Course Description

Course includes development of the U.S. Constitution, structure, and powers of the federal government, including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public and foreign policy, civil liberties and civil rights.

Requirements of the Course

First, you are expected to come to class. Second, you are expected to read the assigned material before class. Third, you are expected to discuss the assigned readings in class. By “discuss” I mean to engage in active, in-depth, conversations with your classmates and me over the assigned readings. Fourth, you are expected to stay informed on current political events by reading the paper, watching the news, browsing political websites, etc. It is sometimes easier to understand political concepts and theories when you can relate them to current political activities. Therefore, we will discuss current events in class as well.

*On Liberty*: Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion – “[T]he peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race…. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth produced by its collision with error” (76).

Please feel free to voice your opinions. Opinions generate class discussions and class discussions generate knowledge and understanding.

Required Books


Note: Outside readings may be assigned throughout the semester.

Grading Policy

Grades for this course will come from four exams (22.5%) and a group project and presentation (10%).
**Examinations:** Examinations will consist of 40 multiple choice questions worth two (2) points each and two essay questions with ten (10) points each. The exams will only cover the material in each segment. You will need to bring a Scantron 882-E for each exam. There will be pages on your exam to answer the essay questions. You will have 75 minutes to take each exam. Exams will cover reading, lecture, and movie material. You are responsible for each of these. Tentative exam dates are noted below.

Make-up exams will be given only in the case of documented illness, documented emergencies, or University related absences. Make-up exams may be more difficult than scheduled exams (e.g., essay). If you miss an exam, it is your responsibility to inform me as to the nature of your absence. If the absence is excused, we will schedule a time to take the make-up exam. No exams will be given early.

**Project & Presentation:** At the beginning of the semester, some of you will be assigned as members of Congress and some of you will be assigned as members of the Supreme Court. Members of Congress will draft legislation covering a controversial topic; legislation will be turned in and graded. Members of the Supreme Court will review the legislation and decide if it is constitutional; written opinion(s) will be turned in and graded. This will require research to draft the law and research to decide if it is constitutional. I will help both groups with research needed. Have fun!

**Attendance:** Attendance will not be taken.

**Academic Integrity**

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the
rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

**Course Hour Credit Justification**

In compliance with SFA Policy 5.4, you are expected to spend 150 minutes each week attending class. In addition, you should spend 300 minutes each week in preparation for class. This time included reading and reviewing material from your assigned readings, as well as reviewing notes from class, working on class assignments, and engaging in research related to your research project. During weeks in which you will meet one-on-one with your professor, you are expected to spend more time engaged in research and writing on your major research project.

**General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes**

In any given semester, one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for political science/government Foundational Component Area may be assessed in this course.

- Critical Thinking Skills – creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
- Communication Skills – effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
- 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. No specific program learning outcomes for a political science major are addressed in this course.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students will:

- Better understand how government affects their lives;
- Have learned about federal political systems;
- Understand the structure and functions of the three branches of the federal government (Legislative, Executive, and Judicial) and the bureaucracy;
- Gain greater interest in contemporary political issues;
- Become knowledgeable about public policies (domestic and foreign);
- Develop the ability to critically analyze information;
- Understand the role of public opinion, political parties, interest groups, campaigns and elections, and the media in American politics.


**Additional Points**

- Be on time! If you arrive late for class, *quietly* take a seat at the back of the room.
- Be polite! Do not talk over your classmates or me.
- Turn off your cell phones. If your cell phone goes off in class, you will be required to perform an embarrassing task in front of the class (hint: learn the words and motions to “I’m a Little Teapot”). If you are texting, your cell phone is on and chances are you are not paying attention in class. Therefore, texting is a punishable offense. If caught, you will be required to sing something in front of the class.
- Any use of AI will be considered plagiarism and reported to the University.
- I reserve the right to eject any student who violates these or other rules.

**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/).

**Mental Health**

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

**On-campus Resources:**
SFASU Counseling Services • [www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices](http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices)
Health and Wellness Hub (corner of E. College and Raguet) • 936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic • [www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://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
Tentative Class Schedule

Week 1    KTR Chapter 1
Week 2    KTR Chapters 1 & 2
Week 3    KTR Chapters 2 & 3
Week 4    KTR Chapter 3

TEST 1   Thursday, September 21st

Week 5    KTR Chapter 4
Week 6    KTR Chapters 4 & 5                Legislation due
Week 7    KTR Chapter 5
Week 8    KTR Chapter 12

TEST 2   Thursday, October 19th

Week 9    KTR Chapter 6
Week 10   KTR Chapters 6 & 7
Week 11   KTR Chapters 7 & 8
Week 12   KTR Chapter 9                Opinion(s) due

TEST 3   Thursday, November 16th

Week 13   KTR Chapters 10 & 13
Week 14   Thanksgiving!!!
Week 15   KTR Chapters 11 & 14
Week 16   TEST 4    Thursday, December 14 – 10:30-11:45
            Project Presentations 11:45-12:30
Course Syllabus Appendix

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 2305: Federal 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.</td>
<td>1) Exam 1</td>
<td>September 21\textsuperscript{st}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information</td>
<td>1) Exam 2</td>
<td>October 19\textsuperscript{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>1) Exam 3</td>
<td>November 16\textsuperscript{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making</td>
<td>1) Exam 4</td>
<td>December 14\textsuperscript{th}</td>
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</tbody>
</table>