“The justification for a university is that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest of life, by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative consideration of learning.”

Instructor: Dr. Peyton Wofford Gooch

E-mail: woffordgooch@sfasu.edu Email is the best way to reach me.

Phone: 936-468-4408

Office: Vera Dugas Liberal Arts North 112 (first floor of the Liberal Arts Building)

Office Hours: See D2L

Course description:

SFA’s official course description reads, “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” (SFA General Bulletin 2015-2016, p. 324).

Course Communication:

Email and/or visiting office hours are the best ways to contact me. I will respond to email as soon as possible; it may take as many as two business days.

Familiarize yourself with D2L. Check the course’s D2L newsfeed and your D2L email frequently for course updates, particularly syllabus updates. Some course readings will appear on D2L under the Content tab. To learn more about using D2L, visit http://sfaonline.sfasu.edu. For technical support, contact the Office of Instructional Technology at d2l@sfasu.edu or 936-468-1919. For general computer support (not D2L related), contact the Technical Support Center at 936-468-4357 or helpdesk@sfasu.edu.

Required Texts:

1) A Well Constructed Union: Readings in the American Political Tradition edited by Peyton Wofford
   a. ISBN: 9781516521197
   b. https://store.cognella.com/
2) Texas Government: Structures & Functions edited by Alan Baily
   a. ISBN: 9781524922481

These texts are required. If you use older editions, you are responsible for reading the correct content if/when chapter and item numbers differ from those listed on the syllabus.
Course Components:

Each course component is a percentage (or weight) of your final course grade. See tables below. Grades are non-negotiable. Late assignments are not accepted. Extra credit is not offered. I expect you to have read and understood SFA’s academic honesty policies (see below). The penalties for plagiarism, cheating, and other lapses in academic integrity are outlined in the Academic Honesty section of this syllabus (see below).

**Socratic Seminar – 35%**

Engaging in civil discourse, the respectful exchange of ideas, is a course requirement. I expect you to have read and understood the information in the Guidelines for Class Meetings section of this syllabus (see below). Failure to follow these guidelines will negatively impact your course grade.

Expect unannounced (i.e., pop) quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes are administered in class. Students who arrive late or leave early will earn a zero on that day’s quiz. Quizzes include multiple choice and short answer questions. To prepare for quizzes, complete the required reading, review D2L materials, review notes from the previous class, and otherwise retain and engage with the course material.

**Study Questions – 35%**

You will submit a series of graded study questions about the assigned readings. See D2L for more information. Please review the sample study questions for information about formatting, length, and style. Bring a typed copy of your completed study questions to class according to the course schedule (see below). **Study questions that appear in my department mailbox, under my office door, or in my email inbox will earn a grade of zero.** Use study questions as opportunities to practice expressing yourself in English prose. Proofread your work. Avoid violating the rules of usage and principles of composition. Do not include outside research or a works cited, bibliography, or foot/endnotes. However, if you quote from the assigned reading, I expect you to provide the page number. See below for information about what constitutes plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.

**Final Exam – 30%**

Unless I notify you otherwise, the final exam will be administered according to SFA’s final exam schedule. Questions drawn from required reading, lesson material, and class discussion. You are responsible for all of these components. The final exam will be comprehensive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Component</th>
<th>Percentage of Course Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socratic Seminar</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Questions</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90% or more / 900 pts or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80% - 89% / 800 to 899 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% - 79% / 700 to 799 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 69% / 600 to 699 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% or less / 590 pts or less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guidelines for Class Meetings:

This course features a combination of the Socratic method and lecture. Your professional engagement in class requires consistent preparation, punctuality, and attentiveness.

**Preparedness:** Meaningful participation during class depends on reading the assigned material *before* class and having that material with you *in* class for reference. Complete the required reading and assignments *before* class begins. Bring all readings with you. Print D2L readings and bring them to class.

**Punctuality and Attentiveness:** I expect you be ready to take notes and participate in each class meeting from start to finish. Unless you have discussed it with me beforehand, late arrivals and/or early departures are prohibited. Students who arrive late or depart early will earn a zero for the day’s quiz.

**Electronics:** Personal electronics have a negative impact on attentiveness and retention. As such, no phones and no laptops. Take notes with pen and paper. Phones tend to be the biggest temptation, so the following penalties describe phone use explicitly. These penalties, however, apply to the use of any electronic device, including recording audio or taking pictures. Students who use their phone, check their phone, have their phone in their lap/on their desk, or allow their phone to ring/vibrate (or be otherwise disruptive) during class will incur a ten (10) point deduction from their Socratic Seminar grade and be required to leave the class. Students who ignore/violate the electronics policy a second time will incur a twenty (20) point deduction from the Socratic Seminar grade. To minimize disruption, circumstances that require phone use must be cleared with me before class begins.

