PSC 142 Introduction to American Government: Structures and Functions, Online

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Office: 129 in LAN
Office Hours: TR 9:30-11:30
Zoom Office Hours: TBD (Will be announced on D2L)
Department of Government

Course Information:
1) If you have ANY questions about this course, please read the syllabus first, it can most likely be found in the document. If you have thoroughly read through the syllabus and still cannot find the answer email me on D2L.
   -Give me 24 hours to respond. This means that you will need to keep on top of things so you don't have any last minute, and time sensitive, questions.
   -I do NOT check my email on the weekend, so do not expect a response until Monday.

2) I will accept late work, but only the day after it was due and it will automatically get 30 percent deducted. Assignments are given in advance so there is no excuse for waiting until the last minute to get it done.

3) You can NOT take an exam after it has been given in class for any reason. You may take an exam early, and if you know you are going to be gone I would highly recommend this.

Course Description: Legislative, executive and judicial functions in American and Texas governments; public policy are such as finance, social services and foreign policy; Texas local and county governments.

Purpose: This course is designed to be an introduction to American and Texas Politics. The focus of this course is the government institutions and resulting implications for policy. As we go through the course, we will explicitly focus on comparing Texas institutions and policy output to U.S. institutions and policy output. All of you have been and will be affected by the political process. How much money you paid for this course, or the fact that this course is required are products of our government. 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.

Course Readings: This course does not have a required textbook, instead all of the readings from this course are open source Journal Articles, News Paper articles or Primary Text documents, and they have been provided for you. All of the course readings are listed and cited in the course outline. If a link on D2L is broken you will still be able to find the articles by searching the citation information online.

If you think that you may like a text book to refer to then I would suggest finding a used copy of the following text book:

By The People
Brief Editions 1-5
James A. Morone and Rogan Kersh

This is the text book I use to write my lectures, and if you want an actual chapter to read this would be very helpful, also all of the quizzes are from this text books website. This text book is NOT required.
Grades

Exams -50% of your grade
The first four exams are required, if you are satisfied with your course grade after the first four exams then you may choose not to take the final exam.
The final exam will be cumulative. If you miss an exam for any reason then you must take the final exam. If you must miss two exams please contact me as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made for you to take an early exam. Late exams are not permitted. If you take all four exams then your lowest exam grade will be dropped.

Exam 1 (Modules 1-4) - 12.5%
Exam 2 (Modules 5-8) - 12.5%
Exam 3 (Modules 9-12) - 12.5%
Exam 4 (Modules 13-14) - 12.5%
Final (All Modules) - 12.5%

Quizzes - 20%
There will be lecture OR reading quizzes in certain modules.
Quizzes are not timed and can be taken up to 3 times.
Every attempt will have different questions. I would suggest taking the quizzes all three times so that you can see how well you know all of the material. The highest attempt will be scored in the grade book. These quizzes are required and a missed quiz will result in a zero.
IMPORTANT: Quizzes will OPEN when the module becomes available, they will CLOSE the day before the exam, for that module, at 11:59 pm!

Discussions- 10%
There will be 2 class discussions each worth five points. In each discussion you will have a specific prompt you need to respond to. In both cases you will not gain access to the discussion post until you have watched all of the Module Lectures and Videos. Guidelines and expectations for Discussion posts can be found at the end of the syllabus and attached to each Discussion assignment.

Current Events – 20%
You will turn in a 250 word current event on predetermined Tuesdays. Instructions and due dates for this assignment can be found on the last page of the syllabus.
These current events MUST be submitted to the appropriate D2L Dropbox.
Dropboxes are labeled “CE#?”

Self-Assessments- 0% but required
In this class there will be 2 self-assessments. The first is a discussion board over the constitution, this is basically a practice discussion so that you can see what the requirements entail, and so you can see how I will grade future discussion boards. The second is over the plural executive of Texas and will resemble a normal quiz. Self-Assessments will be “graded” but they will not affect your overall grade. That being said both of these assignments are required and must be completed before you are able to move on in the course.

Extra Credit
Before every exam a review will be posted in D2L. These reviews will be worth 1 point on top of your final grade, and they are completely optional. To receive credit for your review you MUST submit it to the appropriate D2L Drop Box before 11:59pm on the day your exam closes.
These dropboxes will not accept late work.
Exam Reviews- 5 EC points (added to final grade)

There will also be Bonus quizzes attached to your exams!
Exam Bonus Quizzes- 1 EC point (added into your exam grade)
Because there are multiple opportunities for extra credit no other extra credit will be offered.
Lectures and Notes:
In this class all lectures are recorded in video format. You can watch these videos as many times as you want, while the Modules are open. As you watch these lectures I highly recommend taking notes over the material. In some Modules there will also be “handouts” or outlines which will help you take notes.

