

POLS2301, Section 10 (CRN: 83707)
Principles of American Government — National and State
Fall, 2011: MWF 10:00 – 10:50 AM, CHSS 252

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OFFICE HOURS:
- Drop-in Office Hours: MW 1:00 – 3:00 PM (in CHSS489)
- “Gov & Grub” Help Sessions: WED: TBD
(in Library Coffee Shop)
- By Appointment: Everyday

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: Specific course objectives include:

- Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends).
- Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories.
- Acquiring an interest in learning more by asking questions and seeking answers.

Class Materials:

- (1) **‘Clicker’**: Response Card RF: Synchronous Polling Keypad. Available in the campus bookstore or on-line (we do not have a school code, so click “Forgot Code” and then OK): <https://store.turningtechnologies.com/index.cfm>. **{Clicker}**
- (2) **Texas Government Text**: University of Texas On-line Text. Texas Politics. 2008. University of Texas: Liberal Arts Instructional Technology Services. Available free online at: <http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/> **{On-Line TX}**
- (3) Any **American Government Textbook** of your choice. One of these is recommended:
 - (a) Kerbel, Matthew. 2010. American Government; Your Voice, Your Future. 3rd ed. Textbook Media Press. ISBN: 1-930789-44-0 (available free online: www.textbookmedia.com) **{On-line US}**
 - (b) Berman, Larry & Bruce Allen Murphy. 2008. Approaching Democracy. Portfolio Edition. 2nd ed. New Jersey: Pearson Education. ISBN: 978-0-136-14008-5 (available used online) **{B&M}**
 - (c) Ginsberg, Benjamin, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, and Robert J. Spitzer. 2009. We the People: An Introduction to American Politics. Essential Edition. 7th ed. New York: W.W. Norton Company. ISBN: 978-0-393-93266-9 (available for purchase or rent in campus bookstore) **{GLWS}**
- (4) **Optional Study Guide**: American Government: Cliffs Quick Review. Cliffs Notes. ISBN: 978-0-764-56372-0 (available online: <http://www.cliffsnotes.com/store/product/productCd-0764563726.html>) **{CN}**

Exams and Grading: Your grade for this course will be determined by your performance on in-class quizzes, four in-class exams, and a comprehensive final exam:

In-Class ‘Clicker Questions’	100 points	<i>Optional Final Exam: You are not required to take the cumulative final exam, but your score on this final exam will replace your lowest exam score.</i>
Exam 1 (Friday, September 16 th)	100 points	
Exam 2 (Monday, October 10 th)	100 points	
Exam 3 (Friday, November 4 th)	100 points	
Exam 4 (December 4 th)	100 points	

The *‘Clicker’ Questions* will be presented during class lectures throughout the semester. There will be more than 100 questions presented over the course of the semester, and each is worth one point. Some of the questions will require a correct answer to earn credit, while others will have no “correct” answer and anyone answering will receive credit. You may earn a maximum of 115 of these points over the course of the semester 15 of which will be considered “bonus points” (any points in excess of 115 will not be counted). See Course FAQs posted on the course Blackboard website for more details about the clickers.

The *four in-class, closed book, closed notes exams* during the semester will each include 50 multiple-choice questions covering material from class readings, lectures, and discussions. There will be NO opportunities to earn extra credit points on these exams.

Course grades will be calculated according to the following scale: A = 450 points or more; B = 400 to 449.999 points; C = 350 to 359.999 points; D = 300 to 349.999 points; F = less than 300 points. THERE IS NO AVERAGING, PERCENTAGE CALCULATIONS, OR ROUNDING INVOLVED IN THE COURSE GRADE CALCULATION – IT IS BASED ON THE RAW NUMEBR OF POINTS EARNED OVER THE COURSE OF THE SEMESTER. Students asking Dr. Ulbig to calculate their grade for them will be penalized 100 points. See Course FAQs posted on the course Blackboard website for more details about course grade calculation.

Make-Up Exam Policy: You are expected to take the exams at the scheduled times. There are no opportunities to make up exams in this class. Your final exam score will substitute for any and all of the exams you miss during the semester. See Course FAQs on the course Blackboard website for possible exceptions to this policy.

Optional Final Exam: You are not required to take the cumulative final exam in this class. However, if you do take it and your final exam score is higher than your lowest in-class exam score, your final exam grade will replace that low exam grade. You may replace only one (1) of the four exam grades with the score from the final exam. You may replace a score of zero (0) with your final exam score. If your score on the final exam is lower than all four of your in-class exam scores, then the final exam score will be discarded. See Course FAQs on course Blackboard website for more information about the optional final exam.

Grade Report Forms: Students requesting that grade report forms (for athletics or other campus organizations) be filled out immediately before or after class will need to provide a *printed copy of their grade sheet from Blackboard* along with the form so that Dr. Ulbig can verify grades quickly. Otherwise, students will have to speak with Dr. Ulbig during office hours or leave the form with Dr. Ulbig and pick it up from her the following class meeting. See Course FAQs on course Blackboard website for more information about grade report forms.

