

GOVT 2305 – American National Government
Political Science Department
Fall 2018
T/Th 1-2:15, CB3 1.308

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Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed to familiarize the student with the system of government and politics in America. We will focus on the major institutions of the federal government, along with the actors, and the electorate. We will also study the history and culture of America in order to further understand how our political system came to be what it is today.

By the end of the course students will have the skills to do the following:

- Explain the meaning of key terms like federalism, separation of powers, judicial review, incumbency advantage, and primary elections).
- Describe the historical and social context within which the American political system operates.
- Explain the value and origins of the U.S. Constitution.
- Describe how the major institutions of the federal government (executive, legislative, and judiciary) operate and interact.

UTD General Course Policies <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

Office Hours

Office hours are Tuesday & Thursday 11:30-12:30 and by appointment. I would recommend that you email me ahead of time just to make sure I will be there.

Reading

The required textbook is *The Logic of American Politics 8th Edition* by Kernell and Jacobson. We are also reading *It's Even Worse Than It Was* by Mann and Ornstein. Both books can be purchased at Off Campus Books and the bookstore.

Class Attendance and Participation

Attendance is mandatory and roll will be taken each class. Along with being in class you are expected to have done the reading and be ready to participate in our discussion. This is not a lecture-based class, though sometimes I will give small lectures during class. This is an honors class and it will be run more like a seminar, where we will sit and discuss the readings and the current state of American government. You should be kind and courteous to your fellow students despite the fact that we will be discussing politics. But the class is not a weekly session about whether the current Administration is good or bad, but rather discussing the reading and developing the foundation and analytic skills that will help you understand politics and government more clearly.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

For each chapter you will take a quiz done through elearning.utdallas.edu. You will get just one chance to take each quiz, so don't open a quiz until you are ready to take the

whole thing. It is open book and open note and you have 60 minutes to finish a quiz once you start. You should not be helping or seeking help from other students for quizzes.

For your final grade the quizzes will be 30 percent of your grade, attendance and participation will be 30 percent of your grade, and assignments will count for 40%.

100-98=A+	88-89=B+	78-79=C+	68-69=D+	
93-97=A	83-87=B	73-77=C	63-67=D	Below 60=F
90-92=A-	80-82=B-	70-72=C-	60-62=D-	

Schedule

Aug 21	Introduction & Syllabus
Aug 23- 28	Ch. 1 Logic of American Politics
Aug 30-Sept 4	Ch. 2 The US Constitution
Sept 6-11	Ch 3 Federalism
Sept 13-18	Ch 4 Civil Rights
Sept 20-25	Ch 5 Civil Liberties
Sept 27-Oct 2	Ch 6 Congress
Oct 4-9	Ch 7 The Presidency
Oct 11	Mann & Ornstein book
Oct 16-18	Ch 8 Bureaucracy
Oct 23-25	Ch 9 Judiciary
Oct 30 - Nov 1	Ch 10 Public Opinion
Nov 6- 8	Ch 11 Voting and Campaigns
Nov 13-15	Ch 12 Political Parties
Nov 20-22	No class Thanksgiving
Nov 27-29	Ch 13 Interest Groups
Dec 4-6	Ch 14 The Media