

Political Science 261.07, CID 4085, 3 credit hours
Fall 2009
Dr. Waggener

Class Location/Time: CHSS C070, Ts/Th 3:30 – 4:50
Office Location: CHSS #488
Office Phone/Email/Fax: (936) 294-1466, pol_taw@shsu.edu, (936) 294-4172
Office Hours: TUTH 1:00 – 2:00, MWF 2:00 – 3:00 or by appointment

Course Description

This course deals with the origin, development, and Constitution of the American governmental system, citizenship and civil rights, suffrage, the national party system, the national executive, organization of congress, national judiciary, federal-state relations, and the Constitution of the State of Texas. This course meets the legislative requirement for a course on the Constitutions of the United States and Texas.

Course Objectives

The course has three primary objectives.

1. Students will learn factual information about the structural and philosophical features of US and Texas government.
2. Students will be introduced to current political issues in US and Texas politics. Particular attention will be given to issues students deem relevant to their political lives.
3. Students will learn how to find and use resources for answering questions and solving problems related to government and politics.

Required Texts

Benjamin Ginsberg, et al, We the People: An Introduction to American Politics, Essentials Edition (7th edition), 2009. ISBN: 978-0-393-93266-9.

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.

Exams and Grading

Exams

There will be three multiple choice exams based on lectures and readings. The exams will consist of 25 questions worth four points each. Each exam is weighted equally.

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.

Classroom Policies

Please see <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus> for class policies regarding: Academic Dishonesty, American with Disabilities Act, Religious Holidays, and Visitors in the Classroom
Please see http://www.shsu.edu/students/StudentGuidelines2007_2008.pdf for student 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.

PHILOSOPHICAL AND STRUCTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

<i>August 25/27</i>	<i>Introduction</i>
<i>Sep 1</i>	<i>Chapter 1 - Government institutions and procedures</i>
<i>Sep 3</i>	<i>Chapter 1 - Changes in American identity and important American ideals</i>
<i>Sep 8, 10</i>	<i>Chapter 3 - Federalism: definition, key features, policy consequences</i> <i>E-readings – Texas government</i>
<i>Sep 15, 17</i>	<i>Chapter 9 – Congress: powers, key leaders, and role in national government</i>
<i>Sep 22, 24</i>	<i>Chapter 10 - presidency: powers, leadership roles, and role in national government</i>
<i>Sep 29</i>	EXAM 1

LINKING CITIZENS TO GOVERNMENT

<i>Oct 1</i>	<i>Discussion of exam 1 results</i>
<i>Oct 6, 8, 13</i>	<i>Lecture - The election process: voter registration, types of elections, voting, student voters, and Texas constitutional amendment election (Nov 3, 2009)</i>
<i>Oct 15, 20</i>	<i>Lecture – Constitutions and the amendment process</i>
<i>Oct 22, 27</i>	<i>Chapter 8 – Interest groups: types of groups, functions of groups, and democracy</i>
<i>Oct 29, Nov 3</i>	<i>Chapter 6 – The media: nature of news coverage, affect on politics and government, and citizens' use of media</i>
Nov 5	EXAM 2
<i>Nov 10, 12</i>	<i>No class meetings; outside class assignments addressing results of the Nov 3, 2009 Texas constitutional amendment election</i>

THE COURTS, CIVIL LIBERTIES, AND CIVIL RIGHTS

<i>Nov 17, 19</i>	<i>Chapter 12 – The Federal Courts: powers, role in national government, and constitution</i>
<i>Nov 24 – 26</i>	<i>Thanksgiving Holiday</i>
<i>Dec 1, 3</i>	<i>Chapter 4 - Civil liberties: origin of liberties, development of civil liberties overtime, and important current civil liberty cases</i>
<i>Dec 8</i>	<i>Chapter 4 - Civil rights: origin of rights, development of civil rights overtime, and important current civil rights cases</i>
<i>Dec 14 – 18</i>	<i>Final Exam Week</i>