In the past I have found that students do not always watch the lectures and instead look the information up on google. Although google can be a useful tool, Google does not put the information in context of American/Texas government for you. If you give information that is not in the correct context, then it is incorrect.
So please take my advice and watch the lectures and take notes over them. Actively taking notes and listening to the class lectures helps you better retain the information.

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 Objectives/Outcomes:
In any given semester, one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for the political science / government Foundational Component Area may be assessed.
1. Critical Thinking Skills – creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
2. Communication Skills – effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
3. Social Responsibility – intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to effectively engage in regional, national, and global communities
4. Personal Responsibility – the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making

Student Learning Outcomes:
By the end of the course, students will be able
1. To describe the basic themes and concepts related to the study of American and Texas political institutions
2. To examine the relationship between political behavior and political institutions, especially the interdependence of behavior and institutions
3. To think critical thinking about American and Texas politics, especially the institutional framework of the system
4. To discuss the salient features of political institutions as understood by political scientists
5. To understand citizenship in the American political system more completely
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.

Plagiarism
If you are caught plagiarizing in this course, the first time you will receive a zero for the assignment. You may not makeup that grade. The second time you are caught you will fail this course and I will turn your name into the Dean and whoever it concerns at your High School.

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
If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing you will receive a zero on the assignment. Further action may be taken depending on the assignment. It is completely within my rights to refer you to the Dean of the college if deemed appropriate.

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/.

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).

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 iCare program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.
Welcome

Lectures/Videos:
- Welcome to Political Science
- Syllabus
- D2L/ Gradebook: Overview
- Current Events: How to

Readings:
- Syllabus
- Course Outline
- Discussion Board Guidelines
- Current Event Assignment

Assignments:
- Course Guidelines Acceptance
- Syllabus Quiz (You cannot access any of the course modules until you have passed this quiz.)
Section 1: Module 1-4

Module 1- US Constitution
Lectures/Videos:
  - Review of American Revolution, Part 1
  - Review of American Revolution, Part 2
  - The Articles of Confederation (Video)
  - The Constitution
  - The Bill of Rights
Readings:
  - Declaration of Independence (Primary Source Document)
  - Constitution (Primary Source Document)
Assignments:
  - Observations of the Constitution: Discussion Board (Self-Assessment) (DUE 2/12 at 11:59 PM)

Module 2- Texas Constitutions
Lectures/Videos:
  - Texas Constitutions, Part 1
  - Texas Constitutions, Part 2
Readings:
  - Handbook of Texas Online, Joe E. Ericson and Ernest Wallace, "CONSTITUTION OF 1876,"
Assignments:
  - Lecture Quiz (Due 2/12 at 11:59 PM)

Module 3- The US Legislature
Lectures/Videos:
  - Congress, Part 1
  - Congress, Part 2
  - Congress, Part 3
  - Congress, Part 4
  - Congress, Part 5
  - Congress, Part 6
Readings:
  - Bill Process PDF (Notes Outline)
Assignments:
  - I’m Just a Bill: Discussion Board (DUE 2/12 at 11:59 PM)

Module 4 - The Texas Legislature
Lectures/Videos:
  - Texas Legislature, Part 1
  - Texas Legislature, Part 2
Readings:
  - Bill Process PDF (Notes Outline)
Assignments:
  - Reading Quiz (Due 2/12 at 11:59 PM)

EXAM 1- February 13- 14th
Section 2: Modules 5-8

Module 5- The Presidency
Lectures/Videos:
- The Presidency, Part 1
- The Presidency, Part 2
- The Presidency, Part 3
- The Presidency, Part 4
- The Presidency, Part 5
Readings:
Assignments:
- Lecture Quiz (Due 3/17 at 11:59 PM)

Module 6- The Governor and the Plural Executive
Lectures/Videos:
- The Governor, Part 1
- The Governor, Part 2
- The Plural Executive
Readings:
Assignments:
- Plural Executive (Self-Assessment) (Due 3/17 at 11:59 PM)

Module 7- Bureaucracy
Lectures/Videos:
- The Bureaucracy, Part 1
- The Bureaucracy, Part 2
- The Bureaucracy, Part 3
- The Bureaucracy, Part 4
- The Bureaucracy, Part 5
- Using the Federal Register (Video)
Readings:
Assignments:
- Reading Quiz (Due 3/17 at 11:59 PM)

