



COMMERCE, TEXAS

COURSE SYLLABUS

US/TX GOVERNMENT: INSTITUTIONS and POLICIES

PSCI 2302

Dr. David S. Oualaalou

US/TX GOVERNMENT: INSTITUTIONS & POLICIES
PSCI 2302

Faculty Information:

Faculty Name: Dr. David Oualaalou

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Office Number: 903-886-5337

Office Location: **Ferguson Social Science Building, 147**

Office/Faculty Conference Hours: **Office Hours: Tues/Wed/Thurs 1000-1200 or by appointment. *The BEST way to contact me is via email.***

Lecture dates: Tuesdays/Thursdays **1230-1345; 1400-1515; 1530-1645 Classroom# 143**

Course Description:

Welcome to the US/TX GOVERNMENT: INSTITUTIONS & POLICIES course. This course is an examination of the United States and Texas political systems with emphasis on both formal and informal institutions and the roles they play in the creation and implementation of public policy. Topics considered include the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches, bureaucracies and public policies (formulation and implementation), and foreign policy establishment among others. Of note: You *will not* be taught *what* to think about political institutions in this course. Rather, you will be provided with the knowledge base to determine *how* to think about political institutions and policy issues for *yourself*.

Required Text & Materials:

- Title: We The People: An Introduction to American Politics (Tenth Edition)
Author(s): Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, and Tolbert
Publisher: Norton & Company
ISBN: 978-0-393-27736-4

- Title: **Governing Texas**, (Second Edition, 2015)
Author(s): Anthony Champagne and Edward J. Harpham
Publisher: Norton & Company
ISBN: 978-0-393-27735-7

Course Notes and Faculty Recommendations:

Simply reading the assigned material will not guarantee you a good grade; you must be able to integrate your notes with the reading assignments. If you miss a class lecture, it is your responsibility to obtain the notes from one of your classmates. I suggest you read the material before the lecture. Please do not hesitate to contact me if your reading does not clarify the point (whatever it may be). I will be delighted to assist.

Format:

Each class session involves lectures and discussions about the assigned readings. I'll also provide short video clips in support of the lectures. You will regularly be asked to contribute your opinions and answer questions about the readings. In addition to the assigned readings listed in the syllabus, we will regularly discuss current political events, since US/TX Institutions & Policies evolve on a daily basis.

Requirements/Assignments

Examinations: In this course, all students are required to take three exams, each of which will consist of 50 questions in a multiple choice format. There is NO comprehensive final exam.

If you miss an exam, you will receive 0% for that exam. If you have a legitimate reason for missing an exam (e.g. severe illness or injury requiring professional medical care, emergencies in your immediate family, participation in official university activities, legal obligations) AND you have supporting documentation for your absence, then you may request to take the MAKE-UP EXAM. Please make sure to coordinate with me as soon as possible.

US/TX GOVERNMENT: INSTITUTIONS & POLICIES
PSCI 2302

Requests for taking the make-up exam must be submitted in writing and include documentation explaining and substantiating why the absence was legitimate. An approval to take the make-up exam will be based *solely* upon the professor's evaluation of your request and any supporting documentation. Your grade on the makeup exam may only be used to substitute ONE missed exam. Any other missed exams will receive 0% scores, irrespective of the circumstances.

Attendance: Students are required to attend class and attendance will be taken during each class session using a sign-in sheet. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that he/she has signed in. Arriving late and/or leaving early will negatively impact your attendance grade. This information will also be used for financial aid and other documentation purposes. *Attendance is critical, discussions are irreplaceable, and course sessions cannot be "made up."* It will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for you to succeed in this course if you do not attend all –or nearly all- class sessions. I will not be managing any excuses for absences unless you are absent during an examination – read the previous section. You can miss up to four non-exam class sessions without penalty for any reason. More than four absences will result in a reduction in your grade, REGARDLESS of the reason (excused OR unexcused).

Participation: Your participation in this class is worth up to 2% of your grade. It is highly desirable and will make class sessions more interesting. Positive participation includes responding to my questions, asking your own questions, and contributing to class discussions. Negative participation includes sleeping in class (which I will not tolerate), side-talk with your neighbors, coming to class late (10 minutes rule), and any other class disruptions. Finally, the Faculty will not tolerate the usage of cell phone during class periods. That being said, all cell phones must be silenced and/or turned off when in class. **No exception!**

Grades:

The final grade will be based on the following: Three exams (100 points each) and one write-up (Short Paper) assignment (100 points) for a total of 400 points (Tests: 300; Short Write-up Assignment: 100). The exams and the writing assignment will cover the material addressed in class as well as required readings. To pass the course, all exams and assignments must be completed. If you are absent from an exam you will be given the opportunity to take a make-up exam if (a) provide a legitimate reason for your absence, and (b) you notify the instructor ahead of time of your intention of not taking the exam. It is your responsibility to take the appropriate steps to avoid receiving a failing grade. Grades are based on the following: **A 90-100%; B 80-89.9%; C 70-79.9%; D 60-69.9%; F Below 60%**

Course Objectives and/or Competencies:

Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Institutions and Policies of the US/TX government. Courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, policies, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.

- **Critical Thinking Skills (CT):** “to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.”
- **Communication Skills (COMM):** “to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.”
- **Social Responsibility (SR):** “to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.”
- **Personal Responsibility (PR):** “to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.”

