



**PSCI 2301 01W: Principles of United States and Texas
Government
Course Syllabus: May Mini 2016**

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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: 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 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

At the end of the course students will be able to

- Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to understanding political behavior and interaction between citizens, institutions of government, and the US Constitution.
- Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to understanding political behavior, interaction between citizens and institutions of government in Texas, and the Texas constitution.
- Students will be able to differentiate between fact and opinion. Critical Thinking
- Students will communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion, with an evident message and organizational structure, in written, oral, and/or visual communication. 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.

Course grades will be based upon the following components.

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 complete each exam. Exam One will cover Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and Appendix Readings. Exam Two will cover Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Exam Three will cover Chapters 19, 20, 21, 22.

Discussion Assignments

This is the second graded component of the course and will consist of 6 discussions. Topics for the discussion assignments will be posted at 8 AM on the day they open and close exactly 48 hours later. 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.

For each assignment, students will write at least 5 posts. The first post should be an original response to the topic posted, answering/addressing all parts of the topic. This post should be 250 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. (Do not count quoted material or simply restating the topic as part of your word count.) 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. Posts should be well written, use complete sentences, proper punctuation, avoid slang, and be proofread and edited. Students should avoid making all of their posts on 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. In particular, students should avoid making all of their posts on the same day. Posts that are not properly edited, do not include word counts or meet the word minimums will also receive deductions.

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.

The Discussion Assignment average will be a ratio of the number of points earned on each assignment divided by 18 (3 points X 6 assignments)

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. The time and dates for the syllabus quiz are listed below.

GRADING

Course grades will be based upon the following breakdown.

Final Grade Breakdown

Midterm One	28%
Midterm Two	28%
Midterm Three	28%
Discussion Average	16%
Final Grade	100%

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

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 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.

- 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 (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: <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 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 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 helpdesk@online.tamuc.org or 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.

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

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Students should rely upon e-mail and reading class announcements as the primary means of communication with me. I will use both means 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. Because this class is completely online, I will try to e-mail you as soon as I can. From M-F you can expect a reply, at the latest, within 24 hours.

Office Hours

Because this class is offered online, office hours will be held online. Some weeks I will be in my campus office during the posted office hours, but I will always be available virtually during the posted times. If students need to discuss an issue with me during that time, they should make arrangements by e-mail to setup a time to either use the “Live” chat option on the course page, to see if I will physically be in my office or for me to call on the telephone.

Virtual Office

The Virtual Office, found in the Course Home module is a discussion thread that provides students an opportunity to post questions or concerns that might be useful for the entire class to see. While other students may attempt to help answer your question, please check back for my answer as well, which will always be provided within 24 hours during the week.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures

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 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.
6. 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 will result in a score of 0 for the exam. 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.
7. Failure to complete more than 2 discussion assignments will be considered "excessive" absenteeism and the student will be administratively dropped from the class.
8. Students will comply with any and all eCollege technical requirements in terms of training, computer access, & Internet access.
9. 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.
10. 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.

11. This course is not a self-paced class. Students will need to follow the timelines and calendars included below to ensure that they complete the exams, discussion assignments, and extra credit opportunity in a timely manner. The exams will be found under the module labeled “Exams”; discussion assignments will be found under the module labeled “Discussions” and the extra credit assignment is located under the “Course Home” module. Students should become familiarize with the scheduled times and dates for all of these requirements.

University Specific Procedures

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

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.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Suggested Reading Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
5/16	American Political Culture	1
5/17	US Constitution	2, Appendix A
5/18	Federalism	3
5/19	Civil Liberties	4
5/20	Civil Rights	5
5/21	Exam 1 remains open	
5/22	Public Opinion, Media	6, 7
5/23	Political Participation	8
5/24	Campaigns and Elections	10
5/25	Political Parties	9
5/26	Interest Groups	11
5/27	Exam 2 remains open	
5/28	Texas Political Culture	19
5/29	Texas Constitution	20
5/30	Texas Political Parties	21
5/31	Texas Interest Groups	22
6/1	Exam 3 remains open	

Midterm Exam Schedule

Midterm Exams will be taken on-line and are scheduled on the dates listed below. Each exam begins at 11:59 PM on the scheduled date and closes 36 hours later.

Midterm Exam One: Available 5/20 @ 11:59 PM, closes on 5/22 at 11:59 AM (Noon)
Covers Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and Appendix Readings

Midterm Exam Two: Available 5/26 @ 11:59 PM, closes on 5/22 at 11:59 AM (Noon)
Covers Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

Midterm Exam Three: Available 5/31 @ 11:59 PM, closes on 6/2 at 11:59 AM (Noon)
Covers Chapters 19, 20, 21, 22

Discussion Assignment Schedule

Topics for the discussion assignments will be posted on the dates listed below at 9 AM and close 48 hours later at 9 AM. 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.

Discussion 1 is available 5/17

Discussion 2 is available 5/19

Discussion 3 is available 5/23

Discussion 4 is available 5/25

Discussion 5 is available 5/29

Discussion 6 is available 5/31

Extra Credit Syllabus Quiz Schedule

The quiz will open at 9 AM on 6/20 and close at 9 AM on 6/22.

*** 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 on the class site.