



PSCI 2301 01W
Principles of US and Texas Government
COURSE SYLLABUS: Summer II 2015

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Online Course Time Zone: U.S. Central Time

COURSE INFORMATION

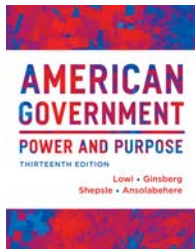
Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required

Lowi, Theodore J., Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere. 2014.

American Government: Power and Purpose (13th Edition).

New York: W.W. Norton & Company (ISBN: ISBN 978-0-393-92244-8).



Textbook Cover Photograph

Texas Politics Multimedia Textbook. <http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu>. Not necessary to purchase. Simply go to the website.

Textbook Readings. Given the vast amount of information available in the course, we will not have enough time to “cover” all of the readings in the assigned book—chapter by chapter. Consequently, this course will depend on you to **complete all assigned readings** and be prepared to discuss them in online class in a timely manner. Please note that all assigned

readings are critically important for successfully completing exams and class activities.

Course Description

This course is a survey of the underlying ideas, principles, and participatory practices of constitutional government in the United States and Texas. Topics considered include constitutionalism, federalism, ideology, pluralism, political culture and socialization, political parties and interest groups, public opinion, republicanism, and voting and electoral politics.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course

1. Students will be able to form substantive and evidence-driven arguments to propose solutions to problems or explain phenomena.
2. Student communication will be clear, purposeful, and make appropriate use of evidence, data and technology as applicable.
3. Students will be able to understand their role in their own education.
4. Students will demonstrate awareness of societal and/or civic issues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

All students are expected to comply with the following requirements.

1. Complete all course readings for each module of the course.
2. Regularly check the course site for announcement and updates.
3. Complete assigned readings.
4. Take each of the scheduled exams.
5. Participate fully in the class discussion.
6. Complete class activities.
7. Students will respect their fellow classmates and the instructor. This includes treating everyone with courtesy and respect in any and all correspondence for the course. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.
8. All students will maintain the highest level of personal responsibility and academic honesty. Academic dishonesty affects all individuals at the University and accordingly will not be tolerated. For this class, academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic work. In particular, passing off work as your own that was

written by someone else, without proper citation or attribution, on either exams or discussion assignments will be considered an act of plagiarism. This holds true whether material comes from the textbook, another publication, an internet source, or another student. Violations of academic integrity/honesty while carrying out academic assignments may, at the discretion of the instructor, receive a zero on the particular work in question, receive an "F" in the course and may result in significant administrative penalties.

9. Students will comply with any and all eCollege technical requirements in terms of training, computer access, & Internet access.
10. Failure to complete two of any discussion, assignment, or activity will be considered "excessive" absenteeism and the student will be administratively dropped from the class.

GRADING

This course occurs in a digital learning environment designed in module format. Each module runs around a week during which time you will be expected to read assigned material, participate in discussions, complete class activities, and take midterm exams. Each module opens and closes on a certain date and once a module closes it will not be opened again. Therefore you need to demonstrate a level of time management that allows you to meet deadlines as posted.

Midterm Exams: 200 Points (50% of total course grade)

Exam Format

Students will take two midterm exams that feature 50 multiple choice questions. 90 minutes are allotted for exam.

Exam Times and Dates

Midterm exams will be taken online and are scheduled on the dates listed below. The midterm exam will begin at **11:59 PM** on a Tuesday and will close 48 hours later at **11:59 PM** on Thursday.

Midterm Exam #1

Opens 7/21

Due 7/23

Covers Chapters 1, 2, 3, Media (Texas) The Constitution

Midterm Exam #2

Opens 8/4

Due 8/6

Covers Chapters 12, 13, 11, Media (Texas) Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Voting, Campaign, and Elections

Technical Issues: Students will take two midterm exams via the course page. Students are responsible for testing the compatibility of their own computers and software prior to starting the exam and must be sure to have a high speed internet connection to eliminate the chance of technical problems. Exams are timed and can only be taken once. Once the exam has begun, the allotted time will begin counting down and students will not be able to “pause” or put the exam time on hold, even if they disconnect from the course site or exam. Students should save their answers frequently by clicking on the “Save Answers” button. Students should not click the “Submit Test” button until they have completed the exam as it will not be possible to re-enter the exam once the test has been submitted. Students who encounter technical problems as a result of failing to comply with these guidelines will not be given an opportunity to re-take or re-access an exam. Any technical problems should be immediately referred to the help desk.

Make Up Exams

If a student misses a midterm exam, that student will receive a grade of 0 for the exam. Make-up exams will only be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Any request for a make-up exam must be made in writing and include documentation explaining why the absence was legitimate. Such a request must be received within 2 calendar days of the missed exam date, unless the student is physically unable to submit such a request during that time period. Legitimate reasons may include illness severe enough to require professional treatment, death in the immediate family, participation in University activities, and/or legal obligations. Technical problems with accessing the course will not be considered a valid excuse for missing an exam unless it can be shown that the problem is the fault of the eCollege platform. **Please note, these reasons do not guarantee that a make-up exam will be given.**

Make-up exams will be exclusively essay format.

