succeed beyond college.

**General Education Core Curriculum**
The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six core learning objectives: 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.

By enrolling in PSC 142 you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Critical Thinking Skills and Communication Skills requirement. You will see this course on your D2L list.
At one point during the semester, you will receive an assignment that fulfills both the requirements of this course and the needs of Stephen F. Austin State University’s Core Curriculum Assessment Plan with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. When you complete this one assignment, you need to upload the assignment to both your standard course dropbox determined by your Instructor and the “Core Curriculum” dropbox. The Core Curriculum dropbox will be identified by the Objective for which work is being collected. (Examples: Critical Thinking, Teamwork, Social Responsibility Empirical & Quantitative Skills, Personal Responsibility, Communication Skills-Written, Communication Skills-Written & Visual, and Communication Skills-Oral & Visual.) Please note that this only applies to the approved assignment. All other assignments should be submitted according to regular class operations.

When you complete the assignment mentioned above, you will upload the assignment to both the course dropbox and the core assessment dropbox.

Please note that this only applies to the specific assignment listed in the matrix below. All other assignments should be submitted according to regular class operations.

If you have any questions, please see your instructor, or contact the Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment at (936) 468-1130.

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 D2L dropbox this semester, and the date the assignment(s) should be uploaded to the D2L dropbox. Not every assignment will be submitted for core assessment every semester. Your instructor will notify you which assignment(s) must be submitted for assessment in the D2L dropbox.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Course Assignment Title</th>
<th>Date Due in D2L</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Skills</td>
<td>To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.</td>
<td>Not assessed in Spring 2019 semester</td>
<td>Not applicable</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 Spring 2019 semester</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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