



PSCI 2302 01W: United States and Texas Government: Institutions and Polices Fall 2015

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COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required

We the People, Texas Edition
Authors: Lowi, Ginsberg, Weir, Tolbert, Harpham, and Champagne
Publisher: W.W. Norton
Edition: 9th Texas Edition
ISBN: ISBN Hardcover 978-0-393-12438-5 or Paperback 978-0-393-92111-3

You should be able to purchase this book from the bookstore or your favorite on-line merchant. Please note there is also an on-line version of the text available from the publishers that is significantly cheaper.

Course Description

This course is an examination of the United States and Texas political systems with emphasis on both political institutions and the roles they play in the creation and implementation of public policy. Topics considered

Syllabus/schedule subject to change

include the legislative, executive, and judicial branches; bureaucracies; and public policies.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course students will be able to

- Understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain the political institutions and policy development and implementation of the government of the United States.
- Understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain the political institutions and state policy development and implementation of the state of Texas.
- Students will be able to differentiate between fact and opinion. Critical Thinking
- In written, oral, and/or visual communication, A&M-Commerce students will communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion, with an evident message and organizational structure. Core Objective: Communication
- Students will be able to understand their role in their own education. Core Objective: Personal Responsibility
- Students will demonstrate awareness of societal and/or civic issues. Core Objective: Social Responsibility

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

The primary method of instruction in this class will be student self-directed readings supplemented with interaction with classmates in discussion assignments as well as the instructor when needed.

Grading and Evaluation

Exams

Students will take three midterm exams. All exams will include material from the textbook and the scheduled dates for the exams are listed below. These

exams will feature 50 multiple choice questions and students will have 60 minutes to take the exam.

Discussion Assignments

This graded component of the course will consist of weekly discussions completed via the eCollege platform. Topics for the discussion assignments will be posted on Sunday each week at 9 AM. Each discussion thread will close at 11:30 PM on Friday that 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.

Each student will randomly be assigned to a discussion group for the duration of the course. The instructor will create a discussion thread topic for each discussion group 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. This post should be 300 words minimum. Second, students are expected to respond to the posts of other students in their discussion group. Each of these posts should be at least 100 words. Students should include a word count in parentheses at the end of all of their posts. 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. Students should make a minimum of 5 total posts (1 original response, 4 responses to other students). Students must make at least one post by 11:59 AM on Wednesday each week and should avoid making all of their posts on the same day or during the final hours of the assignment time line.

Students will receive a grade of between a .5 through a 3 being the highest, 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 in the student's group. Posts that do not fully answer the questions or do not make a minimum of 5 posts will not receive full credit. Students who wait until the end of the time frame may receive a grade penalty. Students who do not post by 11:59 AM on Wednesday will lose 50% (1.5 points). Students who make 3 or more of their 5 required posts on Thursday or Friday of the week will lose 33% (1 point).

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. Effectively, students who do not follow the proper citation/attribution requirements listed above will receive a 0 for all of the discussion assignments.

When the discussion assignment average is computed at the end of the semester, the student's lowest individual assignment score will be dropped. If a student completes all of the assignments, the lowest score will be dropped. For students who do not complete all of the assignments, one score of 0 for a missing assignment will be dropped.

Quizzes

Students will take weekly quizzes (except for the week of exams) throughout the semester via the eCollege platform. These quizzes will feature 6-8 multiple choice and/or True/False questions and students will have 10 minutes to complete them. These quizzes will always open on Fridays at 11:59 AM and remain open for 48 hours. The lowest single quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester. Missed quizzes cannot be made up regardless of the reason. When the quiz average is computed at the end of the semester, the student's lowest individual quiz score will be dropped. If a student completes all of the quizzes, the lowest score will be dropped. For students who do not complete all of the quizzes, one score of 0 for a missing quiz will be dropped.

Extra Credit "Syllabus Quiz"

Students can earn up to a 3 bonus points toward their final average by taking a syllabus quiz. This quiz is designed to ensure that students familiarize themselves with the requirements and expectations of the syllabus.

Student Responsibilities

All students are expected to comply with the following requirements.

1. Students are expected to complete all course readings for each section of the course.
2. Students are expected to regularly check the course site for announcement and updates.
3. Students are expected to take each of the scheduled Midterm Exams.
4. Students are expected to participate fully in the class discussion assignments.
5. Students are expected to take each of the quizzes.

