American Government: The Federal System (GOVT 2305.506)
Stephen F. Austin State University—Summer II 2023
Online
Instructor: Dr. Alan Baily
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I. Course Description and Objectives

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.

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives:
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:

By the end of the course, you should be able:

- To think critically about the relationship between political behavior and political institutions, especially the interdependence of behavior and institutions
- To think critically about American and Texas politics, especially the theoretical foundations of both systems
- To communicate effectively about the foundations of the US and Texas Constitutions and about political matters in general
- To explain the role, and influence, of voters, political parties, interest groups, and media in a democratic political system
- To understand more thoroughly the personal and social rights and responsibilities associated with American citizenship
Credit-hour Justification: This three-credit hour online course provides continuous instruction over a period of six weeks, as well as a variety of activities including class discussion boards, three graded exams, a comprehensive final exam, and readings assigned each week in preparation for exams and completion of writing assignments.

II. Textbook:

The text below is required and is available at university bookstores or online retailers:


III. Grades:

Examinations (75%): Examinations (except makeup exams) will consist of 50 multiple-choice and/or true/false questions. There will be three exams. Each exam will cover reading and lecture material for the preceding units of study. You are responsible for each of these. Exam time limits will be strictly enforced. After 45 minutes the exam will lock, and you will not be allowed to answer the remaining questions.

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., part essay). If you miss an exam, it is your responsibility to inform me as to the nature of your absence and to provide the necessary documentation. If the absence is excused, we will schedule a time to take the make-up exam. No exams will be given early.

Discussion/Participation (25%): On five occasions I will post a question for class discussion (5pts each). Each student must post or reply to another’s post in response to each discussion question. Discussion contributions must be at least 100 words, and no more than 300 words. Quality matters more than quantity; I will assess your contributions for clarity, organization, and insightfulness.

Grading Policy: Grades will be determined by the three examinations. The exams will count for 33.3%. These grades will be averaged to calculate your final grade.

A = 90 – 100%  D = 60 – 69%
B = 80 – 89%  F = Less than 60%
C = 70 – 79%

IV. Email Policy: I will endeavor to respond in a timely manner to all relevant emails.

I will not reply to the following:

- Emails composed in anything other than standard written English (it's not an IM);
- asking a question the answer to which is available in the syllabus, catalog or course schedule;
- requesting a make-up assignment. Please discuss this with me in person.

V. 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.
Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

VI. Course Calendar—Summer 2023:

(This calendar is tentative. **No late work** will be accepted without a documented excuse.)

This class is structured in the following way: Each exam will cover the modules preceding it (beginning with the previous exam, for tests #2 and #3). I will open approximately three modules per week.

Understand this – **exams will only be given on the designated day and time specified below**. So, if you want to read ahead, that is fine. But you cannot take the exam until it opens for everyone. There will be three 50 question (multiple-choice and/or true false) exams. Each exam will only cover the material presented in the previous modules; they are not comprehensive. Exams will post on the date specified below at 8AM and remain open until 8PM that day (12 hours). This should give y’all plenty of time to complete the exams, regardless of your other responsibilities. But, once you start the exam, you will have 45 minutes to complete each exam. If you start the exam later than 7 PM, you may not have the entire period to complete it because the 8 PM end time will lock your exam. Begin before 7!

Please note that the textbook title is abbreviated below. **American Government** is abbreviated AmGov

Week of July 3

Module 1  American Government  (AmGov, Chp. 1)
Module 2  US Political Culture  (AmGov, Chp. 1)
Module 3  US Constitution  (AmGov, Chp. 2)

Week of July 10

Module 4  Federalism  (AmGov, Chp. 3)

**Posting Tuesday, July 11th at 8AM:**  
Exam I  (closes at 8PM)

Modules 5 & 6  Civil Rights and Liberties  (AmGov, Chp. 4)
Module 7  Civil Rights  (AmGov, Chp. 4)

Week of July 17

Module 8  US Legislature  (AmGov, Chp. 5)
Module 9  Presidency and Bureaucracy  (AmGov, Chps. 6&7)
Module 10  US Judiciary  (AmGov, Chp. 8)

**Posting Thursday, July 20th at 8AM:**  
Exam II  (closes at 8PM)

Week of July 24
Modules 11 & 12  Public Opinion & Media (AmGov Chp. 9)
Module 13  US Elections (AmGov, Chp. 10)
Module 14  US Parties & Interest Groups (AmGov, Chps. 11 & 12)

Week of July 31

Modules 15 & 16  Policy Process, Domestic Policy (AmGov, Chp. 13)
Module 17  US Foreign Policy (AmGov, Chp. 14)

Posting Thursday, August 3rd at 8AM:  Exam III (closes at 8PM)

VII. Online Course Policies:

Faculty-to-Student & Student-to-Student Interaction: My communication with you will be done entirely via D2L (including email and discussion). Please feel free to ask any questions, now or at any point in the semester, by posting to the “General Questions – Student Questions” area of the discussion board (if it is a question that you think will be of interest to the entire class) or to me directly (using D2L mail or the “General Questions – Instructor Questions”). All course-related email should be sent via D2L; in case of emergency, you may email me at bailvai@sfasu.edu. (Please note that D2L mail is NOT your Titan account; D2L mail is self-contained within this course.)

D2L Support: If you have problems with D2L, or have a question, call 936.468.1919. I have also provided a link to the OIT website in the “Getting Started” module.

Technical Information: If you need help navigating D2L, visit OIT's D2L Student Support & Tutorials page immediately. Specifically, make sure your browser settings are appropriate for D2L.

The technical nature of the course demands preparation on your part. Students should submit all discussion postings, assignments, exams, etc. early enough to account for technical difficulties. In the event of a technical catastrophe (e.g. the university's main fiber optic line gets severed, a hurricane floods telecommunications hubs in Houston, the D2L server goes down, etc.—all of these things have happened before!), please do not flood the Department of Government with phone calls. I will communicate with the class as soon as is technically possible.

SFA Online's Student Services page offers a variety of support. Students who have technical difficulties with D2L should email the Student Help Desk at sfaonline@sfasu.edu (from your SFA or personal email account) or call the Help Desk at 888.357.3278 or 936.468.1919 (available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) The SFA Online staff are true professionals and will do their best to help you. Though you may be frustrated by technological difficulties when you call them, please remember to extend to them the utmost of respect and courtesy. For general computer and Internet issues that are not D2L-related, visit the Technical Support Center.

Attendance: Attendance will not be taken.

VIII. Withheld Grades  Semester Grades Policy (A-54)

Ordinaril[y, 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.

**IX. 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/)

**X. Mental Health and Wellness**

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](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