Syllabus

Office: 107 LA North
Hours: Posted on door
E-mail: use D2L

Course Description

"it is wrong always, everywhere, and for any one, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence as the danger to society is not merely that it should believe wrong things, though that is great enough; but that it should become credulous, and lose the habit of testing things and inquiring into them; for then it must sink back into savagery"

--- Clifford,
The *Ethics of Belief*,
1879, pp. 185-186

This course explores the structure and dynamics of American national
government, providing a broad-based introduction to the ideas and institutions that shape politics in the contemporary United States. We will focus our analysis on three major areas: the fundamental concepts and principles of politics and democracy, the Constitution and the political context of American politics (political culture and political economy). Our analysis will promote the examination of important political phenomena from a variety of perspectives. Ultimately, the goal is to help each member of the class arrive at a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the forces that shape American government and politics, so that he or she may be both a more discerning student and critic of the system and a more informed and reflective participant in it.

You must be knowledgeable of the contents of this course syllabus and you are expected to complete all of the course assignments on time without my direct supervision. You are encouraged to maintain regular communication with me throughout the semester, especially when you have questions regarding course content or protocol. I am always pleased to receive your D2L emails with questions or concerns, so don’t hesitate to use D2L email to notify me of any problems that you are having. I should be able to reply to you within 24 hours. It is assumed that you have a reliable computer and internet connection and that you can competently use a computer to send/receive emails (with or without attached files), to conduct internet research (using various search engines), and to do word-processing. Should you encounter problems with D2L, please contact the D2L support by email (d2l@sfasu.edu) or by Phone: 936.468.1919.

Please login to the Homepage on D2L frequently (daily) to see any announcements or updates for our class. I will use this site to make announcements or notify you of any changes or updates. Please be sure to check your D2L email account for class email messages.

Course Objectives
To analyze, criticize and evaluate demonstrably the concepts, principles, theories and practices of our republican form of democracy as evident at the federal level.

To analyze, criticize and evaluate demonstrably the cogency and efficacy of democracy, republican forms of government, federalism, civil rights and liberties, various political ideologies, political cultures and American political economy at the federal level, illuminating how they work and how they impact our lives.

To develop demonstrably your ability to suggest cogent, positive alternative concepts, principals, practices and desired outcomes where appropriate.

Requirements and Grading

Your overall grade will be based upon:

1. Quizzes (50%).

2. Midterm and Final (25% each);
   - *Midterm* quiz on the readings from *The Mainstream of Western Political Thought*.
   - *Final* quiz on *The Gardens of Democracy*.

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Calendar

To some extent, the course is designed to be self paced. All quizzes may be taken at any time during the course.

Be sure to read all of the content in each Module before taking the quizzes. All quizzes may be taken twice, and all incorrect answers are indicated in feedback after the first quiz. Your grade will be the average of the two attempts.
“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself. Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.”

John Dewey

Week 1 Classes Begin
Begin The Mainstream Chapter

Read for this week,

Ten things Political Scientists Know that you Don’t
Nine essential lessons from Psychology to Understand the Trump Era
- Propaganda Techniques Gaslighting
- Liberalism Conservatism Socialism
- Pragmatism
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Finish The Mainstream Chapter 3,</th>
<th>Take Quiz</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read this week:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• On Political Power</td>
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<td>• Justice: Contemporary Thinking</td>
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<td>• The Best regime as proposed by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle</td>
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<td>• Machiavelli and the Best Regime</td>
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<td>Suggestion: Watch Apt Pupil</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Begin The Mainstream Chapter 4</th>
<th>Take Quiz</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 5</td>
<td>Read</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Democratic Theory</td>
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<td>The Justification of Democracy</td>
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<td>Essential Elements of a Democracy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, and</td>
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Rousseau on Democratic Government
  • Democracy, Republicanism, and American Government, I & II

Watch short videos:
  • Why Socrates Hated Democracy
  • Political Theory: Hobbes
  • Political Theory: Locke
  • Political theory Rousseau

Week 4

- Finish The Mainstream Chapter 4

Read
  • Introduction
  • Constitutional Theory
  • The Constitution in a Nutshell Federalism
  •
• The Constitution I & II
• The Articles
• Important clauses
• Civil Rights and Civil Liberties I & II
• Five Ways to Change the Constitution Without the Amendment Process

Suggestion: watch Bullworth

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**Week 5**

**Review The Mainstream**

**Chapters 3-4.**

Read,

- Introduction
  - Political Culture and Political Ideology:
- Differentiation
  - American Political Culture
- State and Local Political Culture
- Political Sub-Cultures and Ideologies
- How the US Economy Works
- Basic Political Economics

**Video:** How to Improve Capitalism

Suggestions:
1. They Shoot Horses Don’t They?
2. Watch I ♥ Huckabee’s
3. Watch Ghost World

