

GOVT 2305.501: American National Government (REVISED)

Ryan Lux

Spring 2020

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Online Office Hours:	M-F 9:00 - 10:00 am & flexible as needed	T 3:00 - 4:00 pm W 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

Course Description

Changes to the previous syllabus will be highlighted

This course serves as an introduction to the study of politics and political institutions in the United States. It will introduce the actors, institutions, and processes of the American system of government through the coverage of the Constitution, Congress, the Presidency, voting and elections, public opinion and other topics. Emphasis will be placed on American founding principles and philosophy, with comparison to contemporary ideals. This course is an overview of the information necessary to understand how and why the government operates as it does. The goal is for you to think critically and logically about the functions of the federal government and how it impacts your lives.

- Miller, Banks & Jennifer Holmes. *Readings in American National Government*. Kendall Hunt Publishing. ISBN 978-1-5249-6126-8
- Ginsberg, Benjamin et al. *We the People*. 12th Edition. W.W. Norton and Company. ISBN 978-0-393-67967-0
- Additional readings assigned will be made available through eLearning

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of federal government.

5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.
6. Analyze the federal election process.
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues and policies in US Politics.

Grading Criteria

Components

There are 3 major graded components for this course:

1. 3 Exams (20% each; 60% total)
2. Quizzes: **highest 10 of 11** (2.5% each; 20% total)
3. Group Writing Project (15% of final grade)

Grading Policy

A: 94-100	A-: 90-93	
B+: 87-89	B: 84-86	B-: 80-83
C+: 77-79	C: 74-76	C-: 70-73
D+: 67-69	D: 64-66	D-: 60-63
F: 00-59		

NOTE: Point values are final. Final calculations of grades will be rounded following normal rounding rules. However, final grades will not be "bumped" even if a student is one (1) point away from the next grade level.

Exams

The remaining exams will be given on the dates noted in the course calendar below and will be accessible via eLearning. The test will open at the beginning of the previous class period and will promptly close at the end of that class period. If your living/social situation has been affected causing conflict with these times please contact me IMMEDIATELY. Approximately half of the questions for the exam will come directly from the quizzes, the other half will come from lecture notes, so class attendance is vital to your success. The exams are open book and open note and will cover the material from each unit only (not comprehensive). The exams are to be completed independently from other students and the questions are randomized so there is no advantage to collaborating.

Makeup exams will be offered on a case by case basis if the student has a legitimate reason for missing the assigned time. You must contact me in advance to set up a makeup exam. If you miss an exam for any other reason you may take the final exam during the time period assigned

by the University. The final exam may only replace one missed exam. If you miss more than one, the others will be graded as 0. The final exam may NOT be taken to raise the grade of another exam. There are no exceptions to this rule. **The final exam will be on eLearning and will be comprehensive.** Plan your semester accordingly.

Quizzes

Quizzes will be taken via eLearning and are due by 11:59PM on the date listed in the course calendar below. Each quiz will open approximately three days before it is due to provide ample time to complete. Each quiz will also have a two hour time limit once it has been started. Please ensure you plan enough time to complete each quiz.

There are no makeup quizzes. If you miss a quiz it will be graded as a 0. I will drop your lowest quiz grade, but if you miss more than one your grade for each subsequent missed quiz will remain graded as 0. It is important to take these quizzes seriously as roughly half of your exams questions come directly from them. I suggest saving and printing them to review for the exams.

Group Writing Project

The research project will be a collaborative effort to create a Constitution for your group. Groups will be assigned at random and are final. The Constitution for each group must address each major topic area covered in the course and may address any additional issues the members of the group decide upon. The final project will consist of a written constitution and a 2-3 page essay detailing how the constitution was drafted and ratified within the group. The writing project is due on the date listed below by 11:59 PM

In addition to the final constitution and paper, grades will be based in part on group participation. Each member of the group will score each other member's participation, which will be factored into the final grade for each individual of the group.

All group work should be done remotely and/or follow all CDC recommended social distancing guidelines.

Course Calendar

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. This schedule below should be viewed as the key concepts you should grasp after each week, and also as a study guide before each exam, and at the end of the semester. Each exam will test on the material that was taught up until the exam. Concepts tend to build on each other throughout the semester though, so it is still important to at least review earlier concepts throughout the semester.

