

GOVT 2305 – American National Government  
Political Science Department  
Fall 2019  
Wed 4-6:30, AD 2.238

Professor Tom Brunell  
Office: GR 2.246  
Phone: 972-883-4963  
Email: [tbrunell@utdallas.edu](mailto:tbrunell@utdallas.edu)

### 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 8<sup>th</sup> Edition* by Kernell and Jacobson.

### 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](http://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**

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