Class Discussion: 100 Points (25% of total course grade)

This is the second graded component of the course and will consist of four discussions. Topics for the discussion will be posted on **Friday each week at 9 AM**. Each discussion thread will close at **11:59 PM on Thursday next week**. Regardless of the reason, there will be no make-up opportunities for discussion assignments and students will not receive any credit for posts made after the deadline.

The instructor will create a discussion thread topic for each discussion to which students are expected to compile responses.

Students will be graded upon two criteria. First, students are expected to submit an original response to the topic posted, answering all parts of the

topic (one original post requiring 150 words in length). Second, students are expected to respond to the posts of other students in their discussion group (two peer responses requiring 100 words each in length). Students should engage in conversation with their group members in a thoughtful discussion about the topic as well as their individual responses to the topic. These posts should not be made all on the same day during the final hours of the discussion time line.

Students will receive a grade on each discussion assignment (Students who do not participate will receive a 0). Grades will be based both upon the quality of the content of a student's posts, as well as the student's engagement with other students by responding to posts. Posts that do not fully answer the questions or do not respond posted will not receive full credit. Students who wait until the end of the time frame may receive a grade penalty. **Discussion Posts cannot be made up. No late work accepted.**

- o Post your discussion answers to respond to the discussion questions
[Possible points (15 points x 4 Modules) = 60 points]
- o Respond to classmates' postings
[Possible points ((5 points x 2 responses) x 4 Modules) = 40 points]

Possible assigned points will be divided by the total number of discussion questions. For instance, if there are two discussion questions in Module 3, 6 points will be assigned to original discussion for question #1 and remaining 6 points for questions #2. 4 points will be assigned to two responses for question #1 and remaining 4 points to two responses for question #2.

See the Guidelines/Rubric for Discussion Answer and Guidelines/Rubric for Responding Peer's Posting for the evaluation criteria (Will be placed in Doc Sharing under Course Document).

All content submitted for Discussion Assignments must be a student's original submission. Any material taken from another source, including the textbook, should include a proper citation. Material which is copied or pasted from any source will be considered plagiarism as discussed above in the Course Policies and Procedures section.

Class Activities: 75 points (19% of total course grade)

You will have an opportunity to do a variety of class activities which will include the best practices in American and Texas politics areas. More specific information will be provided later.

- o Complete class activity [Possible points (25 points x 3 Modules) = 75 points]

Self-Assessment: 25 points (6% of total course grade)

You will assess your performance for each module.

o Complete self-assessment [Possible points (5 points x 5 Modules) = 25 points]

Summary of Assignments and Grading

Assignments	How Many	Point Value	Total Possible	Percent of Total
Midterm Exams	2	100	200 points	50%
Discussion	4	25	100 points	25%
Class Activities	3	25	75 points	18.8%
Self-Assessment	5	5	25 points	6.2%
Total			400 points	100%

Grading Scale

Points	Grade	Standard
360-400	A	Superior
320-359	B	Above Average
280-319	C	Average Performance
240-279	D	Below Average
239 and Below	F	Unsatisfactory

Late Work

No late work accepted and work cannot be made up.

Technical difficulties of the student's equipment or internet provider are not excused. When such difficulties occur, students are expected to locate an alternative source for submitting assignments, e.g., neighbor, work place, public library, etc. Technical difficulties caused by the University or eCollege can be excused provided the student obtains documentation from technical support. Students should always have a back-up in mind for unexpected glitches in technology.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Because this is an online course, all students must meet the following technology requirements to successfully complete this course.

- To fully participate in online courses, you will need to use a current, Flash enabled browser. For PC users, the suggested browser is Internet Explorer 9.0 or 10. For Mac users, the most current update of Firefox is suggested.
- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:
 - 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
 - Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
 - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution
- You must have a:
 - sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
 - speakers or headphones.
- Depending on your course, you might also need a:
 - webcam
 - microphone

For courses where interactive tools are used, like VoiceThread or Class Live Pro, headphones are suggested for use with recording and playback. We recommend a webcam with an integrated microphone, such as the Microsoft LifeCam Cinema. All devices should be installed and configured before class begins.

- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. Java can be downloaded at: <http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp>
- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.
- You will need some additional free software for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
 - Adobe Reader
 - Adobe Flash Player
- At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft

Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

- For additional information about system requirements, please see: <https://secure.ecollege.com/tamuc/index.learn?action=technical>

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

Pearson LearningStudio Access and Log in Information

This course will be facilitated using Pearson LearningStudio, the learning management system used by Texas A&M University Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: <http://www.tamuc.edu/myleo.aspx>.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

It is strongly recommended that you perform a "Browser Test" prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login to Pearson LearningStudio, click on the 'myCourses' tab, and then select the "Browser Test" link under Support Services.

Pearson LearningStudio Student Technical Support

Texas A&M University Commerce provides students technical support in the use of Pearson LearningStudio.