6. Students are expected to respect their fellow classmates and the instructor. This includes treating everyone with courtesy and esteem in any and all correspondence for the course. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.
7. Texas A&M University-Commerce does not tolerate **plagiarism** and other forms of academic **dishonesty**. Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. "Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material. 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. Any act of academic dishonesty on a midterm exam or quiz will result in a score of 0 for the exam or quiz. Any act of academic dishonesty on a discussion assignment will result in a 0 for the entire semester's discussion assignment grade. Instances of academic dishonesty may also be referred to the appropriate offices on campus and may result in significant administrative penalties.
8. Failure to complete more than 3 discussion assignments will be considered "excessive" absenteeism and the student will be administratively dropped from the class.
9. Students will comply with any and all eCollege technical requirements in terms of training, computer access, & Internet access.

GRADING

Grading Scale

Final grades will be based on a 100-point scale, using the following letter/number conversion.

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	65-69
F	Below 65

Assessments

Course grades will be based upon the following breakdown.

Midterm One	25%
Midterm Two	25%
Midterm Three	25%
Discussion Average	15%
Quizzes	10%
Final Grade	100%

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

- To fully participate in online courses you will need to use a current Flash enabled browser. For PC users, the suggested browser is Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox. 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.
 - *For courses utilizing video-conferencing tools and/or an online proctoring solution, a webcam and microphone are required.
- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. At a minimum Java 7, update 51, is required to support the learning management system. The most current version of Java can be downloaded at: [JAVA web site](http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp)
<http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp>
- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.
- Run a browser check through the Pearson LearningStudio Technical Requirements website. [Browser Check](http://help.ecollege.com/LS_Tech_Reg_WebHelp/en-us/#LS_Technical_Requirements.htm#Browset)
[http://help.ecollege.com/LS_Tech_Reg_WebHelp/en-us/#LS Technical Requirements.htm#Browset](http://help.ecollege.com/LS_Tech_Reg_WebHelp/en-us/#LS_Technical_Requirements.htm#Browset)

Running the browser check will ensure your internet browser is supported.

Pop-ups are allowed.

JavaScript is enabled.

Cookies are enabled.

- You will need some additional free software (plug-ins) for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
 - [Adobe Reader](https://get.adobe.com/reader/) <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - [Adobe Flash Player](https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/) (version 17 or later)
<https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>
 - [Adobe Shockwave Player](https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/) <https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/>
 - [Apple Quick Time](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/) <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>
- 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: [System Requirements for LearningStudio](https://secure.ecollege.com/tamuc/index.learn?action=technical)
<https://secure.ecollege.com/tamuc/index.learn?action=technical>

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

Pearson LearningStudio (eCollege) 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 [myLeo](http://www.tamuc.edu/myleo.aspx). <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 you perform a "Browser Test" prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login to Pearson LearningStudio, click on the "My Courses" 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 you experience LearningStudio (eCollege) technical problems, contact the LearningStudio helpdesk at 1-866-656-5511 (toll free) or visit [Pearson 24/7 Customer Support Site](http://247support.custhelp.com/) <http://247support.custhelp.com/>

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 a Pearson LearningStudio Representative.

- **Phone:** 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak 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 then will be able to get assistance via online chat, email or by phone.

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 1-866-656-5511.
2. Students **MUST** file their problem with the helpdesk and obtain a helpdesk ticket number
3. 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
4. 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 LearningStudio 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.

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 [myLeo](https://leo.tamuc.edu). <https://leo.tamuc.edu>

Learner Support

Go to the following link [One Stop Shop](http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/onestopshop/)- created to serve you by attempting to provide as many resources as possible in one location.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/onestopshop/>


Go to the following link [Academic Success Center](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/academicSuccessCenter/)- focused on providing academic resources to help you achieve academic success.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/academicSuccessCenter/>

FREE MOBILE APPS

The Courses apps for phones have been adapted to support the tasks students can easily complete on a smaller device. Due to the smaller screen size course content is not presented.

The Courses app is free of charge. The mobile Courses Apps are designed and adapted for different devices.

	App Title:	iPhone – Pearson LearningStudio Courses for iPhone Android – LearningStudio Courses – Phone
	Operating System:	iPhone - OS 6 and above Android – Jelly Bean, Kitkat, and Lollipop OS
	iPhone App URL:	https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/pearson-learningstudio-courses/id977280011?mt=8
	Android App URL:	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.pearson.lsp_hone

Once downloaded, search for Texas A&M University-Commerce, and it should appear on the list. Then you will need to sign into the myLeo Mobile portal.