Policies:

US/TX GOVERNMENT: INSTITUTIONS & POLICIES
PSCI 2302

Notes on Academic Dishonesty of ANY kind: Any student who is caught committing any kind of academic dishonesty will receive an “F” in this course and will be reported to the University administration. “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), signing the attendance sheet for a student who is absent (or asking another student to sign you in when you are absent), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material” (Texas A&M University-Commerce Procedures A13.12). If you have any doubt as to what may constitute academic dishonesty, please consult with me prior to submitting your assignments.

Notes on plagiarism: All research papers will be submitted to *turnitin.com*, a digital plagiarism detection system. Any student who is caught plagiarizing will receive an “F” in this course and will be reported to the University administration for academic dishonesty. If you have any doubt as to what may constitute plagiarism, please consult the faculty prior to submitting any written work.

Email Policy: Before you ask me a question in an email, check to see if the syllabus answers your question FIRST. I generally reply to emails within 24 hours, Monday-Friday. Emails sent to me over weekends will be replied to on Mondays. I do not reply to emails that ask questions about items covered in the syllabus, such as what chapters are covered on an exam or what the assigned readings are for a given week.

Student Behavioral Expectations and Conduct Policy:

Students are expected to be mindful of what a constructive education experience is and respectful of those participating in a learning environment. Said differently, you respect your classmates’ point of views even you may disagree with. In addition, the Faculty expects a mature behavior and adherence to rules and discipline guidelines set forth by TAMUC. Further, *Faculty has the authority to request students who exhibit inappropriate behavior to leave the class and may refer serious offenses to the University Police Department and/or the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.* Failure to comply with the Code of Student Conduct and commonsensical directions listed above may result in a verbal request to cease inappropriate behavior, your immediate removal from the class, being immediately dropped from the class, and/or a review by an appropriate university disciplinary agency. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook: <http://web.tamuc.edu/studentLife/documents/studnetGuidebook.pdf>

Note: The classroom is not a cafeteria; thus, the Faculty expects students to show respect for classroom setting by not bringing food into the classroom. The Faculty also encourages students to bring more than one writing utensil. Sharpening a pencil during a lecture is borderline rudeness. Further, if you routinely take classroom breaks, we need to talk. Finally, the Faculty will not tolerate the usage of cell phone during class periods. That being said, all cell phones must be silenced or turned off when in class and removed during test days. **No exception!**

Campus Carry: Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

US/TX GOVERNMENT: INSTITUTIONS & POLICIES
PSCI 2302

Non-discrimination notice: A&M–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.

Note to 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

In order to maximize your performance in this course, you must:

- ***TURN OFF ALL PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES BEFORE CLASS BEGINS. THIS INCLUDES (BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO): CELL PHONES, LAPTOPS, iPADS, IPODS, MP3 Players/Recorders, Translation devices, VIDEO CAMERAS, OR ANY OTHER AUDIO AND/OR VIDEO RECORDERS OF ANY KIND***
- Attend each class session AND arrive ON TIME (**the classroom door will not be opened for late arrivals 10 minutes after class starts**; Notify the professor in advance if you need to arrive late or leave early;
- Read the assigned material before class;
- Be prepared to discuss the topics presented in class;
- Refrain from reading materials or working on other homework during class;
- Be courteous to-and respectful of-your fellow students and professor.

Course Outline/Schedule: (This schedule is subject to change. Students will be notified about any changes via e-mail/announcements)

Course Section	Chapters	Lecture Date(s)	Exam/Assignments Due Date
	<i>Purchase your books</i> Introduction	Jan/17,	
Part II: Politics	We the People: Ch. 6	Jan/19,24,26	Introduction Assignment
Part II: Politics	We the People:: Ch. 9	Jan/31, Feb/02	
Part III: Institutions	We the People : Ch. 12 (legislative Branch)	Feb/07,09	
Institutions	Governing TX: Ch. 8 (Executive Branch)	Feb/14,16	Test Review

US/TX GOVERNMENT: INSTITUTIONS & POLICIES
PSCI 2302

U.S. Political Parties,	We the People, Ch. 9	Feb/21, 23, 28	Exam 1: March/02 <i>We The People (Ch. 6,9,12)</i>
U.S. Political Parties,	We the People, Ch. 9	March/02,07,09	
Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break
Part III: Institutions	We the People, Ch.15 (Judicial Branch)	March/21,23	
TX Executive Branch	Governing TX: Ch.8	March/28,30	Writing Assignment March/30
Interest Groups/Lobbying	Governing TX: Ch. 6	April/04, 06	Test Review
Executive Branch	We the People, Ch.13	April/11,13	Exam 2: April/13 We The People (Ch.6,13) Governing TX (Ch.6,8)
Executive Branch	We the People, Ch.13	April/18,20	
Foreign Policy & Democracy	We the People, Ch. 18	April/25,27	
		May/02,04	
		May/09	Final Exam (3): We The People (Ch. 13,18)

This syllabus is subject to change at any time at the professor's discretion.

US/TX GOVERNMENT: INSTITUTIONS & POLICIES
PSCI 2302

STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

I, _____, have read the syllabus in its entirety, and understand the guidelines and agree to the policies detailed therein as a condition of being enrolled in this course. I understand my obligation to adhere to these guidelines and policies in this course, and that failure to do so may result in serious consequences, including (but not limited to) being dropped from the course, and/or receiving a grade of “F” in the course.

Student Signature: _____

Student PRINTED Name: _____

Date of Signature: _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS SIGNED STATEMENT BY THE FOURTH CLASS SESSION (January 26, 2017).