Technical assistance is available 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week.

If at any time you experience technical problems (e.g., you can't log in to the course, you can't see certain material, etc.) please contact the Pearson LearningStudio Help Desk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- **Chat Support:** Click on '*Live Support*' on the tool bar within your course to chat with an Pearson LearningStudio Representative.
- **Phone:** 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with Pearson LearningStudio Technical Support Representative.
- **Email:** helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with Pearson LearningStudio Technical Support Representative.

Accessing Help from within Your Course: Click on the *'Tech Support'* icon on the upper left side of the screen inside the course. You will then be able to get assistance via online chat, email or by phone by calling the Help Desk number noted below.

Note: Personal computer problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, an Internet cafe, or a bookstore, such as Barnes & Noble, etc.

Policy for Reporting Problems with Pearson LearningStudio

Should students encounter Pearson LearningStudio based problems while submitting assignments/discussions/comments/exams, the following procedure **MUST** be followed?

1. Students must report the problem to the help desk. You may reach the helpdesk at
2. helpdesk@online.tamuc.org or 1-866-656-5511
3. Students **MUST** file their problem with the helpdesk and obtain a helpdesk ticket number
4. Once a helpdesk ticket number is in your possession, students should email me to advise me of the problem and to provide me with the helpdesk ticket number
5. At that time, I will call the helpdesk to confirm your problem and follow up with you

PLEASE NOTE: Your personal computer/access problems are not a legitimate excuse for filing a ticket with the Pearson help desk. You are strongly encouraged to check for compatibility of your browser **BEFORE** the course begins and to take the Pearson LearningStudio tutorial offered for students who may require some extra assistance in navigating the Pearson LearningStudio platform. **ONLY** Pearson LearningStudio based problems are legitimate.

Internet Access

An Internet connection is necessary to participate in discussions and assignments, access readings, transfer course work, and receive feedback from your professor. View the requirements as outlined in Technology Requirements above for more information.

myLeo Support

Your myLeo email address is required to send and receive all student correspondence. Please email helpdesk@tamuc.edu or call us at 903-468-6000 with any questions about setting up your myLeo email account. You may also access information at <https://leo.tamuc.edu>.

Learner Support

Go to the following link [One Stop Shop](#)- created to serve you by attempting to provide as many resources as possible in one location.

Go to the following link [Academic Success Center](#)- focused on providing academic resources to help you achieve academic success.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

It is very important to go to this online course 4-5 times each week to:

1. Read new announcements
2. Check your university email
3. Review activities and assignments
4. Check the Schedule of activities and assignments
5. Communicate as needed with your instructor and class members.

Submitting assignments

You are responsible for attaching the correct assignment to the correct folder in the Dropbox. Once you submit your assignment, you should always click on the Outbox to make sure the assignment is there. You can tell if it is attached in at least two ways: (1) touch the little document icon (symbol for an attachment) with your cursor and the name of your document will appear or (2) click on the little icon and actually open and view the document. Submitting an incorrect document, a blank document, or no document is counted as failure to complete the assignment on time.

Each assignment or work should include your name in the content. Also make your computer file name, when attaching to the Dropbox, using your last name and a specific assignment (i.e., Choi Activity1.docx).

Announcements

Announcements are posted often in the course. When you go to the course, you should first read any announcements that have been posted since you were last in the class.

Email Correspondence

Email from me is sent to your University email account. It is important to go to MyLeo mail regularly to check for messages.

If you need to contact me, email is the best way to reach me. Please send your message with your first and last name so I know who you are. Unless otherwise announced, I will do my best to respond within 48 hours except weekends.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook). Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:
<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library- Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

COURSE SCHEDULE

Module 1 (July 13 – July 16)

Course Introduction
Principles of Politics (Lowi Ch. 1)

Class Activity #1

Module 2 (July 17 – July 23)

Foundations of the US and Texas
US Constitution (Lowi Ch. 2)
Federalism (Lowi Ch. 3)
Texas Constitution (Media Textbook: The Constitution)

Exam #1
Discussion #1

Module 3 (July 24 – July 30)

Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Elections
Political Parties (Lowi Ch. 12)
Interest Groups (Lowi Ch. 13)
Elections and Campaigns (Lowi Ch. 11)

Class Activity #2
Discussion #2

Module 4 (July 31 – August 6)

Texas Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Elections
Texas Political Parties (Media Textbook: Political Parties)
Texas Interest Groups (Media Textbook: Interest Groups)
Texas Elections (Media Textbook: Voting, Campaigns, and Elections)

Exam #2
Discussion #3

Module 5 (August 7 – August 13)

Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
Civil Liberties (Lowi Ch. 4)
Civil Rights (Lowi Ch. 5)

Class Activity #3
Discussion #4

√ Many class activities, discussions, exams, and reflection papers are due at **11:59 PM on Thursday**.

√ Please note that the instructor reserves the right to change any part of this syllabus as needed over the course of the semester. Any and all changes will be announced.