Module 8- TX. Bureaucracy
Lectures/Videos:
- TX Bureaucracy, Part 1
- TX Bureaucracy, Part 2
- Sunset Advisory Commission (Video)
Readings:
Assignments:
- Reading Quiz (Due 3/17 at 11:59 PM)

EXAM 2- March 18-19th
Section 3: Modules 9-12

Module 9- The US Judiciary
Lectures/Videos:
   The Judiciary, Part 1
   The Judiciary, Part 2
   The Judiciary, Part 3
Readings:
Assignments:
   Lecture Quiz (Due 4/6 at 11:59 PM)

Module 10- Judicial Review
Lectures/Videos:
   Judicial Review
Readings:
   Marbury V. Madison, Summary #1
   Marbury V. Madison, Summary #2
Assignments:
   Reading Quiz (Due 4/6 at 11:59 PM)

Module 11- TX Judiciary
Lectures/Videos:
   TX Judiciary, Part 1
   TX Judiciary, Part 2
   TX Judiciary, Part 3
   TX Judiciary, Part 4
   Judicial Elections: Just or Unjust?
   TX Judiciary, Part 5
Readings:
Assignments:
   Reading Quiz (Due 4/6 at 11:59 PM)

Module 12- TX Local Government
Lectures/Videos:
   TX Local Government, Part 1
   TX Local Government, Part 2
   TX Local Government, Part 3
Readings:
Assignments:
   Lecture Quiz (Due 4/6 at 11:59 PM)

EXAM 3- April 7-8th
Section 4: Modules 13-14

Module 13- US Policy
Lectures/Videos:
   Social Policy
   Economic Policy, Part 1
   Economic Policy, Part 2
   Economic Policy, Part 3
   Crisis of Credit (Video)
   Foreign Policy, Part 1
   Foreign Policy, Part 2
Readings:
   “How Republicans and Democrats View Federal Spending,” Pew Research Center, April 11, 2019
Assignments:
   Deficit/Debt Crisis: Discussion Board (Due 4/28 at 11:59 PM)

Module 14- TX Policy
Lectures/Videos:
   TX Fiscal Policy, Part 1
   TX Fiscal Policy, Part 2
   TX Education Policy, Part 1
   TX Education Policy, Part 2
   TX Social Policy, Part 1
   TX Social Policy, Part 2
Readings:
   None
Assignments:
   Lecture Quiz (Due 4/28 at 11:59 PM)

EXAM 4- April 29-30th

Section 5: All Modules: Make Up Work

Make-up Quiz: Crisis of Credit (Video) Due- May 6th
Make-up Current Event Due- May 6th

FINAL- May 7- 8th
CURRENT EVENT DUE DATES

**Regular:** 2/4, 3/3, 3/31, 4/21

**Make-up:** 5/6

**Acceptable Sources**

- PBS
- Politico
- CSPAN
- Reuters
- Associated Press
- NPR
- Al Jazeera

**Instructions:**

1) Choose and read an article about government or politics from one of the above sources. This part will be easier if you choose an article that is about something you are actually interested in. Please remember that this is an academic assignment, therefore academic language should be used at all times. Attention should also be paid to grammar and spelling.

2) Your Current Event is a four part assignment. Neglect of one part will result in loss of points. A rubric will be used to grade this assignment. A copy of is can be found in the Welcome Module. You can also look at the rubric on D2L by clicking on the dropbox.

   - **Part 1** Summarize your article. This should be about 100-150 words.
   - **Part 2** What are your opinions of the event? Is there anything you agree or disagree with? Explain how the event may impact our government in a negative or positive way. This should be between 100-150 words.
   - **Part 3** Explain why this is relevant to our class? Be specific; tie the event back to a topic from the syllabus, or something that we have talked about. This should be between 50-75 words.
   - **Part 4** You must cite your work you may use either citation format. Make sure that you are formatting your citation correctly AND using one of the acceptable sources. (Found below)

3) The Current Event should be at least 250 words. I will be counting, and points will be taken off if short.

4) **Current Events are due on assigned Tuesday nights by 11:59pm.** They must be submitted to the appropriate Drop Box on D2L. Remember that late current events can only be turned in the day after it is due. Late Current Events will automatically have 30 percent (1.5 points) deducted from them.

**Citation References:**

Below are the two ways you may cite your sources. It does not matter which which you choose to use. If you are not comfortable doing this by hand please use citationmachine.net.

**MLA Citation:**


**APA Citation:**
