

GOVT 2305: American National Government

Course Information

Course: GOVT 2305.003
Term: Spring 2017
Class Meetings: MWF 4:00pm-4:50pm
Location: HH 2.402

Professor Contact Information

Dr. Patrick F. Larue
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Teaching Assistants

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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: None. If you miss an exam for any reason, then you will be eligible for a final comprehensive exam which will be given on the date of the final exam. The score on this exam will replace the missed exam. There will also be no review for this exam. There is no make-up for the final comprehensive. I highly suggest against relying on the final comprehensive unless absolutely

necessary. Being comprehensive, this exam will test you on material from the entire semester, so I do not encourage you skipping an exam just because. Also, this exam can only replace a single missed exam, not multiple missed exams, or to try to increase your grade on a previously completed exam. If you come take the comprehensive and you have taken all 3 regular exams, you will have wasted your time.

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. You responsible for checking online each week to see if there is a quiz. Generally, quizzes occur every week (not including week 1 or the week of Spring Break).
- Quizzes are open-book, but 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

- It is best to email me (even right before) if you are coming by office hours, just to make sure I am there. I often find myself running around to various meetings and other responsibilities, so a quick heads up will save you and me some potential headaches. We are both busy.
- I discourage the use of laptops in class. They end up distracting yourself and others. If they become an issue, I reserve the right to disallow them in the room.
- Do not use your phone in class. 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.
- 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.
- There are no individual bonus opportunities or extra credit.
- Attendance will be taken periodically throughout the semester. Although not formally part of your grade, exemplary attendance will be considered when assigning final grades.

Course Outline

This outline is tentative and subject to change.

Jan 9:	Introduction
Jan 11-18:	Regimes and Political Culture, and Ideology Chapter 1
Jan 16:	NO CLASS - Holiday
Jan 20-23:	The Constitution Chapter 2
Jan 25-27:	Constitutional Amendments Chapter 5
	Jan 30-Feb 1: Federalism Chapter 3
Feb 3-10:	Civil Rights Chapter 4
Feb 13:	Reading Day/Review
Feb 15:	EXAM 1
Feb 17-27:	Public Opinion Chapter 10
Mar 1:	Media Chapter 14
Mar 3:	Political Protest Chapter 11
Mar 6-8:	Voting Chapter 11
Mar 10,20:	Elections Chapter 11
Mar 13-17:	NO CLASS - Spring Break
Mar 22-24:	Political Parties Chapter 12
Mar 27:	Reading Day/Review
Mar 29:	EXAM 2
Mar 31-Apr 5:	Interest Groups Chapter 13
Apr 7-12:	Congress Chapter 6
Apr 14-17:	The Executive and the Bureaucracy Chapter 7&8
Apr 19-21:	The Judiciary Chapter 9
Apr 24:	Public Policy Issues
Apr 26:	Reading Day/Review
Apr 28:	EXAM 3
TBD:	Comprehensive Final Exam (if eligible)

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.