Political Science 261.05, CID 1006, 3 credit hours
American Government
Spring 2008
Dr. Waggener

Course Location/Time: AB1 317, 12 – 12:50, MWF
Office Location: AB1 319B
Office Phone/Email/Fax: (936) 294-1466, pol_taw@shsu.edu, (936) 294-4172
Office Hours: 10 – 12:00 MWF or by appointment

Course Description

This course addresses: the origin, development, and operation of the US national government and the Texas state government; civil liberties and civil rights; elections and voting; political parties and interest groups; and the three branches of government.

Course Objectives

This course has 3 primary objectives:

1. Students will gain factual knowledge of the structural and philosophical foundations of American government and Texas Government.
2. Students will learn how to find and use resources for answering questions and solving problems.
3. Students will be introduced to current political ideas, issues, and events in American politics. Special attention will be given to political ideas, issues, and events that students in the class deem relevant to their political lives.

Class Format

The class format will be a mixture of lecture and student participation. During class discussions, we will not assume that there is a “correct” position on a particular political issue, but rather that there are multiple positions all of which must be considered. Thus students are strongly encouraged to arrive at their own political opinions. However, students must arrive at their opinions through active debate and informed reasoning. “Off the cuff” political opinions are not credible or productive to class learning.
**Required Readings**

*Text*

**Exams, Projects, and Grading**

*Exams*
There are 4 multiple-choice exams. Each exam is weighted equally. There is no comprehensive final exam in this course. Exams will be based on material from lectures and the textbook.

*Grading*
Final course grades will be based on the following grading scale: 100 – 90=A, 89-80=B, 79-70=C, 69-60=D, 59-0=F

*Make-Up Exams*
Make-up exams will be granted to students who can provide formal documentation of a medical or family emergency. If a student fails to provide this documentation, he or she will receive a zero on the exam. Please note that visitation slips issued by the University Health Center are not considered formal documentation, unless the slip clearly indicates that the student was too ill to attend class. Make up exams will be short answer exams.

*Extra Credit*
Under NO circumstances will extra credit be offered in this course.

*Scored Scantron Sheets*
Students must keep their scored scantron sheets. A student cannot challenge their grade unless he or she has copies of all scantron sheets.

**Class Attendance**
Regular and punctual class attendance is expected of each student enrolled in this course.

**Class Policies**
Please see [http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus](http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus) for class policies regarding: Academic Dishonesty, Classroom Rules of Conduct, Student Absences on Religious Holy Days, Students with Disabilities Policy, and Visitors in the Classroom. Please see [http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html](http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html) for classroom rules of conduct.

**Instructor Evaluations**
Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.
Class Schedule

Please note that the class schedule is tentative and may be subject to change.

The Philosophical and Structural Foundations of American Government
Jan 16 – 18  Chapter 3: The Constitution
Jan 21 – 25  Chapter 4 Federalism

Linking Citizens with Government
Jan 28 – 30  Chapter 5: Public Opinion
Jan 31 – Feb 1  Chapter 6: The Media
Feb 4  Exam 1
Feb 6 – 11  Chapter 7: Participation and Voting
Feb 13 – 15  Chapter 8: Political Parties
Feb 18 – 22  Chapter 9: Nominations, Elections, and Campaigns
Feb 25 – 29  Chapter 10: Interest Groups
March 3  Exam 2

Institutions of Government
March 5 – 7  Chapter 12: The Presidency
March 10 – 14  Spring Break
March 17 – 21  Chapter 11: Congress
March 24 – 28  Chapter 14: The Courts

Texas Government and Politics
March 31  Chapter 1 (Texas section): The Environment of Texas Politics
April 2 -4  Chapter 3 (Texas section): Local Governments
April 7  Exam 3
April 9 - 14  Chapter 7 (Texas section): The Legislature and Chapter 8 (Texas section): The Executive

Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
April 16 – 23  Chapter 15: Order and Civil Liberties
April 25 – 30  Chapter 16: Equality and Civil Rights
May 2 – 7  Review of Class Material

Final exam week is may 12 - 16. Please see SHSU homepage final exam schedule for information about the time and date for exam 4.