PSC 141.501 American Government – Theory and Politics

Spring 2020

Department: Government
Instructor: Dr. Cindy Davis
Email: Through the course D2L email (preferred) or cindy.davis@sfasu.edu
Campus Office: Liberal Arts North 132
Campus Phone: 936-468-2424
Skype: CL Davis
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Office Hours:

In office: Wednesday 10am-2pm

Virtual: Monday 12:30-2pm; Thursday 1-2:30pm [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 and which course you are in. I will try to be available by Skype during my office hours as well but it is better to let me know you would like to Skype at a particular time.]

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.

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, 2018 - 2019.

Course Requirements & Grading

• **13 Lessons; 455 Points (each lesson is worth 35 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; 240 Points (80 points each):** 1-2 written pages (double spaced, 2 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

**Grading Scale**: A (1000-900 points); B (899-800 points); C (799-700 points); D (699-600 points); F (599 and below)

**Required Materials**

- **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 Getting Started 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-2e](https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-2e)

*Additional materials will be assigned by instructor during the semester and will be located within the lesson for the week.*

**Calendar at a Glance**: Calendar is not set in stone and is subject to change!


Reading: Chapter 1. American Government and Civic Engagement


Reading: Chapter 2. The Constitution and its Origins

**Week 3 (Mon. Jan. 27th-Sun. Feb. 2nd)**: Lesson Three: Federalism

Reading: Chapter 3. American Federalism

**Week 4 (Mon. Feb. 3rd-Sun. Feb. 9th)**: Lesson Four: Texas Political Culture and Constitution

Reading: Located within the lesson

**Week 5 (Mon. Feb. 10th-Sun. Feb. 16th)**: Exam One; Writing Assignment One Due

**Week 6 (Mon. Feb. 17th-Sun. Feb. 23rd)**: Lesson Five: Civil Liberties

Reading: Chapter 4. Civil Liberties

**Week 7 (Mon. Feb. 24th-Sun. March 1st)**: Lesson Six: Civil Rights
Reading: Chapter 5. Civil Rights

**Week 8 (Mon. March 2nd - Sun. March 8th):** Lesson Seven: Public Opinion

Reading: Chapter 6. The Politics of Public Opinion

**Week 9 (Mon. March 16th - Sun. March 22nd):** Lesson Eight: Voting and Elections

Reading: Chapter 7. Voting and Elections

**Week 10 (Mon. March 23rd - Sun. March 29th):** Lesson Nine: Texas Elections

Reading: Located within the lesson

**Week 11 (Mon. March 30th - Sun. April 5th):** Exam Two; Writing Assignment Two Due

**Week 12 (Mon. April 6th - Wed. April 8th):** Lesson Ten: Media

Reading: Chapter 8. The Media

**Week 13 (Mon. April 13th - Sun. April 19th):** Lesson Eleven: Political Parties

Reading: Chapter 9. Political Parties

**Week 14 (Mon. April 20th - Sun. April 26th):** Lesson Twelve: Interest Groups & Lobbying

Reading: Chapter 10. Interest Groups and Lobbying

**Week 15 (Mon. April 27th - Sun. May 3rd):** Lesson Thirteen: Texas Parties and Interest Groups

Reading: Located within the lesson

Writing Assignment Three Due

**Finals Week: (Mon. May 4th - Friday May 8th):** Exam Three must be completed by **Wednesday May 6th by 11pm**

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**General Education / Core Curriculum Education Objectives:** In any given semester, one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for the political science / government Foundational Component Area assigned to Political Science 141 may be assessed.

- 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 Outcomes:** By the end of the course, you should be able to

- To describe the basic concepts related to the study of American and Texas political behavior
• To examine the relationship between political behavior and political institutions, especially the interdependence of behavior and institutions
• To think critically about, especially the theoretical foundations of both the U.S. and Texas systems
• To discuss the foundations of the US and Texas Constitutions
• To identify the key schools of thought regarding voting behavior and electoral processes
• To explain the roles and functions of political parties and interest groups in a democratic political system
• To 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 141: American Government: Theory and Politics is a general education core curriculum course and fulfills the Personal Responsibility and Social Responsibility general education core curriculum requirements.

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 – Social Responsibility 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 Social Responsibility dropbox this semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Course Assignment Title</th>
<th>Date Due in D2L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making</td>
<td>Not Assessed in Spring 2020</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities</td>
<td>Writing Assignment Two</td>
<td>April 5, 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Justification: This three-credit hour online course requires approximate 150 minutes of online 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.
**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.

**Classroom 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. A course calendar is posted in the Getting Started content section, and I will post announcements when necessary.

- Make-up exams will only be allowed under exceptional circumstances. Having another exam or paper due that week is not an exceptional circumstance.

- **Turn it in software is used to view all assignments. 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).
• According to the university: “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.”

• “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.”

• 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

Technical Support

For D2L technical support, contact student at 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

Statement on Harassment, Assault, and Discrimination

If you encounter personal problems of any kind on or off campus, please reach out for help. This specifically includes being the victim of sexual assault, domestic violence, harassment based on sex or gender, discrimination based on race, religion, or national origin, or hate speech of any kind.
If you are the victim of any of these types of violations on campus, immediately call campus security (936-468-2608 for non-emergencies) or see the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs (Hollie Smith, Suite 3.105 Baker Pattillo Student Center, 936-468-7249) or the Title IX Coordinator (Amanda Pruitt, McKibben Building, Room 304; 936-468-8292); You may also seek out the Campus Health Clinic (On the S.E. corner of Raguet and East College Streets; 936.468.4008); the campus counseling centers (Student Counseling Services - 3rd Floor, Rusk Bldg; 936.468.2401 and the Department of Human Services Counselor Education Counseling Clinic 2100 Raguet St., Human Services and Technology Building; 936.468.1041).

Stephen F. Austin State University strives to provide an educational and work environment that affirms the rights and dignity of each individual. It is the policy of the university, in accordance with federal and state law, to prohibit unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, genetic information, citizenship, and veteran status. Additionally, Stephen F. Austin State University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Unlawful discrimination based on sex includes discrimination defined as sexual harassment.

Please be aware that all SFA employees (other than those designated as confidential resources in Section 4.5 and Section 6 of the Sex-and Gender-Based Discrimination, Violence, Harassment, and Misconduct Policy 2.13) are required to report any information obtained about potential policy violation such as sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and/or sexual violence or other related misconduct as outlined in Policy 2.13, the faculty member must share that information with the University’s Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of resources at www.sfasu.edu/lumberjacks-care.

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