

# GOVT 2305: American National Government

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## Course Information

Course: GOVT 2305.003  
Term: Fall 2016  
Class Meetings: MWF 1:00pm-1:50pm  
Location: HH 2.402

## Professor Contact Information

Patrick F. Larue  
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Office: GR 3.230  
Office Hours: MW 11:00am-12:00pm, or by appointment

## Teaching Assistants

Sohan Das (A-L)  
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Office: GR 3.314  
Office Hours: TBD

## Supplemental Instruction

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is offered for this course. SI sessions are free group study opportunities, scheduled three times per week. Sessions are facilitated by an SI Leader, who has recently taken the course and received a high final grade. Attendance is voluntary. For information about the days, times, and locations for SI sessions, refer to [www.utdallas.edu/studentsuccess/leaders/si.html](http://www.utdallas.edu/studentsuccess/leaders/si.html). Your SI: Michael (mtb130230@utdallas.edu).

## Course Description

This course is the first in a two-course sequence in the Department of Political Science that satisfies the Government/Political Science requirement of the University Core Curriculum. The purpose of this course is to highlight the basic foundations of government in the United States; the institutions we have, the functions of those institutions, and the importance of those functions in our daily lives.

Although this is an introductory course, this course will be more important to you than you may think. The laws that are implemented by our government impact you on a daily basis, and whether you are a psychologist, a computer scientist, or a banker, you should know how the government affects you individually.

These laws can affect your job, your pocketbook, or both. Knowing how these laws are created, and what you can do about it will be the subject of much of the content of this course.

## Course Objectives

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

- Define various key terms regarding American Government, like federalism, the separation of powers, a prisoner's dilemma, the incumbency advantage, polyarchy, and soft media.
- Describe how the major institutions of American Government function, including Congress, the President, and the Federal Courts.
- Identify and explain what is in the Constitution, including the amendments.

## Required Textbook

*The Logic of American Politics*, 7th edition by Kernell et al. ISBN: 9781483319841

It is available at the campus bookstore, and at other outlets as well. Feel free to find a cheaper used/rental version. I always am asked about alternate texts, and alternate editions. My answer is always going to be this. You can, but it is not suggested. Weekly quizzes are based on the aforementioned text. Questions from the text will show up on the exam, and will be based on the aforementioned text. I believe that it would be very difficult to make an A in this course without this textbook. The single exception to this would be purchasing the 6th edition of the textbook, but the disclaimer still holds. Page numbers and the exact content will be similar, but may not directly align across editions. You have been warned.

Additional materials: There are no other required materials, but consistently referring to current events would give you an advantage in this course. Staying abreast of what is happening in the news on a week-to-week basis will help you understand how things work, and why we see the outcomes we do. Who knows, after learning some of the major concepts in this course, you may be able to predict what will happen next. This is especially important given the Presidential election climate we are currently in.

## Grading

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

- **Three Exams**, each worth 30% of the final grade.
- **Online Quizzes**, worth 10% of the final grade.

## Exam Information

- The three exams will be given on the dates listed in this syllabus. Exams are in-class, closed book, and will be collected at the end of the class period. *If you come in late, then you will not receive extra time to complete the exam.* Exam dates may change for unforeseen circumstances, but changes will be disclosed well in advance.

- Exams are based on lecture material and material from the textbook. This will be discussed in more detail prior to each 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.
- 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 beginning of the exam. Allowable excuses include medical reasons (hospital/doctor visits), and school-sanctioned activities (with school sponsor/coach documentation). Other extenuating circumstances are at my discretion. Teaching Assistants will give make-up exams at a time/location of their choosing. This will require you to coordinate with them.

### **Quiz Information**

- The highest 10 of 12 online quizzes will count towards your final grade. This means you can miss up to 2 quizzes with no impact to your grade.
- Quizzes will be given online through eLearning. Each quiz will be available for a specified amount of time, on specified dates.
- Quizzes are open-book.
- Do not attempt to coordinate with others on quizzes. Questions are randomized, so it would not behoove you to work with others.
- Each quiz will be 10 questions, and you have one hour to complete the quiz once you begin.
- I am not responsible for your inability to access eLearning. If there are scheduled outages, be aware of them. You will have 7 days to take each quiz, so it is suggested that you do not wait until the last day. An outage (even an unexpected one) may cause you to miss the quiz.
- I do not reopen quizzes for any reason. *No exceptions.*

### **Instructor Policies**

- I discourage the use of laptops in class. They end up distracting yourself and others.
- Turn off your phone. You don't need it. If you do need it, come talk to me. I'm happy to accommodate. Otherwise, I reserve the right to ask you to leave if it is distracting to others, or to me.
- Be respectful of others. Given this is a course on government, divisive political discussions may result. These are encouraged within a forum that encourages dignity and respect.
- Do not cheat. I will handle this aggressively. If I suspect that you cheat, I will move you into a secluded area. *At a minimum.*
- 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.

- Attendance will be taken randomly during the semester. Any curve or bonus given to the class will be individually earned based on your attendance.
- For most questions, the teaching assistants should be your first point of contact. You should contact me directly if you need to let me know you are missing an exam, for example. If you need clarification on lecture material, coming to my (or TA) office hours would serve you best. Other questions about exam content, for instance, should be sent directly to your teaching assistant. If you email me or a teaching assistant about something that can be answered by the syllabus, we will simply direct you to the syllabus.
- 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.

Aug 22:	Introduction
Aug 24-26:	Regimes and Political Culture, and Ideology   Chapter 1
Aug 29-31:	The Constitution   Chapter 2
Sep 2:	Constitutional Amendments   Chapter 5
Sep 5:	<b>NO CLASS</b>
Sep 7:	Federalism   Chapter 3
Sep 9-14:	Civil Rights   Chapter 4
Sep 16:	Reading Day/Review
Sep 19:	<b>EXAM 1</b>
Sep 21-26:	Public Opinion   Chapter 10
Sep 28:	Media   Chapter 14
Sep 30-Oct 3:	Political Participation   Chapter 11
Oct 5-7:	Voting   Chapter 11
Oct 10-12:	Elections   Chapter 11
Oct 14-17:	Political Parties   Chapter 12
Oct 19:	<i>Special Topics: Election 2016</i>
Oct 21:	Reading Day/Review
Oct 24:	<b>EXAM 2</b>

Oct 26-31: Interest Groups | Chapter 13  
Nov 2-7: Congress | Chapter 6  
Nov 9-14: The Executive and the Bureaucracy | Chapter 7&8  
Nov 16-18: The Judiciary | Chapter 9  
Nov 21-25: **NO CLASS - Thanksgiving Break**  
Nov 28: Economic Policy  
Nov 30: Social Policy  
Dec 2: Foreign Policy  
Dec 5: Reading Day/Review  
Dec 7: **EXAM 3**

## 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.