### Week 6: Congress

**Review The Mainstream Chapters 3-4**

**Read**

- Introduction
- Congress; An Overview
- Congressional Government
- Legislative Oversight
- Congressional Authority: The Problem of
- Delegation
- Party Control of the
- Congressional Agenda
  - Summary and Conclusion

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### Week 7: Presidency

**Review The Mainstream Chapters 3-4**

**Read**

- Introduction
- Federalist 70
- Presidential Power
- Understanding and
Evaluating Presidents
The Personal Presidency
### Week 8

**The Judiciary**

- Take Midterm on Mainstream Chapters 3, 4
- As well as quiz on the material

**The Federalist No. 78**

- Court Role and Structure
- Judicial Review
  - Video: Judicial Activism
  - and Restraint
  - Controversial Supreme Court Cases

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<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read The Federalist No. 78</td>
<td>Take Quiz &amp; Take Midterm</td>
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**Midterm**

- October 17

### Week 9

**The American Voter**

- Read GOD Chapter 1 & 2

**Introduction**

- Why People Vote the way they do
- Trust among Voters
- Effect of Conventions and Debates on Voting
- Economic Insecurity
- and Voting behavior Voting against Self-Interest
- Voter Attribution and Voting Behavior
- Effect of Voter ID
- Requirements
- Effects of Voting ID
- Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
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<tr>
<td>Read The American Voter</td>
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<td>Take Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10 Political Parties</td>
<td>Read</td>
<td>Introduction Political Parties Overview Why Parties? • Democratic Party • Republican Party Donkeys and Elephants</td>
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<td>Week 11 Interest Groups</td>
<td>Read</td>
<td>The Federalist No. 10 Interest Group Overview Which Groups will be Successful? Interest Groups, Iron Triangles and Issue Networks Iron Triangles: • Examples and Functioning The Governmental Process Legislators and Interest Groups</td>
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Week 12
The Media
Read GOD Chapter 5

- Introduction
  - Two Step Flow Model
  - Mass Media, Public
  - Opinion and Government
  - Mass Media and Bias
  - Media Misinformation,
  - Disinformation and Fake
  - News
  - How social media makes it difficult to identify real news

Week 13
Catch-up and Review

Week 14
11/21 - 11/28
Thanksgiving Break
Week 15-16
Review and Finals

Merry Christmas!
Finish Quizzes and
Review Gardens of Democracy
• General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes: In any given semester, one or more of the following Exemplary Educational Objectives (EEO)s for Social and Behavior Sciences may be assessed.

  o EEO#3 – “To use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories”
  o EEO #5 – “To analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the area under study”
  o EEO #6 – “To comprehend the origins and evolution of the U.S. and Texas political systems, with a focus on growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S. and Texas, federalism, civil liberties, and civil and human rights”
  o EEO #8 – “To differentiate and analyze historical evidence (documentary and statistical) and differing points of view”
  o EEO #9 – “To recognize and apply reasonable criteria for the acceptability of historical evidence and social research”
  o EEO #11 – “To recognize and assume one’s responsibility as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy”
  o EEO #12 – “To identify and understand differences in commonalities within diverse cultures”

• Program Learning Outcomes: This course is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for a
• Attendance: there is no attendance policy, but your grade will suffer with a lack of participation.

• All cases of academic dishonesty will be handled according to University policies and procedures (A-9.1). The consequences for academic dishonesty may range from a score of zero (0) on the assignment to an “F” for the course. For details, students should refer to the University’s General Bulletin, 2009-2010 section entitled “Academic Integrity” and other sources of University policy. 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)

• 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: it is the student’s responsibility to inform the professor of any relevant 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/)

• 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 and 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.

**Mental Health and Wellness**

*Please copy and paste the following information into your course syllabus.*

SFA values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students' mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**

SFA Counseling Services [www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices](http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices) Rusk Building, 3rd Floor 936.468.2401

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic [www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](https://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp) Human Services, Room 202 936.468.1041

**Crisis Resources:**

Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)

Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

**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 GOVT 2306: Texas Government you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Core Curriculum / General Education Objectives of Communication Skills (Visual and Written), Critical Thinking, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.
During the semester, you will receive assignments 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. If you have any questions, please see your Instructor or 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 associated with this course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Course Assignment Titles</th>
<th>Date Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas though written, oral, and visual communication.</td>
<td>Please Refer to the Course Calendar for QUIZZES 1-8</td>
<td>Please Refer to the Course Calendar For all Due Dates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information</td>
<td>Please Refer to the Course Calendar for QUIZZES 1-8</td>
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<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to effectively engage in regional, national, and global communities</td>
<td>Please Refer to the FINAL and QUIZZES 1-8 on the Course Calendar</td>
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<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making</td>
<td>Please Refer to the FINAL on the Course Calendar</td>
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