

## **Course Syllabus**

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### **Course Information**

Government 2305.002  
American National Government  
Fall 2013: MWF 4:00-4:50  
Hoblitzelle Hall (HH) 2.402

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### **Contact Information**

Professor: Michael Crespin  
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### **Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to serve as an introduction to the actors, institutions and processes of American government. Since this is an introductory course, we will cover many topics such as the Constitution, Congress, the Presidency, Voting and Elections, and Public Opinion. While we will not go into deep detail in any one particular topic, this class will provide you with the skills necessary to understand how our government works, and the ability to think critically and logically about its functions. We will also spend time linking current events in the U.S. Government with political science theories and historical trends.

**The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.**

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## Objectives

- Students will be able to provide examples of and apply important theoretical and scholarly approaches to understanding state and national institutional behavior, citizen involvement and interaction between citizens and institutions of government.
- Students will be able to analyze and appreciate historical trends in development of government institutions and their constitutional foundations.
- Students will be able to identify, describe, and analyze various mechanisms of citizen political involvement.

## Required Textbooks and Materials

Textbook: *The Logic of American Politics, 6th Edition*, Samuel Kernell, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavreck

The book is also available for rent and as an ebook.

There are also two readings on electronic course reserves here:

<http://utdallas.docutek.com/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=1560>

I will also post selected readings to the UTD eLearning page in the **Readings** folder on the course homepage.

The dates for specific readings are detailed below. You will find it useful to have the reading done prior to the class where it is discussed. Students who expect to read all of the material the night before an exam will most likely receive a poor grade.

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## Assignments and Grading

Your grade will be based on the following:

1. Four in class non-cumulative exams each worth 22% of your grade for a total of 88%. **The exams will be on September 25, October 18, November 8, and December 11.** If you have scheduled a vacation, wedding, family reunion, or some other non-university sanctioned event for these days, I suggest you take another class. There is no final exam in this class.

NO MAKEUP EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN without proper documentation. Missing an exam without documentation will result in a zero and you **will not** have the opportunity to take the exam. If you are missing class for an excused absence you must let me know in advance. All students missing class for excused UTD related activities must turn in the appropriate

documentation from your organization with the excused dates. If you miss an exam due to illness, you must provide proper documentation. Make-up exams will be scheduled by the TA or me when **our** schedules can accommodate them.

For exams, you must bring your UTD photo ID with you to class and I reserve the right to ask you to show this ID when you turn in your exams.

2. Nine quizzes, of which the highest six will count toward your final grade. The six highest scoring quizzes will be each worth 2% of your grade, for a total of 12% of your final grade. **THERE ARE NO MAKEUP QUIZZES.**

Quizzes are open-book and open-note, so you may refer to your textbook and your class notes when taking the quizzes. A quiz will typically cover one or two of the substantive topics on the syllabus. The quizzes are available on the eLearning course website under **Exams/Assignments**.

Please note the following:

- It is your responsibility to access and complete the quizzes before they expire, typically you will have one week to complete a quiz once it opens.
- Deadlines for completing the quizzes are listed below.
- Failure to take a quiz in the allotted time means receiving a zero for that exam.
- Once you open a quiz you will have two hours to complete it. If you begin a quiz and do not complete it in the allotted time then you will be scored based on the questions you have answered in the time given. Therefore, only begin the quizzes when you will have sufficient time to complete them.
- The questions and answers within a quiz are presented in a randomized order so taking the quiz with someone else will not be helpful. You should take the quizzes on your own and use them as an assessment of your mastery of the material.
- I am not responsible for your inability to access eLearning. Please give yourself plenty of time to complete the quizzes, as failure to take the quizzes before they expire will result in a zero.

#### **Quiz schedule**

Quiz 1: Sept. 4-10

Quiz 2: Sept. 11-17

Quiz 3: Sept. 18-24

Quiz 4: Oct. 2-8

Quiz 5: Oct. 9-15

Quiz 6: Oct. 23-29

Quiz 7: Oct. 30-Nov. 5

Quiz 8: Nov. 13-19

Quiz 9: Dec. 4-10

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### **Grading Policy**

The grading scale for this class is as follows: A+, 97 or higher; A, 93-96; A-, 90-92; B+, 87-89; B, 83-86; B-, 80-82; C+, 77-79; C, 73-76; C-, 70-72; D+, 67-69; D, 60-66; F, below 60.

There is no extra credit for this class. Please do not ask.

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### **Course & Instructor Policies**

I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. Please do not talk on your cell phone, text message, tweet, Facebook, play video games, snap chat, pinterest, or whatever new thing you kids do that I haven't heard of yet, etc. Although I do not take attendance, you are expected to attend class regularly. You will be held responsible for all material in the textbooks and in lectures, even if you miss a class. It is your responsibility to remain aware of when quizzes are due and to be sure they are completed on time. I recommend that you plan far enough in advance when studying for an examination to avoid unnecessary problems.

I DO NOT TOLERATE CHEATING

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**The reading schedule for this class begins on the next page.**

**UT Dallas 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 <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies

***The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.***

## Class Schedule

Below is the reading schedule for the semester. Please note Logic is your textbook, *Logic of American Politics*

Date	Topic	Reading
Aug. 26	Intro, Syllabus	---
<b>Foundations</b>		
Aug. 28	Historical Culture	Founding Brothers Preface*
Aug. 30 & Sept. 2	No Class	APSA Conference and Labor Day
Sept. 4, 6 & 9	Logic of American Politics	Logic Chap. 1
Sept. 11, 13, & 16	Constitution	Logic Chap. 2 Articles of Confederation US Constitution (Logic Appendices 1 & 3)
Sept. 18	Federalist Papers and Ratification	Federalist Papers Numbers 10 and 51 (Logic Appendices 4 & 5)
Sept. 20 & 23	Federalism	Logic Chap. 3
<b>Sept. 25</b>	<b>EXAM 1</b>	
<b>Institutions</b>		
Sept. 27, 30 Oct. 2	Congress	Logic Chap. 6
Oct. 4	Polarization and Fiscal Future	Bafumi "Polarization and the Fiscal Future of the United States,"**
Oct. 7 & 9	Presidency	Logic Chap. 7
Oct. 11	Bureaucracy	Logic Chap. 8
Oct. 14 & 16	Courts	Logic Chap. 9
<b>Oct. 18</b>	<b>EXAM 2</b>	

Political Behavior		
Oct. 21	Political Culture	Bernstein, Bromley, and Meyer "Republicans and Golf, Democrats and Outkast: Or, Party Political Culture from the Top Down"***
Oct. 23 & 25	Public Opinion	Logic Chap. 10
Oct. 28 & 30	Voting, Campaigns, and Elections	Logic Chap. 11
Nov. 1	Political Advertising	Finkel and Geer "Spot Check"***
Nov. 4 & 6	Political Parties	Logic Chap. 12
<b>Nov. 8</b>	<b>EXAM 3</b>	
National Politics		
Nov. 11	Interest Groups	Logic Chap. 13
Nov. 13 & 15	News Media	Logic Chap. 14
Nov. 28 & 20	Civil Rights	Logic Chap. 4
Nov. 22	Freedom Riders	---
Dec. 2 & 4	Civil Liberties	Logic Chap. 5
Dec. 6	Immigration	Hansen, "Immigration & Immigration Reform in the United States: An Outsider's View"***
Dec. 9	The Friendship	Founding Brothers*
<b>Dec. 11</b>	<b>EXAM 4</b>	

\*on E-reserves, link in eLearning

\*\*Posted in eLearning