

GOVT 2305.502 - American National Government Syllabus Spring 2022

Course Information

Institution: University of Texas at Dallas

School: Economic, Political, and Policy Sciences

Meeting Time: MW from 5:30 PM to 6:45 PM

Term: Spring 2022

Class Location: ATC 2.602

Modality: In-Person

Course Pre-requisites: None

Course Description: Survey of American national government, politics, and constitutional development.

Instructor Information

Instructor: Patrick Muenks

Email Address: patrick.muenks@utdallas.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment Only (MS Teams)

[Click Here to Book an Appointment](#)

Student Learning Objectives

- **Think critically about issues related to government and politics**—analyze and appreciate historical trends in the development of government institutions (constitutions, branches of government, political parties, elections, etc.), and apply knowledge of government institutions and theoretical and scholarly approaches to understand government behavior and current events.
- **Effectively communicate issues of societal and personal import with others**- meaningfully and respectfully express your positions and ideas on political and social issues to fellow students, community members, public officials, and representatives.
- **Engage academically and professionally with a sense of social responsibility**- recognize that individual actions can have consequences for society just as government actions can have consequences for individuals, and engage with the world around you with awareness and empathy.

- **Exercise personal responsibility in how government functions**-understand how to effectively interact with government to achieve desired outcomes, and begin a lifetime of active engagement with your government.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the influence founding principles have on today's political structure, including current political and policy debates.
2. Describe the ever-changing relationship between the federal government and state and local governments.
3. Explain how the executive, legislative, and judicial branches were designed to check and balance governmental power, and assess how they have worked in practice
4. Examine the evolving role of civil rights and civil liberties protections in U.S. law
5. Analyze issues, public policies, and political culture in the U.S. from an empirical (e.g., evidence-based) rather than opinionated frame.
6. Identify, describe, and analyze various mechanisms of citizen political involvement including public opinion, political parties, interest groups, and electoral processes.
7. Apply important theoretical and scholarly approaches to understanding American institutions' behavior, citizen involvement, and interactions between citizens and institutions of government.
8. Consider the above factors when designing, strategizing, and proposing workable policy solutions to complex governmental and societal problems facing America today

Required Textbooks and Materials

There are two required materials for this course: (1) a textbook, and (2) a subscription to a digital learning platform called TopHat. Our textbook is fully integrated into TopHat, which means that you cannot access the textbook without purchasing the TopHat subscription.

Both can be ordered via this link: [TopHat Course Registration](#).

Click on the student portal and use the Join Code of **878219** to locate this course.

Accessing the Textbook and Required Materials

The course join code is *forthcoming*. Upon purchasing your subscription to TopHat (ISBN: *forthcoming*) and the textbook (ISBN: 9781774127582), you will have full access to the necessary course materials.

Notes About Class Materials

- These materials are only to order through the link above or in the invitation link sent to your UT Dallas email address; these items are not available through the UT Dallas bookstore.
- Use your UT Dallas email to subscribe to TopHat.
- If you already purchased a TopHat subscription the Spring 2022 term, you only need to purchase the textbook for this course.
- You only need to purchase the semester-length subscription to complete this course.

Course Calendar

The course is set to be taught as an in-person course meaning students are expected to attend class. If university policy requires the modality of course instruction to be adjusted, students will receive an email from the instructor with updated course information.

All times listed on the course calendar are in **CT (Central Time Zone)**.

Major Assignments

Assignment	Date Available	Date Due
Exam 1	March 9 at 12:00 AM	March 11 at 11:59 PM
Exam 2	May 2 at 12:00 AM	May 4 at 11:59 PM
Final Exam	May 11 at 7:00 AM	May 11 at 7:45 PM