Attendance Policy: Regular and punctual class attendance is expected of each student at Sam Houston State University. Because class attendance and course grade are demonstrably and positively related, I expect students to attend all class sessions of this course. Regular attendance is important because we will cover information in class that is not found in the texts. Attendance will be taken in every class meeting. If you are absent for any reason, it is your responsibility to become informed on what was covered in class. Please get class notes from a fellow student. It is not my policy to give out my lecture notes. See Course FAQs on course Blackboard website for more information about class attendance.

Classroom Rules of Conduct: Students are expected to abide by the Classroom Rules of Conduct as outlined by the Dean of Students: http://www.shsu.edu/students/StudentGuidelines2007_2008.pdf. Further, the use of cell phones is completely prohibited in class. See course FAQs for information about penalties associated with using phones in class.

Instructor Evaluations: Students will be given the opportunity to complete a course/instructor evaluation form near the end of the semester. You may also speak directly with Dr. Ulbig or the Chair of the Political Science Department if you have concerns about the quality of instruction you are receiving.

Academic Dishonesty: All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: <http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty>

Americans with Disabilities Act: SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center . For a complete listing of the university policy, see: http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.pdf

Religious Holidays: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.pdf

CLASS SCHEDULE & READING ASSIGNMENTS

Note: This schedule and the reading assignments are tentative. Changes will be announced in class.

Date	Topic	Reading
August 26	Optional First Friday Final Exam	None **Bring a scantron & pencil**
August 29 – September 2	Basics & U.S. Constitution	<u>Online US</u> : Ch. 2, pp. 29-48; <u>B&M</u> : Ch. 2; <u>GLWS</u> : Ch. 2; <u>CN</u> : Ch. 1
September 7	Texas Constitution	<u>Online TX</u> : “The Constitution” (Sec. 1-3, 6-7)
September 9 – September 14	Federalism & Intergovernmental Relations	<u>Online US</u> : Ch. 2, pp. 49-56; <u>B&M</u> : Chapter 3; <u>GLWS</u> : Chapter 3; <u>CN</u> : Ch. 2

September 16 (FRIDAY): EXAM #1

September 18 – September 23	U.S. Congress	<u>B&M</u> : Chapter 4; <u>Online US</u> : Chapter 9; <u>GLWS</u> : Chapter 9; <u>CN</u> : Ch. 3
September 26	Texas Legislature	<u>Online TX</u> : “Legislative Branch” (Sections 1-3, 6)
September 28 – October 5	The Presidency & U.S. Bureaucracy	<u>Online US</u> : Ch. 10; <u>B&M</u> : Chapter 5; <u>GLWS</u> : Chapter 10; <u>CN</u> : Ch. 4
October 7	Texas Governor & Bureaucracy	<u>Online TX</u> : “Executive Branch” (All Sections)

OCTOBER 10 (MONDAY): EXAM #2

October 12 – October 17	U.S. Judiciary (Courts)	<u>Online US</u> : Ch. 12; <u>B&M</u> : Chapter 6; <u>GLWS</u> : Chapter 12; <u>CN</u> : Ch. 5
October 19	Texas Judiciary (Courts)	<u>Online TX</u> : “The Justice System” (Sections 3-4)
October 21 – October 28	Civil Liberties	<u>Online US</u> : Ch. Ch. 14; <u>B&M</u> : Chapter 13; <u>GLWS</u> : Chapter 4, pp. 92-114; <u>CN</u> : Ch. 12
October 31 – November 2	Civil Rights	<u>Online US</u> : Ch. 13; <u>B&M</u> : Chapter 14; <u>GLWS</u> : Chapter 4, pp. 114-138; <u>CN</u> : Ch. 13

NOVEMBER 4 (FRIDAY): EXAM #3

November 7 – November 11	Campaigns & Elections	<u>Online US</u> : Ch. 7; <u>B&M</u> : Ch. 10, pp. 283-298; <u>GLWS</u> : Ch. 7, pp. 217-237; <u>CN</u> : Ch. 10
November 14 – November 18	Voting & Public Opinion	<u>Online US</u> : Ch. 3, pp. 70-80 & 87-91, Ch. 4., pp. 130-155, Ch. 9, pp. 326-329, Ch. 13, 516-517; <u>GLWS</u> : Ch. 10, pp. 278-282; Ch. 8, pp. 232-237 <u>CN</u> : Ch. 7; <u>B&M</u> : Ch. 8;
November 21 – November 28	Political Parties	<u>Online US</u> : Ch. 6; <u>B&M</u> : Ch. 8; <u>GLWS</u> : Ch. 5; <u>CN</u> : Ch. 9
November 30 – December 2	Interest Groups	<u>Online US</u> : Ch. 8; <u>B&M</u> : Ch. 11; <u>GLWS</u> : Ch. 8; <u>CN</u> : Ch. 11

DECEMBER 5 (MONDAY): EXAM #4

December 7	Review for Final Exam
December 9	Study Day – No Class Meeting

DECEMBER 12 (MONDAY): OPTIONAL FINAL EXAM, 11:00AM – 1:00PM