

## Govt 2301: The Constitution and Political Behavior, U.S. & TX (Section 005)

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Class time: Tuesday & Thursday 3:30p-4:45p  
Classroom: GR 2.302  
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 2:00p-3:00p  
Webpage: <http://www.utdallas.edu/~cjwilson>

**Class Description:** This course is designed to introduce students to the basics of American and Texas politics. The first section will focus on the founding era of the United States and Texas. Then, we will investigate political culture, political participation, public opinion, campaigning, party dynamics, the role of interest groups and media in politics today.

**Attendance:** There is no attendance policy for this course. However, if students expect to do well in the course, regular attendance is necessary. Under no circumstances will I provide notes for students missing class.

**Reading:** Students are responsible for reading assignments each class. Assignments are to be read before the date beside which they are listed. The required book for this course is Ginsberg, Lowi & Weir. *We the People*, Texas edition. It can be purchased from *The University Book Store & Off Campus Books*.

### Exams:

- 1) There will be three midterm exams and one optional cumulative final in this class. Exams will cover material from the readings and from the lectures. All exams will be objective. Each of the exams will constitute 25% of your **exam grade**.
- 2) There will be **no make-up exams**. Exams are scheduled well in advance so that you can plan around these dates. If you miss one of the midterm exams, you must take the final (it is no longer optional). The missed 25% of your grade will be allocated over the other exams so that each exam is worth 33.3% of your **exam grade**. If you miss more than one exam, you will receive a zero for the additional missed exam s. There are no exceptions. If you chose not to take the first exam because it is raining, and you wreck your car on the way to the second exam, you will receive a zero for one of your mid-term exams. If you have the bubonic plague for the first exam and have a relapse for the third, you will receive a zero.
- 3) All mid-term grades will be posted by Thursday, November 24<sup>th</sup>. If you have taken all three mid-terms, and are satisfied with your course grade, *do not* take the final. If, however, you are not satisfied with your grade, you may take the cumulative final. Remember, the final can either raise or lower your course grade. The final is scheduled for Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 2pm.
- 4) Once you sit for any exam, you will receive a grade for that exam.
- 5) Bring picture identification to each exam.

### Papers:

- 1) There will be two short optional papers assigned in this class. These papers will not require outside research. Each paper will constitute 10% of your final grade.
- 2) Paper topics will be given one week before the due dates.
- 3) Instructions for writing and turning in the paper assignments are provided at the end of this syllabus.
- 4) Academic dishonesty policies will apply to all work in this course including optional papers. You should read the University policy regarding plagiarism. If you have any questions about plagiarism or concerns about your paper, discuss them with me before you turn in the paper.

**Incompletes:** Incompletes will not be given.

**Assignment Values:** Grades in this course are based on the exams and any papers you choose to write. The formula used to calculate your final grade will be:

$$\text{Final Grade} = \left[ \frac{\text{sum of exam grades}}{\text{number of exams taken}} \right] * \left[ 1 - \frac{\text{number of papers written}}{10} \right] + \left[ \frac{\text{sum of paper grades}}{\text{number of papers written}} \right] * \left[ \frac{\text{number of papers written}}{10} \right]$$

If you take all four exams, and write both papers, your final grade would be:

$$\text{Final Grade} = \left[ \frac{\text{sum of exam grades}}{4} \right] * .80 + \left[ \frac{\text{sum of paper grades}}{2} \right] * .20$$

If you take only three exams, and write no papers, your final grade would be:

$$\text{Final Grade} = \left[ \frac{\text{sum of exam grades}}{3} \right]$$

The most assignments you can receive credit for is 4 exams and 2 papers. The minimum necessary to complete the course is 4 exams.

**Scholastic Dishonesty:** Scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students are responsible for knowing what constitutes scholastic dishonesty and its consequences (see <http://www.utdallas.edu/student/sliffe/chapter49.html>, especially sub-chapter F). If you have any doubt, contact me before you turn in your assignment.

**WebCT:** Grades, the syllabus, course calendar, and class announcements will be posted on WebCT at <http://webct.utdallas.edu>. To access WebCT, you need a NetID. Information about using WebCT and obtaining a NetID can be found at <http://www.utdallas.edu/distancelearning/students/>. Grades will not be given out by phone, email, postal mail or in class.

**TA:** The teaching assistant for this course is Anca Turcu. You should speak to Anca if you have any questions about the lecture materials, need help studying for the course, or to discuss your exam grades. As part of Anca's training, she will occasionally lecture in this class. Anca's office hours are Thursdays 2:00p-3:30p in GR3.220. You can reach Anca by email at [anca@utdallas.edu](mailto:anca@utdallas.edu).

**Contacting the Professor:** I encourage all students to contact me or the TA if you have any problems in person, by phone, email, or WebCT. If you use WebCT mail, it will not automatically forward replies to your email inbox unless you set your preferences to do so. If you contact me or the TA by email, we will only respond to email originating from your UTD account (per University regulations). If you are unable to meet during my office hours, please email me to setup an alternative meeting time.

