

American National Government

May – Aug of 2024

Course Information

Course Number GOVT-2305
Course Title American National Government
Term Summer 2024

Classroom JSOM 12.210
Time Tue and Thu, 10am – 12:15pm
TopHatLinkandCode <https://app.tophat.com/e/677215> (Join Code = 677215)

Contact Information

Instructor Gary Chang
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Office Hours MSTeams (by appointment)

TA Contact Information

Teaching Assistant Sonali Singh
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Office Hours By appointment

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

None.

Course Description

Survey of American national government, politics, and constitutional development.

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 state and local governments.

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. Understand the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government in the U.S.
4. Analyze issues, public policies, and political culture in the U.S. from an empirical (e.g., evidence-based) rather than opinionated frame.
5. Identify, describe, and analyze various mechanisms of citizen political involvement including public opinion, political parties, interest groups, and electoral processes.
6. Apply important theoretical and scholarly approaches to understanding American institutions' behavior, citizen involvement, and interactions between citizens and institutions of government.

Required Materials

Required Texts

There are two requirements for this course: a text book and a subscription to a digital learning platform called TopHat. The 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:** <https://app.tophat.com/e/677215> with Join Code 677215.

For instructions on how to create a TopHat account and enroll in our TopHat course, please refer to one of the following resources:

- 1) The invitation sent to your school's email address OR
- 2) Consult TopHat's Getting Started Guide

If you are new to TopHat, follow the link in the email invitation you received or

- Go to <https://app.tophat.com/register/student>
- Click "Search by school" and input the name of our school
- Search for our course with the following join code: 677215

Bear in mind that textbook material will be made available in our course throughout the semester once your instructor assigns it to the class, **so do not panic if you do not see any content in the course upon entry.** Should you require assistance with TopHat at anytime please contact their SupportTeam directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in-app support button, or by calling [1-888-663-5491](tel:1-888-663-5491). Specific user information may be required by their technical support team when troubleshooting issues.

Grading Scale and General Course Policies

Grading Scale

Grades are based on the standard grading scale:

- A=100-90,
- B=89-80,
- C=79-70, etc.

- With pluses / minuses at my discretion and based on class performance.

Grading Policy

- Attendance = 20%
- Participation = 20%
- Exam1 = 20%
- Exam2 = 20%
- Exam3 = 20%

Exams and Make-up Exams

Exams

Each exam will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and multiple answer questions, will be taken on the designated days that are marked on course schedule at the end of syllabus, and will consist of questions covered in the unit being tested (meaning, noexam will be comprehensive) and class lectures. *Exams will be taken in eLearning (or TopHat). Exams will be due at 11:59pm.*

Make-upexams

- Because you are given a 72-hour window within which to complete the exams, medical emergencies and school-sanctioned activities are the only acceptable reasons for make-ups. Both require documentation and are allowed at my discretion.
- Make-ups must be scheduled with me and completed within one week of the original exam.

Extra credit

There is no “extra credit” in this course.

Grade Disputes

Should be sent to the instructor of record within 48 hours of the grade being posted via e-mail. Please identify the nature of the grade dispute. If you wish to have an assignment re-graded, it must be returned to the me or the TA within two days of the day it was returned via e-mail.

Announcements

These will be made in class, via eLearning or via e-mail. Please monitor each of the sesources for any changes in course policies or other updates as necessary.

Communication

- Emails should have the course name and number (e.g., GOVT2305) in the subject line.
- Do not use text messaging language in your email. Address it as a formal mode of correspondence.
- You may also message me in MSTeams.

Late Work

Due dates and deadlines are integrated into the course calendar (below); however, you should also input due dates and deadlines into a personal calendar and set meaningful reminders (e.g., a reminder three days before, one day before, one hour before, etc.). If you anticipate that you will not meet a deadline, please contact me or the TA immediately and we can work together to find an equitable and fair solution.

Class Participation

You are highly encouraged to attend class meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Remember, the exam questions will be based on the lectures.

Classroom Citizenship

This class is a great opportunity to practice engaging politically with people from diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and opinions. Democracy cannot work if we are unwilling to listen to one another or unable to exchange ideas respectfully. This course will cover some topics that may prove controversial. It is incumbent upon each and every one of us to maintain civil discourse in the classroom. If at any time you do not feel this standard is being upheld, come talk to me.

Technical Requirements

In addition to a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable a successful learning experience. Please review the important technical requirements on the [Getting Started with eLearning](#) webpage.

Course Access and Navigation

This course can be accessed using your UT Dallas NetID account on the [eLearning](#) website. Please see the course access and navigation section of the [Getting Started with eLearning](#) webpage for more information. To become familiar with the eLearning tool, please see the [Student eLearning Tutorials](#) webpage. UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The [eLearning Support Center](#) includes a toll-free telephone number for immediate assistance at 1-866-588- 3192, email request service, and an online chat service.

Communication

This course utilizes online tools for interaction and communication. Some external communication tools such as regular email and a web conferencing tool may also be used during the semester. For more details, please visit the [Student eLearning Tutorials](#) webpage for video demonstrations on eLearning tools. Student emails and discussion board messages will be answered within 3 working days under normal circumstances.

Distance Learning Student Resources

Online students have access to resources including the McDermott Library, Academic Advising, The Office of Student Access Ability, and many others. Please see the [eLearning Current Students](#) webpage for more information.

Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties

The University is committed to providing a reliable learning management system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and also contact the online [eLearning Help Desk](#). The instructor and the eLearning Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UTDallas 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.”

Academic Support Resources

The information contained in the following link lists the University’s academic support resources for all students. Please go to [Academic Support Resources](#) webpage for these policies.

UTDallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please go to [UTDallas Syllabus Policies](https://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies) webpage for these policies (<https://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>).

Academic Calendar

Weeks	Tue	Thu
Week01 05/28		05/30 Intro and syllabus
Week02 06/04 Chapt1-American National Government and Representative Democracy		06/06 Chapt2-The U.S. Constitution
Week03 06/11 Chapt3-Federalism		06/13 Chapt4-The U.S. Congress
Week04 06/18 Chapt5-The Presidency		06/20 Exam1
Week05 06/25 Chapt6-The Federal Courts		06/27 Chapt7-Civil Rights
Week06 07/02 Chapt8-Civil Liberties		07/04
Week07 07/09 Chapt9-Political Parties		07/11 Chapt10-Organized Interests
Week08 07/16 Exam2		07/18 Chapt11-Elections and Campaigns
Week09 07/23 Chapt12-Media, Information, and American Politics		07/25 Chapt13-Public Opinion
Week10 07/30 Chapt14-American Health Policy		08/01 Chapt15-Foreign Policy
Week11 08/06 Exam3		

Please note: The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor