Stephen F. Austin State University  
American Government 141  
Spring 2020

Professor: Dr. Julie Harrelson-Stephens  
Office: 135 Liberal Arts North, Department of Government  
Phone: 468-2380

I am available by email and will check my email and respond in a timely fashion. The quickest way to reach me is through the D2L email, although you can also reach me through the SFA email: harrelsoj@sfasu.edu

*Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you.* -Pericles (430 B.C.)

**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.

**Purpose:** This course is the first of two required political science courses designed to be an introduction to American Politics. The focus of this first course is the inputs into the political process, and to some extent the political process itself. Although many of you are not majoring in political science, all of you will be affected by the political process. Hopefully by the end of this course you will not only be more informed about the political process, but also more interested and involved in it.


**Grading:**
Course grades of 90 – 100 will be scored an A; 80-89 is a B; 70-79 is a C; 60-69 is a D; below 60 is an F.

If you think that an error has been made in calculating your grade, it is *your responsibility* to provide me with all of your work. To that end, it would be prudent to save anything that is handed back to you until you get your final grade report.
The schedule is designed so that you have a module every week, due Tuesday. The modules generally cover one or two chapters and include written and audio lectures, along with a quiz. The quizzes are designed to help you work through the reading and the lecture and check your understanding of basic concepts. As such, you cannot take the quiz until you have completed the content module (and you should have completed the reading as well). You can continue to take the quizzes as many times as you want and the highest grade will be recorded. Although the assignments are due each Tuesday before midnight, the quizzes will remain open until the end of that semester. I have posted review questions and reading assignment that you can start working through immediately to help you focus for the exams. Please let me know if you have any problems or concerns.

Course Requirements:
There will be four exams given during the semester, which comprise 75% of your course grade. The regular exams will consist of multiple-choice questions, fill in the blank, and short answers. Tests will cover material from the lecture and the reading. The exam time limits will be stated on each exam and strictly enforced. Another 20% of your grade will come from your daily grade. The final 5% of your course grade will come from the Constitutional Principles writing assignment.

Daily Grade:
Your daily grade will be comprised of course quizzes and module completion. The quizzes are designed to help test your basic understanding of the module’s content. As such, you may take each quiz as many times as you want to help study the material. The highest grade will be recorded. Be sure to complete the reading and relevant portion of the study guide prior to taking the quiz for each module.
**Success in this course:**
To succeed in this course you need to keep up with the reading and the lecture. Keep in mind that you need to allow time for class and time to study. In a ‘live’ class you would spend two and ½ hours a week in class and one to three hours a day studying. An online course is no different. You should *put aside time to read or listen to the lecture and hand write notes, time to read the textbook that corresponds to that module and fill out the relevant review sheet, and time to study the review sheet and lectures.* If you do this with every unit as you go, then studying prior to the exam will be much more effective.

Study skills are developed with practice. It is unlikely that you can merely read an assigned chapter and fully absorb all the concepts contained in that chapter in one sitting. Rather, it is often the case that to truly understand new material, you have to *read it more than once,* spend time contemplating the material, and even discussing it with your peers. Success is significantly more likely if you **keep up with the course requirements throughout the semester**, rather than cramming the day before the exam.

Anyone having problems in this course is strongly encouraged to contact the instructor as early as possible. I will be happy to help you in any way possible. I may be able to help you study more effectively or recommend other assistance. Do not wait until the end of the semester to ask for help, when so much of your grade is already completed. Ask for help as soon as you know you need it. **Remember, I want you to do well in this class!**

**Email inquiries** should employ professional language including a subject line that indicates the nature of the email, your full name, which course and section you are enrolled in, and appropriate salutations. I will not respond to emails that are answered in the syllabus or requesting extra credit or any other adjustment in your grade. I will also not respond to emails merely repeating questions from the review that I give you to fill out. I am happy to answer questions and help you with material you are struggling with, but you should be sure you have been keeping up with the material and the modules.

**Class information and updates:**
Class information, including changes of dates, review sheets, or other information will be posted on the class D2L site.
This syllabus should be seen as a rough guide for the coming semester. I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus throughout the semester.

**Academic Integrity**
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**
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/)

**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.

**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

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 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>
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<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>
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<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: Constitutional Principles</td>
<td>May 1, 2020</td>
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