**Contacting Other Students:** I encourage you to exchange contact information with other students in the class so that you can get notes from each other and study together for exams. Feel free to use the WebCT bulletin boards for discussion, to exchange comments, and set up study groups. Please remember that WebCT, Pipeline, Blackboard, etc. are University provided services, therefore your conduct should be consistent with University rules and regulations.

#### **Grading Scale:**

100=A+	87-89=B+	77-79=C+	67-69=D+	
93-99=A	83-86=B	73-76=C	63-66=D	Below 60=F
90-92=A-	80-82=B-	70-72=C-	60-62=D-	

## Assignments:

DAY	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS (Chapters)
TH	Aug 18	<b>Start-up</b>	
T	Aug 23	<b>Introduction</b>	1
TH	Aug 25	<b>Introduction</b>	1
T	Aug 30	<b>Political Culture--Special</b>	
TH	Sept 1	<b>Political Culture--Special</b>	
T	Sept 6	<b>Foundations &amp; Constitution</b>	2, 20
TH	Sept 8	<b>Foundations &amp; Constitution [Paper 1 Due]</b>	pp. A3-A27
T	Sept 13	<b>Federalism</b>	3
TH	Sept 15	<b>Federalism</b>	3
T	Sept 20	<b>Exam 1</b>	
TH	Sept 22	<b>Civil Liberties/Civil Rights</b>	4, 5
T	Sept 27	<b>Civil Liberties/Civil Rights</b>	4, 5
TH	Sept 29	<b>Civil Liberties/Civil Rights</b>	4, 5
T	Oct 4	<b>Public Opinion</b>	6, 8
TH	Oct 6	<b>Public Opinion</b>	6, 8
T	Oct 11	<b>Public Opinion [Paper 2 Due]</b>	
TH	Oct 13	<b>Media</b>	7
T	Oct 18	<b>Exam 2</b>	
TH	Oct 20	<b>Parties</b>	9
T	Oct 25	<b>Parties</b>	9
TH	Oct 27	<b>Parties</b>	9
T	Nov 1	<b>Campaigns &amp; Elections</b>	10& 21
TH	Nov 3	<b>Campaigns &amp; Elections</b>	10& 21
T	Nov 8	<b>Campaigns &amp; Elections</b>	10& 21
TH	Nov 10	<b>Interest Groups</b>	11& 22
T	Nov 15	<b>Interest Groups</b>	11& 22
TH	Nov 17	<b>Catch up &amp; Review</b>	
T	Nov 22	<b>Exam 3</b>	
TH	Nov 24	<b>No Class (Thanksgiving)</b>	
T	Nov 29	<b>No Class (Exam Week)</b>	
TH	Dec 1	<b>Final Exam, 2pm</b>	

## Paper Instructions:

You will write an essay of 900-1100 words that answers the assigned question. Your essay will provide a thesis in the opening paragraph that states your argument. Subsequent paragraphs will support your thesis. The paper will be well written and grammatically correct. Papers should be double spaced and in 12pt font. Please use one of the following fonts: Arial, Courier, Garamond, or Times New Roman.

You will turn in your assignment by noon on the due date in the syllabus. You will submit your papers electronically to <http://www.turnitin.com>. Allow yourself extra time for submission of your paper in case you encounter “technical difficulties”. You also need to hand in a paper copy (stapled) to the TA on the due date (by class time).

Prior to submitting the paper, you will register at [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com) for this course. The class ID is **1326144** and the enrollment password is **intro05**. Your paper will include (1) your name and (2) the word count at the top of the first page.

If you have used other people’s words and or ideas, you must cite this. If you are unsure of proper citation format, please consult one of the many style guides available in the library or on the web.

If you need help using [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com), click on login on the homepage, and then you can access user manuals at the bottom of the login page.

Your essay will not require any outside research.

Some of the questions I will ask myself when grading your essay:

- Can the conclusion of this paper be convincingly drawn from the thesis and the argument made in the body of the paper?
- Does the introduction of this paper give you a clear idea of the argument to follow?
- Does each paragraph of this paper logically progress from the former ones?
- How smoothly does this paper integrate examples into its own argument?
- Does it clearly illustrate connections between the evidence it cites and the ideas they support, or does it merely assume them?
- Are there any general grammatical or mechanical problems with the essay?
- Does the writer have any stylistic peculiarities (for example, a tendency to overuse certain words, passive constructions, or excessively lengthy sentences) that would need to be fixed?
- Could the readability, clarity, or style of this paper be improved?

The academic dishonesty policies will apply to all work in this course including optional papers. You should read the University policy regarding plagiarism. If you have any questions about plagiarism or concerns about your paper, discuss them with me before you turn in the paper.