

GOVT 2107: Federal and Texas Constitutions

Course Information

Course: GOVT 2107.0W1

Term: Fall 2016

Class Meetings: Online

Professor Contact Information

Patrick F. Larue

patrick.larue@utdallas.edu

Office: GR 3.230

Office Hours: MW 11:00am-12:00pm , or by appointment

Course Description

This course is a one credit-hour online course on the Constitutions of the United States and Texas. The course is divided into three different sections, one on basic political theory, one on the US Constitution, and one on the Texas Constitution.

Course Objectives

Upon passage of this course, you should be able to:

- Define various key terms regarding American and TX Government, like federalism, the separation of powers, and civil liberties.
- Describe how the political theories of Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau influence each other and the Constitution.
- Identify and explain what is in the US Constitution, including the amendments.
- Identify and explain what is in the Texas Constitution.

Required Materials

There are no required materials for you to purchase. All reading materials that are listed below will be available online, or on eLearning.

Grading

There are 2 components of this course that will determine your final grade.

- **Three Exams**, each worth 25% of the final grade.
- **Online Discussions**, worth 25% of the final grade.

Exam Information

- The three exams will be given on the dates listed in this syllabus. Exams are open note, but are non-collaborative. Exams will be given online through eLearning.
- Exams are based on any "lecture" materials I give you and any information from the readings. This will be discussed in more detail prior to the first exam.
- Review outlines will be given prior to each exam. These are not study guides, and they are not meant to replace information in your notes. It is merely an outline of the major topics discussed for you to make sure you are not missing major chunks of lecture material.
- Exams will be available for 24 hours (on Fridays). They will be open for the entire 24 hours. Once you begin the exam, you will have 30 minutes to take the exam. If you do not finish the exam within 30 minutes, only submitted answers will be graded.
- You are expected to study for these exams as you would for an in-person class. You will not have enough time to just look through your notes to find answers. If you try to do that, it will be much more difficult to pass these exams. You have been warned.
- Make-up exams: Must occur within one calendar week of the exam given in class. In order to take a make-up exam, you must email me (so I have it in writing) prior to the day of the exam. Allowable excuses include medical reasons (hospital stays), and school-sanctioned activities (with school sponsor/coach documentation). Other extenuating circumstances are at my discretion. You will have all day to take the exam, so these excuses must be severe enough to warrant a make-up. For instance, you having a cold is not a sufficient reason to miss the exam. You being in a coma, for instance, would.

Discussion Information

- Discussions will be held online through eLearning. Each discussion will be available for a specified amount of time, on specified dates.
- Discussions will open on Sunday at 12:01am, and will close on Saturday at 11:59pm.
- I will post a series of discussion questions, and your job is to contribute meaningfully to each discussion. Questions will assess your level of knowledge, and will ask you to tell me about your thoughts on given issues, provide examples, etc.
- I am not responsible for your inability to access eLearning. If there are scheduled outages, be aware of them. You will have an entire week to engage in the discussion, so it is suggested that you do not wait until the last day. An outage (even an unexpected one) may cause you to miss points.
- I do not reopen discussions for any reason. *No exceptions.*

Instructor Policies

- Be respectful of others. Given this is a course on government, divisive political discussions may result. These are acceptable within a forum that encourages dignity and respect.
- Finally, you are not children. I treat you as such. You are responsible for your grade. The level of effort you put into this course will reap a particular grade output. If you put much into this course, it will reap dividends. If you put little into it, then little you will earn.
- If you email me, it must be through your UTD email address. University policy dictates this, and I do not deviate from this. Grades can only be discussed face-to-face. I highly recommend setting an appointment or coming to office hours in order to respect your privacy.

Course Outline

This outline is tentative and subject to change.

Section 1: Philosophical Origins of the Constitution

Week of Aug 22:	Introduction
Week of Aug 29:	Hobbes ¹
Week of Sep 5:	Locke ²
Week of Sep 12:	Montesquieu ³
Week of Sep 19:	Rousseau ⁴ EXAM 1

Section 2: The United States Constitution

Week of Sep 26:	US Constitutional History ⁵
Week of Oct 3:	Articles I-III ⁶
Week of Oct 10:	Articles IV-VII ⁷ Discussion 1
Week of Oct 17:	The Bill of Rights ⁸
Week of Oct 24:	11th-27th Amendments ⁹ EXAM II

Section 3: The Texas Constitution

Week of Oct 31:	Texas Constitutional History ¹⁰ Discussion 2
Week of Nov 7:	Texas Bill of Rights ¹¹
Week of Nov 14:	Articles II-V ¹²
Week of Nov 21:	Thanksgiving Break - NO CLASS
Week of Nov 28:	Articles VII-XI ¹³ Discussion 3
Week of Dec 5:	Articles XII-XVII ¹⁴ EXAM III

University Policies and Miscellany

- University policies regarding email communication, withdrawals, grievances, incompletes, holidays, and disability accommodations can be found at <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>.
- This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.

Notes

¹<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hobbes-moral/>

²<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/locke-political/>

³<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/montesquieu/>

⁴<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rousseau/>

⁵On eLearning

⁶[http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/a-guide-to-the-united-states-constitution - Preamble through Article III, Section 3](http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/a-guide-to-the-united-states-constitution-Preamble-through-Article-III-Section-3)

⁷See note 6, Article IV through VII

⁸See note 6, Amendment I through X

⁹See note 6, Article XI through XXVII

¹⁰On eLearning

¹¹http://www.webtexts.com/courses/9833-professor/traditional_book/chapters/1294689-the-texas-constitution/pages/1294490-iv-the-texas-constitution-today (Section 2.8-2.9)

¹²http://www.webtexts.com/courses/9833-professor/traditional_book/chapters/1294689-the-texas-constitution/pages/1294492 (Section 2.10)

¹³http://www.webtexts.com/courses/9833-professor/traditional_book/chapters/1294689-the-texas-constitution/pages/1294493 (Section 2.11-2.12)

¹⁴http://www.webtexts.com/courses/9833-professor/traditional_book/chapters/1294689-the-texas-constitution/pages/1294495 (Section 2.13)