Readings and Homework

Date	Readings	Assessment	Due Date
Week of January 17 (Online)	Syllabus and Module 1 - Introduction	Homework 1	January 21 at 11:59 PM
Week of January 24 (Online)	Module 2 - U.S. Constitution	Homework 2	January 28 at 11:59 PM
Week of January 31 (Online)	Module 3 - Federalism	Homework 3	February 4 at 11:59 PM
Week of February 7	Module 4 - U.S. Congress	Homework 4	February 11 at 11:59 PM
Week of February 14	Module 5 - The Presidency	Homework 5	February 18 at 11:59 PM
Week of February 21	Module 6 - Federal Courts	Homework 6	February 25 at 11:59 PM
Week of February 28	Module 7 - Civil Rights	Homework 7	March 4 at 11:59 PM
Week of March 7	Module 8 - Civil Liberties	Homework 8	March 8 at 11:59 PM*
March 9 to 11	No Class March 9	Test 1 (Modules 1 - 8)	March 11 at 11:59 PM
Week of March 14	No Class - Spring Break		
Week of March 21	Module 9 - Political Parties	Homework 9	March 25 at 11:59 PM
Week of March 28	Module 10 - Organized Interests	Homework 10	April 1 at 11:59 PM
Week of April 4	Module 11 - Elections	Homework 11	April 8 at 11:59 PM
Week of April 11	Module 12 - Media	Homework 12	April 15 at 11:59 PM
Week of April 18	Module 13 - Policy Process	Homework 13	April 22 at 11:59 PM
Week of April 25	Module 14 - American Health Policy	Homework 14	April 29 at 11:59 PM
Week of May 2	Module 15 - Foreign Policy	Homework 15	May 3 at 11:59 PM*
May 4-6		Text 2 (Modules 9-15)	May 6 at 11:59 PM
May 11		Final Exam	May 11 at 7:45 PM

Notes on Class Schedule

*Homework assignments during exam weeks are due on Tuesday instead of Friday to ensure students can focus on completing the exam.

Assessment

Course assessment will be completed using homework and exams. Details on the grading scale along with each of the assignments can be found below.

Grading Scale

Consistent with UT Dallas policy, students are graded on a plus/minus scale. Grades will not be rounded in this course. Extra credit is not offered in this course. Please see the grade table below:

Grade	Top of Range	Bottom of Range
A+	100	97
A	< 97	>= 93
A-	< 93	>= 90
B+	< 90	>= 87
B	< 87	>= 84
B-	< 84	>= 80
C+	< 80	>= 77
C	< 77	>= 74
C-	< 74	>= 70
D+	< 70	>= 67
D	< 67	>= 64
D-	< 64	>= 60
F	< 60	

Assignment Weights

Assignment	Weight
Homework	40%
Exam 1	30%
Exam 2	30%
Final Exam	Optional
Total	100%

Homework - 40%

Homework is integrated into the textbook via TopHat and is completed by answering the questions embedded in the weekly readings in each chapter. **For final assessment, students will be evaluated based on the 13 highest scored homework assignments. This means the lowest two homework grades will be dropped.** This provides students the flexibility to miss up to two homework assignments without penalty. In order to receive full credit for the homework assignments, students must answer all of the questions in each chapter. The questions are worth one point each and evaluated equally on two factors: participation and correctness. Participation is whether you progressed through

the chapter and attempted each question. Correctness is whether you provided the right answer to the question. Below is a sample calculation for figuring out a grade on a homework assignment.

- Total number of questions in the chapter: 10
- Total number of questions attempted (participation): 10
- Total number of correct answers (correctness): 8
- Calculation: $(10 * 0.5) + (8 * 0.5) = 9$
- Assignment Score: 90%

2 Exams - 30% Each

Exams will be conducted online through TopHat; students are welcome to use course materials and notes. Exams will feature a variety of questions which test your recollection of topics and concepts covered in class along with your ability to critically analyze and apply those topics to the U.S. governmental system.

Exams 1 and 2 will be made available to students for 72 hours. Once you begin the exam, you will have 75 minutes to complete the exam. If you start the exam within 75 minutes of the due date and time, you will not be allotted extra time. The exams are online meaning students can select the location where they will complete the exam. Coordination or taking the exam as a group is prohibited.

Remember, all due date times are CT (Central Time).

- Test 1 will cover material from Modules 1 through 8.
- Test 2 will cover material from Modules 9 through 15.

Final Exam - Optional

Given that we have missed several classes, the Policy Paper has been removed as a major assignment from the course. It will be replaced with an optional Final Exam. The Final Exam will be comprehensive meaning it will cover content from Modules 1 through 15. If a student opts to take the Final Exam, your two highest exam scores will be used to calculate your final grade. If students are satisfied with their grade after Exam 2, they are not required to take the Final Exam.