**Inappropriate Conduct:** According to SFA’s Student Conduct Code (D-34.1), your behavior in class should not interfere with my ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program. Students who disrupt the learning environment will be subject to penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums. The instructor has full discretion over what classroom behavior is (in)appropriate.

**Early Submission and Makeup Work:** Avoid missing class. Meet the deadlines outlined in the course schedule. If you miss coursework due to documented illness, documented emergency, or documented University-related activity, it is your responsibility to request makeup work. Acceptable documentation, evaluated on a case-by-case basis, is required to complete make up work or submit late work. It is your responsibility to provide documentation. If the absence meets the above criteria, we will discuss options for completing the missed coursework. If you know you will miss class/coursework ahead of time for unavoidable medical, personal, or University-related reasons, you must to notify me ASAP, provide documentation, and submit any missed coursework early or immediately upon your return to class. Once you return, we can discuss options for missed quizzes.
--------- Other Helpful Information ---------

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/.

WITHHELD GRADES
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.

ACADEMIC HONESTY
“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.” - SFASU’s Policy Manual (2011), section on “Academic Integrity” (A-9)

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 (e.g., plagiarizing or cheating) 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 (2015) or the University’s General Bulletin, 2014 – 2015 section entitled “Academic Integrity” and other sources of University policy.
Tentative Course Schedule

“The justification for a university is that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest of life, by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative consideration of learning.”

This calendar is subject to change. Complete reading and writing assignments before class time.

D2L = Print and read the article from D2L’s Content tab.

--------------- Our Project and the Questions of Politics ---------------

“For all we may resist such ultimate questions as the meaning of justice and the nature of the good life, what we cannot escape is that we live some answer to those questions – we live some theory – all the time.”

“All that has happened to you is also connected with the detail of...a rising people.”

"A republic, if you can keep it."

During the first weeks of the course, we will cover basics about the American system. But that is not all we will do. This course has an explicitly normative focus. What do I mean by normative? We will explore the ideas (or at least a selection of the ideas) that animate us whether we recognize them or not. Expect to read and talk about competing definitions of justice, the value of civil discourse, government’s utility (or lack thereof), and the purpose of a constitution. Although our treatment of American history will be woefully inadequate, we will cover a few pertinent details about the Founding. Expect to re-read the Declaration of Independence and US Constitution. You will also get a glimpse into the Founders’ understanding of human nature, government, and citizenship by reading excerpts from various Founding era documents. This understanding will serve as a springboard for our discussion of America’s political institutions – that is, the “how” of our government. To put it another way, I hope the first section of this course provides a glimpse into why our government is structured the way it is. Without some knowledge of the “why,” the “how” makes precious little sense.

Thursday, January 24 – Our Project and the Questions of Politics

Read: “The Coddling of the American Mind” by Lukianhoff and Haidt (D2L)
Items 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7 in A Well Constructed Union

Tuesday, January 29 and Thursday, January 31 – Our Project and the Questions of Politics

Read: Items 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 in A Well Constructed Union
Chapter 5 in Texas Government

Write: SQ 1 due in class on Thursday, January 31
Tuesday, February 5 and Thursday, February 7 – The Spirit of 1776: Their Project

Read: Items 9, 10, 11, 12, 25, 28, 30 in A Well Constructed Union
Write: SQ 2 due in class on Thursday, February 7

Tuesday, February 12 and Thursday, February 14 – The Spirit of 1776: Influences

Read: Items 28, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17
Write: SQ 3 due in class on Thursday, February 14

Tuesday, February 19 and Thursday, February 21 – The Spirit of 1776: Principles

Read: Items 27, 21, 22, 23, 24
Write: SQ 4 due in class on Thursday, February 21

Tuesday, February 26 and Thursday, February 28 – Loose Ends (or we will move on early to Legislative Power)

Read: TBA
Write: SQ 5 due in class on Thursday, February 28

--------------- Legislative Power ---------------

“...such an institution may be sometimes necessary as a defence to the people against their own...errors and delusions.”vi

We now turn to the US Congress and Texas State Legislature. From this point forward, the course will move at a quicker pace. We will also begin to shift our focus to institutional design. The legislative branch is the largest and most powerful part of our system. Expect to read about the differences between the national and state versions of this branch. We will discuss theories of representation, the committee system, veto overrides, redistricting, and the behavior of elected officials (to name a few topics).

