Introduction to Government  
Political Science 261, Section 24  
Fall 2007  

Tuesdays  
6-8:50 p.m.  
AB1 317  
Office Hours:  
M 2-3  
T 5-6  
W 5-6  
or by appointment  

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294-4761  
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Course description  
This course deals with the origin, development and Constitution of the American governmental system. It covers both the federal and state levels of the party system, executive structures, legislatures, and judiciaries. This course meets the legislative requirement for a course on the Constitution of the United States and Texas.  

Prerequisites: None.  

Course objectives and goals  
While this is clearly a ‘content’ course intent on conveying basic introductory information about government on the federal and the state level, it is also an objective of this course to encourage critical thinking and to foster inquiry. It is my hope that in addition to introducing participants to American politics, the course will also foster responsible citizenship both among those with and those without a pronounced interest in politics. In other words, this course will allow you to develop an informed and educated position. The information will be provided, and so will be the opportunity to think and talk about it – the work of figuring out where you stand is up to you.  

Course text  
The textbook for this course is  
You are responsible for completing the readings by the time they first appear on the syllabus. Each notation on the course schedule refers to a chapter in the book. Readings marked CD refer to chapters about federal politics and they are in the first half of the book. Readings marked PTP refer to chapters about Texas and they are in the second half of the book.  

Grading plan  
There will be three in-class exams and a final in this course. All exams will be multiple-choice. Please come to the exams with a long Scantron sheet and a pencil.
On exams 1, 2, and 3, you will have as many questions and there are points to get (each question is worth one point). On the final, there are 2 options, of which the class will have to choose with a majority vote.

Final option 1 ➔ as many questions as there are points, cumulative exam
Final option 2 ➔ non-cumulative, each questions is worth two points (30 questions, 60 points)

You can earn a total of 200 points in this class. At the end of the semester, you will have to divide by two the total number of points you have to determine your percentage and your grade.

Grades will be assigned on the standard grading scale:
A = 100-90, B = 89-80, C = 79-70, D = 69-60, F = 59 and below.

The grade composition in this class is the following:
exam 1  40 points
exam 2  40 points
exam 3  40 points
final    60 points
attendance 20 points

Extra credit
Those who desire to earn extra credit in the course, it will be possible to not just view the films screened during the semester but to also write about them. (See tentative class schedule for screening times). The following conditions will apply:
◇ film write-ups are optional, not required assignments
◇ you may earn a maximum of 5 points for each write-up
◇ a film write-up will have to be typed, with a word count appearing next to your name, and its length will have to be between 700 and 2000 words
◇ to avoid technological glitches, you cannot email your write-ups – you have to turn them in as hard copy
◇ write-ups will only be accepted at the beginning of the class meeting immediately following the screening
◇ write-ups are reaction papers in which you reflect on how the themes in the film relate to themes of the course or other political phenomena

Classroom policies
The policies that govern this course are included on the BlackBoard site of the course, under Course Documents. Please note that you are responsible for knowing and abiding by, the contents of the ‘Course Policies’ document and that everything in it has the same force as other items on the syllabus. Please familiarize yourself with the document early on.
## Tentative course schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Check?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 21</td>
<td>Intro to course</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>Political culture and values</td>
<td>CD1 and PTP1</td>
<td>att 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 4</td>
<td>Constitution</td>
<td>CD3 and PTP2</td>
<td>att 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 11</td>
<td>review session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 18</td>
<td>EXAM 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 25</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>CD7 and PTP5</td>
<td>att 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 2</td>
<td>Parties</td>
<td>CD8 and PTP4</td>
<td>att 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>EXAM 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>Legislature</td>
<td>CD11 and PTP7</td>
<td>att 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 23</td>
<td>Executive power</td>
<td>CD12 and PTP8</td>
<td>att 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 30</td>
<td>EXAM 3</td>
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<td>Nov 6</td>
<td>film screening</td>
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<td>att 7</td>
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<td>Nov 13</td>
<td>Bureaucracy and local govern</td>
<td>CD13 and PTP3</td>
<td>att 8</td>
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<td>att 9</td>
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<td>Nov 27</td>
<td>Courts</td>
<td>CD14 and PTP10</td>
<td>att 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>review session</td>
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Final to be schedule by SHSU