Professor: Dr. Spencer L Willardson

Office: Liberal Arts North 136

Email: Spencer.Willardson@sfasu.edu

Class Meets: M-Th 10:15-12:10 Ferguson Liberal Arts 377

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description
“Course includes development of the U.S. Constitution, structure and powers of the national government, including the legislative, executive and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public policy, civil liberties and civil rights.” General Bulletin, 2020-2021.

Course Hour Justification
This 3-credit hour face-to-face course requires approximately 150 minutes of classroom time/direct instruction as well as at least 5 hours of out of class reading and studying each week in preparation for exams and completion of writing assignments.

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

- 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 and no specific program learning outcomes for a political science major are addressed in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this course, students will:
1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States. (Critical Thinking)
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system. (Critical Thinking, Social Responsibility)
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice. (Critical Thinking, Social Responsibility)
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government. (Social Responsibility)
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system. (Critical Thinking, Communication Skills)
6. Analyze the election process. (Social Responsibility)

Required Text

*Keeping the Republic*, Ninth Brief Edition by Christine Barbour and Gerald Wright. (Available at the Bookstore)

(Note: I don’t have a preference to which format of this book that you purchase (digital, hard copy, loose-leaf, etc). If you purchase the *Sage Vantage* option with your textbook, you will have access to additional study resources. They are not required for class, but they may be useful/helpful in your exam preparations.)

A note on Reading

This course relies on your individual reading and work to be successful. As noted above, you are expected to spend around 5 hours each week outside of class studying. That study will largely consist of reading the textbook and learning the concepts from it. Lectures (twice a week) reinforce the information that you are learning from the textbook. I *strongly recommend* that you read the assigned chapters before lectures are scheduled for that topic so that you will know what questions to ask and what you need help understanding. That helps us to use lecture time most effectively.

Grading

Grades will be based on three exams (2 midterm and 1 final) and two writing assignments. Grades will be assigned based on the following grade scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>Student demonstrates a mastery of the subject and the attendant skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89.9%</td>
<td>Student demonstrates an above-average understanding of subject and skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79.9%</td>
<td>Student demonstrates an average understanding of subject and skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69.9%</td>
<td>Student demonstrates a below-average understanding of subject and skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;=59.9%</td>
<td>Student failed to adequately understand subject materials and skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students will be graded based on the following items:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm 1</td>
<td>8 June</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm 2</td>
<td>20 June</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federalist Paper Assignment</td>
<td>5 June</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Assignment</td>
<td>15 June</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>29 June</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description of Assignments in Class**

**Midterm Exams**

Each midterm exam will last for the length of class. Students will answer a mix of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and long answer questions. The short answer questions require about 1 paragraph (5-6 clear sentences) to answer. Students will also be asked to answer 1-2 long question (3-4 paragraphs required to answer fully). I will give you more information on these questions prior to the first exam.

**Note on Writing Assignments**

The purpose of these writing assignments is to help students to think about the academic concepts we are learning about how politics work and how the American government was set up and to apply that to how things work. I am interested in how you make clear connections between what is happening and the way the system is set up.

**Federalist Paper Assignment**

In this assignment, I want you to engage with the primary document of the founding of the United States – the Constitution – and with some of the original attempts to help people understand that text. You will write a short essay that identifies which of the Federalist Papers you read, what sections of the Constitution it applies to, and how reading the F.P. helped you to understand the Constitution OR how it helps you to understand a present-day political issue. The paper will be 1 single spaced typed page long, will follow all the rules of a good paper, and will be the original work of the student. You can find the Federalist Papers here: [https://guides.loc.gov/federalist-papers/full-text](https://guides.loc.gov/federalist-papers/full-text). The Assignment is due on D2L at 5:00 p.m. on 5 June 2023.