The Courses App for Android and iPhone contain the following feature set:

- View titles/code/Instructor of all Courses enrolled in online
- View and respond to all discussions in individual Courses
- View Instructor Announcements in individual Courses
- View Graded items, Grades and comments in individual Courses
- Grade to Date

- View Events (assignments) and Calendar in individual Courses
- View Activity Feed for all courses
- View course filters on activities
- View link to Privacy Policy
- Ability to Sign out
- Send Feedback

LEARNINGSTUDIO NOTIFICATIONS

Students can be alerted to course activities via text on their mobile phones or up to two email addresses.

Based on their preferences, students can automatically receive a push notification with every new: course announcement, threaded discussion post, grade, and/or assignment without having to login to the course. Enrolled students will automatically receive email notifications for announcements and can opt out of this feature. To receive text notifications, students must opt in.

To begin setting up notifications, go into your course in LearningStudio and click on the bell-shaped Notifications icon on the main menu ribbon.

By default the student's university email address will appear. This cannot be changed in LearningStudio. Additional email addresses may be added by clicking the Add button. After all of the other selections are completed be sure to click the Save and Finish button.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Students should rely upon e-mail, office hours, and in-class interaction as well as and reading class announcements as the primary means of communication with me. I will use all of these to announce any changes to the course syllabus or other relevant information. Also, please note that the system will only send e-mail to your official University Email address, so you will need to check that account regularly. I will always try to e-mail you as soon as I can. From M-F you can expect a reply, at the latest, within 24 hours.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures

1. Make-up exams: If a student misses an 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 3 calendar days of the missed exam date, unless the student is physically unable to submit such a request. Legitimate reasons may include illness severe enough to require professional treatment, death in the immediate family, participation in University activities, and 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. Students who miss any exam because they forgot about the exam dates/times or because they did not have access to a computer/Internet will not receive a make-up exam. Please note, these reasons do not guarantee that a make-up exam will be given. Make-up exams will be exclusively essay format.
2. Incompletes will be granted completely at the discretion of the instructor and only be granted in the case of serious medical illness or other serious, unavoidable circumstances and only if the student has completed at least 50% of the course work. Incompletes must be made up within two weeks of the end of the semester as students only have access to their eCollege course for two weeks following the final day of the term.
3. Students who miss more than 3 discussion assignments will be administratively dropped from the course for excessive absenteeism.
4. Students must sign and agree to the Personal Responsibility Statement form available on the class site. Students must submit a hard copy of these forms to the instructor, either by post mail or in person by the first exam. Students who fail to do so will be administratively dropped from the class.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

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 current Student Guidebook).

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette](http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html)
<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

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
Email: Rebecca.Tuerk@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)
<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

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.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Below are readings assignments and exam schedule. In addition to the readings from the textbook, students should also keep abreast of the news and current events.

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
Week starting 8/30	American Political Culture	1
Week starting 9/6	US Constitution	2, Appendix A
Week starting 9/13	The Congress	12
Week starting 9/20	The Presidency	13
Week starting 9/27	The Bureaucracy	14
Week starting 10/4	The Judiciary	15
Week starting 10/11	Economic Policy	16
Week starting 10/18	Social Policy	17
Week starting 10/25	Foreign Policy	18
Week starting 11/1	Texas Constitution	20
Week starting 11/8	Texas Legislature	23
Week starting 11/15	Texas Executive	24
Week starting 11/22	Texas Judiciary	25
Week starting 11/29	Local Government in Texas	26
Week starting 12/6	Public Policy in Texas	27

Midterm Exam Schedule

Midterm Exams will be taken on-line and are scheduled on the dates listed below. Each exam begins at 11:59 AM and closes 48 hours later.

Midterm Exam One: Available 10/2 @ 11:59 AM. Covers Chapters 1, 2, 12, 13, 14 and Appendix Readings.

Midterm Exam Two: Available 10/30 @ 11:59 AM. Covers Chapter 15, 16, 17 & 18.

Midterm Exam Three: Available 12/8 @ 11:59 AM. Covers Chapters 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, & 27.

Extra Credit Syllabus Quiz Schedule

The quiz will open at 11:59 AM on 9/11 and close at 11:59 AM on 9/13.