Since it is being held during finals week, the final exam will only be available to students for approximately 12 hours on May 11. Once you begin the final exam, you will have 2 hours and 30 minutes to complete the exam. If you start the exam within two hours and 30 minutes of when it is due, you will not be allotted extra time.

Course Policies

Communication

- Emails about the course must be sent using your UT Dallas email and have GOVT 2305 in the subject line. Failure to do so may result in a delayed response from the instructor. Per UT Dallas policy, I will not respond to student emails sent from non UT Dallas email accounts.
- Expect all email messages to be responded to within two business days.
- You may also reach out to the instructor using e-Learning. Please see the e-Learning tutorials for additional information and guides.

Late Work

Late work is not accepted. The student's lowest two homework grades will be dropped.

Make-Up Exams

Exams will be take online using TopHat. Exams will take place when class is scheduled to meet on March 11 and May 4. Since the exams are online, students Students who miss exams due to a medical emergency, death in the family, or a university sponsored activity may be approved for a make-up exam. Students must reach out to the instructor and provide documentation to verify the event (e.g. doctor's note, note from university sponsored activity, etc.). Approval of make-up exams is at the instructor's discretion and must be completed within 1 week of the last day of the exam.

Courseroom Citizenship

This course is meant to serve as an introductory survey of the U.S. Federal Government. Course material may cover topics that some considered to be controversial or provocative - the instructor will do their best to present this material in the context of the subject being discussed. It is incumbent on students to treat all members of the classroom with respect and to maintain a cordial atmosphere as we engage in discussions.

Academic Integrity

Every student at UT Dallas is expected to exercise independent thought and expression as he or she strives for academic achievement. Incorporated in the quest for intellectual growth are the expectations of honesty, originality in written and oral expression, a respect for the exchange of ideas, and

acknowledgement and recognition of the abilities and contributions of others. Please see the university's [academic integrity](#) page for details and tips.

Academic dishonesty is unacceptable under any circumstances. This includes but is not limited to plagiarism, collusion, cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, failure to contribute to a collaborative project, and sabotage. If a student is thought to be engaging in academic dishonesty, they will be referred to the Office of Community Standards and Conduct. For additional details on what may constitute academic dishonesty, please refer to the [university's webpage](#).

Academic Accommodation Information

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Dallas to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and state and local regulations regarding students and applicants with disabilities. In compliance with these laws, the Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA) is dedicated to maintaining an environment that guarantees students with disabilities full access to educational programs, activities and facilities.

It is the student's responsibility to identify himself/herself to OSA and to provide documentation of a disability. Strict documentation guidelines exist for different types of disabilities. See the [OSA website for details](#). The student meets with OSA, who determines appropriate accommodations after reviewing documentation prepared by a licensed professional.

Instructors are under no obligation to provide accommodations for a student who does not identify himself/herself as a student with a disability. If a student requests accommodations for a disability but has not provided the faculty member with an Accommodation Letter from OSA, the instructor will immediately refer the student to OSA.

Classroom Conduct Requirements Related to Public Health Measures

UT Dallas will follow the public health and safety guidelines put forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and local public health agencies that are in effect at that time during the Fall 2021 semester to the extent allowed by state governance. Texas Governor Greg Abbott's Executive Order GA-38 prohibits us from mandating vaccines and face coverings for UT Dallas employees, students, and members of the public on campus. However, we strongly encourage all Comets to get vaccinated and wear face coverings as recommended by the CDC. Check the [Comets United: Latest Updates webpage](#) for the latest guidance

on the University's public health measures. Comets are expected to carry out Student Safety protocols in adherence to the Comet Commitment. Unvaccinated Comets will be expected to complete the Required Daily Health Screening. Those students who do not comply will be referred to the Office of Community Standards and Conduct for disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct – UTSP5003.

Class Recordings

Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, **students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course**. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

The instructor may record meetings of this course. These recordings will be made available to all students registered for this class if the intent is to supplement the classroom experience. If the instructor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law.

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”