**News Assignment**

In this assignment, you will pick an issue from the news (within 1 month of the assignment being due, i.e. on or after 15 May 2023). You will write a brief summary of what is happening (1 paragraph) and then relate the news to one of the core topics from the class using references to concepts from the book and other academic or reliable sources. The assignment will be due on D2L on 15 June 2023. It should be 1 single spaced typed page long and follow the rules for a good paper. This includes the proper use of citations both in the body of the paper and references at the end of the paper for all outside information used.
Participation

You cannot participate if you are not present. I am interested in positive participation. You don’t always need to say something to participate, but you do need to be engaged. You will be docked points for “negative participation.” Behaviors such as coming to class late, having side conversations, sleeping, or speaking with other students rudely, will be noted and you will lose participation points.

Final Exam

The final exam will be comprehensive. It will mainly cover the new information that we cover in class after Midterm 2. However, I will ask questions on the exam that cover the entire scope of information that we learned in class.

Weekly Schedule

This is an intensive summer course. We are covering a full semester’s worth of material in 5 weeks. You will average 3 chapters of reading per week. You must read in order to do well. You should read the chapters before class. Lectures and class time are to help you put the information together and to answer questions that you have. Reading and individual study is where you will learn the bulk of the material. You will fall behind in the class if you are not reading and preparing before class each week.

Additional Information

I am here to help you to learn. You are responsible for your learning, and I am responsible for helping you to learn however I can. Please take advantage of my office hours. If you cannot make it to regular office hours, I will make an appointment with you. If you have questions, please ask them. If you are struggling with a concept in class, please let me know as soon as possible. If you are feeling overwhelmed or backed up, please come and see me. Deadlines are firm, but if you talk to me before an assignment is due, I am more likely to accept a late assignment with a smaller penalty. Since this is a condensed summer schedule class, you have a much stronger need to stay engaged and caught up.
## Weekly Schedule

Key for Core Objectives:
CS – Communication Skills  
CT – Critical Thinking  
SR – Social Responsibility  
PR – Personal Responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
<th>Core Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>T (5/30)</td>
<td>Understanding US Politics</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>The Founding of the US</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>CT, SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>Federalism</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M (6/5)</td>
<td>Civil Liberties</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>Federalist Paper</td>
<td>CS, PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Civil Rights</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>PR, SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Finish Up/Review</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Midterm 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>M (6/12)</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>CS, CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Congress/The President</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>The President/Bureaucracy</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>CS, CT, SR, PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>Bureaucracy/Wrap Up</td>
<td></td>
<td>News Assignment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>M (6/19)</td>
<td>Law and the Courts</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Midterm 2</td>
<td>PR, SR, CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Parties and Interest Groups</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
<td></td>
<td>CT, SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>Voting and Elections</td>
<td>Chapter 12</td>
<td></td>
<td>CT, SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>M (6/26)</td>
<td>Domestic and Foreign Policy</td>
<td>Chapter 14</td>
<td></td>
<td>CT, SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Domestic and Foreign Policy</td>
<td>Chapter 14</td>
<td></td>
<td>CT, SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Study - No Class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th (6/29)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>CS, CT, PR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
POLICIES

Attendance Policy
Students are expected to be in class. I will take attendance on a regular basis. Missing class, disrupting class, or not being engaged with the material while in class will result in your participation grade being lowered. If you miss class, you will miss important concepts and discussions. That will affect how well you do on exams and writing assignments. Come to class.

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)
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

I do not tolerate cheating of any kind. Any plagiarism, use of AI to do your work, or other academic integrity violations will be reported and you will receive an F for the course.

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/.

Desire2Learn (D2L)
For D2L technical support, contact student support in the Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) 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 at 936-468-HELP (4357) or at helpdesk@sfasu.edu.
**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
  - Health and Wellness Hub (corner of E. College and Raguet) • 936-468-2401

- SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic • 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
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>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Communication Skills      | To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas though written, oral, and visual communication. | Midterm 1  
Federalist Papers Assignment  
Midterm 2  
News Assignment  
Final Exam |
| Critical Thinking         | To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information | Federalist Paper Assignment  
News Assignment  
Each Chapter Reading |
| Social Responsibility     | To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to effectively engage in regional, national, and global communities | News Assignment  
Midterm 2  
Final Exam |
| Personal Responsibility   | To include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making | Midterm 1  
Midterm 2  
News Assignment  
Final Exam |