Tuesday, March 5 and Thursday, March 7 – The Legislature

Read: Items 20, 38, 39, 40, 41, and 42 in A Well Constructed Union

Tuesday, March 12 and Thursday, March 14 – The Legislature

Read: Chapter 1 in Texas Government
Write: SQ 6 due in class on Thursday, March 14

Tuesday, March 19 and Thursday, March 21 – Spring Break
“No man will ever bring out of that office the reputation which carries him into it. The honeymoon would be as short in that case as in any other, and its moments of ecstasy would be ransomed by years of torment and hatred.”vii

“No man who ever held the office of president would congratulate a friend on obtaining it.”viii

“Some third person decides your fate: this is the whole essence of bureaucracy.”ix

We now turn to the executive branches of the United States and of Texas. The US President and the Texas Governor are the most visible pieces of these two respective branches; as such, we will dedicate the majority of our time to them. Please keep in mind, however, that both executive branches include extensive bureaucracies. Get ready for a journey through the land of the red tape. As we move through the material, consider the following questions. How is the presidency (as an institution) different today than it was when George Washington took office in 1789? Why is it different? What is the most/least satisfactory justification for its evolution? Now, what is the purpose of bureaucracy? Are there some things the bureaucracy does best? In short, despite our inveterate criticisms of the bureaucracy, why do we keep it around?

Tuesday, March 26 and Thursday, March 28 – The Executive

Read: Items 24, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49 in A Well Constructed Union

Tuesday, April 2 and Thursday, April 4 – The Executive

Read: Chapters 2 and 3 in Texas Government

Write: SQ 7 due in class on Thursday, April 4

“Let every American, every lover of liberty,…swear by the blood of the Revolution, never to violate in the least particular, the laws of the country; and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of seventy-six did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and the Laws, let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor; - let every man remember that to violate the law, is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the charter of his own, and his children’s liberty. Let reverence for the laws,...be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in the legislative halls, and enforced in the courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of the nation; and let the old and the young, the rich and the poor,...sacrifice unceasingly upon its altars.”

During the next few course meetings, we are going to combine institutional details with normative questions. We will give the most basic of outlines for the US and Texas court systems. We will also discuss the purpose of law, the function of courts (particularly the US Supreme Court), and different understandings of justice. Our system is designed to prioritize procedural justice. As a society, however, we tend to also care about substantive justice. We’ll explore this tension over the next few class meetings.

Tuesday, April 9 and Thursday, April 11 - The Function of Law

Read: Item 2 in A Well Constructed Union

D2L readings TBA

Write: SQ 8 due in class on Thursday, April 11
Tuesday, April 16 – The Function of Law

Read: Items 2, 33, 31, 36, 37 in A Well Constructed Union
Excerpt from The Roberts Court by Marcia Coyle (D2L)

Thursday, April 18 – Easter

Tuesday, April 23 and Thursday, April 25 – Judicial Independence

Read: Items 32, 33, 34, 35 in A Well Constructed Union
Chapter 4 in Texas Government

Write: SQ. 9 due in class on Thursday, April 25

--------------- The Implications ---------------

Now that we’ve talked a little bit about our political institutions, let’s take a look at what these institutions create, public policy. Remember what we covered in Section I? Determining who deserves what is the first question of public policy. The next questions deal with when and how recipients get their desert. We will have a normative bent to our discussion of domestic policy – that is, we will spend a good bit of time talking about the philosophy underlying public policy alternatives, specifically two competing (albeit somewhat caricatured in the D2L readings) theories about the possibilities and pitfalls of government. We will also explore specifically two prominent arguments about how the government and economy should interact. Sections IV and V will be covered on the last (i.e., final) exam.

Tuesday, April 30 and Thursday, May 2 – The Implications

Read: Chapters 6 and 7 in Texas Government

Write: SQ. 10 due in class on Thursday, May 2

Tuesday, May 7 and Thursday, May 9 – The Implications

Read: TBA

Thursday, May 16 from 8-10am – Final Exam

---

² Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, On Congress (1788), 171.
⁷ Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Edward Rutledge (December 27, 1796).
⁸vi John Adams, Letter to Josiah Quincy III (February 14, 1825).
⁹viivals Alexandra Kollontai, The Workers’ Opposition (1921).