Week 01, 01/13 - 01/17: Introduction to course

- 1/14 Syllabus review
- 1/16 We the People CH1 - The Citizen and Government

Week 02, 01/20 - 01/24: Foundations

- 1/21 We the People CH1 - The Citizen and Government
- 1/23 American Reader Ch 1 - Fundamentals: Group Size and Group Behavior & The Tragedy of the Commons
 - Quiz 1 due

Week 03, 01/27 - 01/31: Foundations

- 1/28 We the People CH2 - The Founding and the Constitution
- 1/30 American Reader Ch 2 - Constitution: Federalist 10 & Federalist 51
 - Quiz 2 due

Week 04, 02/03 - 02/07: Foundations

- 2/4 We the People CH3 - Federalism
- 2/6 American Reader Ch 3 - Federalism: Federalist 39
 - Quiz 3 due

Week 05, 02/10 - 02/14: Foundations

- 2/11 We the People CH4 - Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
 - Quiz 4 due
- 2/13 **Exam 1**

Week 06, 02/17 - 02/21: Institutions

- 2/18 We the People CH9 - Congress
- 2/20 American Reader Ch 5 - Congress: The Electoral Incentive
 - Quiz 5 due

Week 07, 02/24 - 02/28: Institutions

- 2/25 We the People CH 10 - The Presidency
- 2/27 Group project meetings

Week 08, 03/02 - 03/06: Institutions

- 3/3 American Reader Ch 6 - The President: Korematsu v US
 - Quiz 6 due
- 3/5 We the People CH 11 - Bureaucracy

Week 09, 03/09 - 03/13: Institutions

- 3/10 American Reader Ch 8 - Bureaucracy: Congressional Oversight Overlooked
 - Quiz 7 due
- 3/12 We the People CH 12 - The Federal Courts

Week 10, 03/16 - 03/20:

- NO CLASS - Spring Break

Week 11, 03/23 - 03/27:

- NO CLASS - COVID-19 SHUTDOWN

Week 12, 03/30 - 04/03: Institutions

- 4/1 American Reader Ch 7 - Judiciary: Marbury v Madison
 - Quiz 8 due
- 4/2 Exam 1

Week 13, 04/06 - 04/10: Politics

- 4/7 We the People CH 7 - Political Parties, Participation, and Elections
- 4/9 We the People CH 7 - Political Parties, Participation, and Elections
 - Quiz 9 due

Week 14, 04/13 - 04/17: Politics

- 4/14 We the People CH 8 - Interest Groups
- 4/16 We the People CH 8 - Interest Groups
 - Quiz 10 due

Week 15, 04/20 - 04/24: Politics

- 4/21 We the People CH 6 - The Media
- 4/23 We the People CH 6 - The Media
 - Quiz 11 due

Week 16, 04/27 - 05/01:

- 4/28 Group project meetings
- 4/30 Exam 3
- 4/30 Constitution Project Due

Week 17, 05/04 - 05/08:

- 5/5 Final Exam: 5:00 - 7:45 PM

Course Policies

Student Responsibility

You have already made the decision to go to college; now the follow-up decisions on whether to commit to doing the work could very well determine whether you end up working at a good paying job in a field you enjoy or working at minimum wage for the rest of your life. Education involves a partnership that requires both students and instructors to do their parts. By entering into this partnership, you have a responsibility to show up for class, do the assigned readings before class, be engaged and pay attention in class, follow directions, and put your best effort into it. You will get out of your experience here exactly what you put into it - nothing more and nothing less.

Attendance

Class will now be conducted via eLearning. I will post the slides for each class the morning before our scheduled class time. I will be available to discuss the slides and answer any questions regarding the material during class time. This portion will be conducted via Collaborate sessions. Please see https://help.blackboard.com/Collaborate/v12/Participant/Join_a_Session for how to access this feature.

Academic success is closely associated with regular classroom attendance and course participation. All successful students, whether on campus or online, are expected to be self-motivated. Class attendance is expected and required. You are responsible for any announcements made or information given during class. I do not provide copies of lecture slides to those who miss class, so your attendance is very important if you are to master the material.

Late Assignments

Sufficient time has been allotted for each of the assignments in this course. As such, late assignments are not accepted in this course. Do not fail to plan your time appropriately and expect me to make exceptions.

Extra Credit

There is NO extra credit for this course. Note the grading criteria and plan accordingly. However, there are potential bonus points based on in-class participation and leadership.

eLearning

eLearning is used in this class for quizzes, review, and to check your progress in the class. You can access the course eLearning page at <http://elearning.utdallas.edu>. Additional information about how to use eLearning is available at this site as well. You will need your UTD netid to access this site. eLearning is also how I will communicate with you. You are responsible for announcements made through eLearning. You may forward messages from eLearning to your regular UTD e-mail account. Please select a forwarding address in your mail preferences if you do not regularly check your eLearning mail or UTD email.

University Policies

Academic Integrity and Honesty

The faculty expects from its students a high-level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. See <https://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/integrity/>.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty can occur in relation to any type of work submitted for academic credit or as a requirement for a class. It can include individual work or a group project. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and collaboration/collusion. In order to avoid academic dishonesty, it is important for students to fully understand the expectations of their professors. This is best accomplished through asking clarifying questions if an individual does not completely understand the requirements of an assignment.

Additional information related to academic dishonesty and tips on how to avoid dishonesty may be found here: <https://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/dishonesty/>

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."

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

Instructor's Rights

The instructor has the right to add, delete, or revise this course syllabus.