

# GOVT 2305: American National Government

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## Course Information

**Course:** GOVT2305.OU1.18U

**Term:** Summer 2018

**Meeting Times:** TTH--10:00am to 12:15pm

**Meeting Location:** GR 4.301

## Professor Contact Information

Justin Culp, MA

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**Office:** GR 3.808

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays: 9:00am to 9:50am and 12:30pm to 1:30pm, and by apt.

## General Course Information

**Description:** This course is designed to allow students to gain a comprehensive understanding of American government, its foundations, and the constitution. Upon completion of this course, students will understand the institutions and processes that are responsible for the formation and execution of public policy. Additionally, students will become familiar with basic social science theories. For instance, political actors are strategic in their pursuit of various personal and policy goals. By the end of the semester, students must be able to apply theoretical perspectives to explain political behavior and processes.

In addition to the textbook, this course requires a reader (Miller and Holmes). The reader contains articles of peer-reviewed research to help you understand how the political science field examines the federal government

## Objectives:

By the end of the semester students will:

- Understand how the federal government operates and about the interaction of citizens and the federal government
- Apply political science theories to analyze to past and current political events
- Think critically about past and current political events
- Gain a knowledge of civic responsibility and the ability to engage effectively in politics

## Required Texts

Kernell, Samuel, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser, and Lynn Vavreck. 2017. *The Logic of American Politics*. 7th edition. Thousand Oaks, California: CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1483319841

Miller, Banks, and Jennifer Holmes, eds. 2017a. *Readings in American National Government*. 1st ed. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing. ISBN: 978-1524933807

These are available at the campus bookstore, and at other bookstores as well. Feel free to find the cheapest used/rental/eBook version.

The books are meant to provide a historical grounding in American Government, and a scholarly perspective on topics. The *Logic* book is better at providing the history and a thorough coverage of many different topics related to American Government. The *Readings* text is better at providing a scholarly perspective on these issues and concepts. Both, together, are integral to a full understanding of how our government works. Because this is such a massive course, we simply cannot cover everything. So, reading the text in their entirety will provide you with a full picture of standard concepts in American Government, and lectures will supplement that.

## Method of Evaluation

**5 Exams (20% each):** Exams will be given on the dates noted in the course calendar. Exams will be closed book, no notes, and in the usual classroom (GR 4.301). The exams are based on lecture materials AND required readings. I will automatically drop your lowest exam score, which will leave 20% remaining of your final grade.

**Attendance/Participation** will equal the remaining 20% of your grade.

## Grading Scale and Final Grades are determined accordingly:

A = 90% to 100%  
B = 80% to 89%  
C = 70% to 79%  
D = 60% to 69%  
F = 59% and below

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE GRADES ARE WEIGHTED!**

## Make-Up Exam Policy

Make-up tests and submission of late exams **will NOT be** allowed except for school-sanctioned events. I allow you to drop an exam grade in case you might have to miss a class for an emergency. If you miss an exam for reasons not that are not for school-sanctioned activities, then this should be the exam grade that you drop. If you miss an exam due to a school-sanctioned activity, you must provide proof from the activity supervisor.

Go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for additional information regarding policies and procedures.

## Course Conduct and Expectations

1. You may use laptops or any other device (besides your smartphone) to take notes. I have found that students who are not taking notes on laptops and are surfing the web, do not do very well in my course.
2. **Cell phones should not be visible.** If you are found using your cell phone during class, I will politely ask you to leave.
3. You **should** check your email daily. When sending the professor an email, you must send it from your UTD email account and it must be written in a professional manner. If you are unsure of how to write a professional email, please refer to: <https://www.netmanners.com/e-mail-etiquette-tips/>.
4. *You are expected to be pro-active in anticipating and planning for any absences or problems you will have in completing course work.* Make arrangements for possibly missed work prior to the due date is preferable and more likely to be successful than doing it after the due date. Plan for absences and missed work accordingly.
5. You are adults, and I treat you as such. So, you are responsible for things: therefore, if you miss something I announced, or you fail to complete an assignment, my response will be “How is that my problem?”
6. This syllabus is your guide to this class. Which means you should be bringing it to class daily.

**IMPORTANT:** If you have questions, comments, concerns, or are confused about anything that we discuss in the course. Please reach out to me to set up a time to go over what you do not understand as soon as possible. Do not wait until the last minute before something is due or right before an exam confused about the course materials. I am here to help you get through this class. Please use me as a resource.

## **Course Calendar**

The dates listed for each topic are approximate and, in my experience, will change. You should be bringing your book and syllabus to class with you daily to make any corrections, as to the updated schedule. You should read the material for each date *before* class, and if you answered the end of the chapter study questions. I am sure you have read and are prepared for class. Readings are listed under the lecture topics below and the chapters do bounce around a bit.

### **(T) May 22:**

- Course Introduction
- Syllabus Review

### **(TH) May 24:**

- The Logic of American Politics, Ch. 1 Kernell
- “Group Size and Group Behavior” (Olson), Ch. 1 Miller and Holmes
- “The Tragedy of the Commons” (Hardin), Ch. 1 Miller and Holmes

### **(T) May 29:**

- The Constitution, Ch. 2 Kernell
- The Constitution of the U.S. (Miller and Holmes, Appendix)
- The Declaration of Independence (Miller and Holmes, Appendix)

### **(TH) May 31:**

- No Class--At-Home Assignment to make up for the attendance grade.

### **(T) June 5:**

- *Federalist #10*, Ch. 2 Miller and Holmes
- *Federalist #51*, Ch. 2 Miller and Holmes
- *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819), Ch. 2 Miller and Holmes

### **(TH) June 7:**

- Exam #1
  - Ch. 1, Ch. 2, and Ch. 3 Kernell
  - Olson, Hardin, *Federalist #10*, *Federalist #51*, *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819)

### **(T) June 12:**

- Federalism, Ch. 3 Kernell
- *Federalist Paper #39*, Ch. 2 Miller and Holmes
- *United States v. Lopez* (1995), Ch. 3 Miller and Holmes
- “Fort Hill Address” (Calhoun), Ch. 3 Miller and Holmes

### **(TH) June 14:**

- Civil Rights Ch. 4 Kernell
- *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), Ch. 4 Miller and Holmes

**(T) June 19:**

- Civil Liberties Ch. 5 Kernell
- *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008) Ch. 4 Miller and Holmes
- *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), Ch. 4 Miller and Holmes

**(TH) June 21:**

- Exam #2
  - Ch. 3-5 Kernell
  - *Federalist* #39, Ch. 2 Miller and Holmes, *United States v. Lopez* (1995), Calhoun, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), *DC v. Heller* (2008), and *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015) in Miller and Holmes.

**(T) June 26:**

- Congress Ch. 6 Kernell
- “The Electoral Incentive” (Mayhew), Ch. 5 Miller and Holmes
- “The Polarization of Contemporary Politics” (Poole and Hare), Ch.5 in Miller and Holmes

**(TH) June 28:**

- The Presidency Ch. 7 Kernell
- *Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co. v. Sawyer* (1952), Ch. 6 Miller and Holmes
- *Korematsu v. United States* (1944), Ch. 6 Miller and Holmes

**(T) July 3:**

- The Bureaucracy, Ch. 8 Kernell
- “Congressional Oversight Overlooked” (McCubbins and Schwartz) Ch. 8 Miller and Holmes
- “Governance and the Bureaucracy Problem” (Meier and O’Toole) Ch. 8 Miller and Holmes

**(TH) July 5:**

- Exam #3
  - Ch. 6-8 Kernell
  - Mayhew, Poole and Hare, McCubbins and Schwartz, Meier and O’Toole, *Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co. v. Sawyer* (1952), *Korematsu v. United States* (1944) Ch. 8 Miller and Holmes

**(T) July 10:**

- The Judiciary Ch. 9 Kernell
- *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), Ch. 7 Miller and Holmes
- The Confirmation Hearing of Robert Bork, Ch. 7 Miller and Holmes

**(TH) July 12:**

- Public Opinion Ch. 10 Kernell

**(T) July 17:**

- Interest Groups, Ch. 13 Kernell

**(TH) July 19:**

- Exam #4
  - Ch. 9, 10, and 13 Kernell
  - *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), The Confirmation for Robert Bork in Miller and Holmes

**(T) July 24:**

- Political Parties Ch. 12 Kernell
- “Prospects for Partisan Realignment” (Wallach) Ch. 10 Miller and Holmes

**(TH) July 26:**

- Voting, Campaigns and Elections Ch. 11 Kernell
- “Citizenship and the Transformation of American Society” (Dalton) Ch. 11 Miller and Holmes
- *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010), Ch. 11 Miller and Holmes

**(T) July 31: Final Exam-- Last Day of Class**

- Exam #5
  - Ch. 12, 13, 15 Kernell
  - Wallach, Dalton, and *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010) in Miller and Holmes

**Comet Creed**

*This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas 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.”

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