



TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY  
COMMERCE

**PSCI 2301.05W (23075)**

## **Principles of United States and Texas Government**

Instructor: Rebecca Lynch

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### **Required Textbooks**

ISBN: 978-0393639988

*We the People: An Introduction to American Politics*, 11<sup>th</sup> Essentials Edition

By Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, and Tolbert.

ISBN: 978-1-5063-4629-8

*Lone Star Politics: Traditions and Transformations in Texas*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition

By: Collier, Galatas, and Harrelson-Stephens.

\*\*\*In addition to the above materials, you will be required to keep up with your MyLeo email to receive material. You will also have to access at least one major news source everyday in order to keep up with current events in order to fulfill the requirements of the course. Your professor reserves the right to assign additional readings as required.\*\*\*

### **Course Description:**

A survey of the underlying ideas, principles, and participatory practices of constitutional government in the United States and Texas. Topics considered include civil liberties, and civil rights, constitutionalism, federalism, ideology, pluralism, political culture, and socialization, political parties, interest groups, public opinion, republicanism, voting and the electoral process, and global forces that continue to shape our understanding of the relationship between the people and the government. Please note that you will not be taught what to think about political issues in this course, rather you will be provided with the knowledge to determine how to think about political issues for yourself. This course is meant to provide you with working knowledge how a government functions both at the federal and state levels in the United States and Texas.

### **Student Learning Objectives for this Course:**

1. 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.

2. Understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain the political institutions and state policy development and implementation of the state of Texas.
3. Students will be able to analyze, evaluate, or solve problems when given a set of circumstances, data, texts, or art.. Core Objective: Critical Thinking
4. 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
5. Students will understand and practice academic honesty. Core Objective: Personal Responsibility
6. Students will demonstrate an understanding of societal and/or civic issues. Core Objective: Social Responsibility

**Format:**

Each class session will consist of and involve lectures and discussion over the assigned readings and any other supplemental readings the instructor wishes to add. You will regularly be asked to contribute your opinions and answer questions about the readings.

**Grading Policy:**

The following will be how grades are broken down for this class

Exam 1 – 100pts.	Book Review – 180pts.
Exam 2 – 100pts.	Discussion Board Posts – 220pts. (20 pts. Each week)
Exam 3 – 100pts.	Quizzes – 100pts.
Final Exam – 200pts.	

Grading Scale

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	0-59

Participation: With this being an online course, you will need to login to D2L and access this course regularly throughout the week. There will be discussion board posts weekly and assignments throughout the semester that you will be required to complete on our online platform. Not logging in and keeping up with due dates and weekly readings and assignments will have a detrimental effect on your grade.

Exams: There will be three exams given during the semester in addition to a final exam to be administered during finals week. They comprise a significant portion of your grade so, it would be beneficial to be prepared for your exams. **Exams will open Thursday at 8:00 pm and close Friday of the same week at 8:00 pm.** Since there is a twenty-four window for exams makeup exams will not be given unless under dire circumstances. If you have an athletic or academic reason as to why you are not able to take the exam during the window it is open you must email me IMMEDIATLEY so that other arrangements can be made.

Book Review: This review will be over a book outside of the assigned readings, you are not required to purchase the book if you can find it in the library system. You may select your own book, but it will have to be approved by me. The book review will be over non-partisan political issues, and can include the biography/autobiography of political leaders. This is to help develop

your writing skills, and allow you to look at how other people have discussed topics that are at the forefront of our political lives. The book review should be in TIMES NEW ROMAN with 12 point font and one inch margins all the way around with a cover sheet. The book review will be due to the dropbox with an attachment to be sent to Turnitin on D2L. **BOOK REVIEWS WILL NOT BE GRADED IF THEY ARE SUBMITTED LATE. NO EXCEPTIONS.** Further instructions will be provided at a later date.

**Quizzes:** Quizzes will be given weekly and can be over the subject matter or **current topics/events**. Questions for the quizzes will come from the week's lectures, assigned readings, and any breaking news (political, sports, or pop culture related). Quizzes will be given randomly during the semester, so again it is imperative that you log into the course regularly throughout the week and cannot be made up if they are missed. When quizzes are given during a week they will open on **Tuesday at 8 am and close that same day at 10 pm.**

**Discussion Board Posts:** Like with a face to face class where students would engage with one another, you will be expected to do so in this course as well. For weekly discussion posts students are expected to respond to the week's prompt with a MINIMUM of at 350 words and you are also responsible for responding to at least THREE other classmates' responses with a minimum of at least 150 words per response. **Original discussion posts are due Thursday of each week by 11 pm and peer responses are due Friday of each week by 11 pm. Late responses or original responses will not be accepted or graded.** You should make four total posts each week discussions are posted each weeks' discussions are worth a total of 20 points totaling 220 points for the semester. In your discussion posts please include a word count.

**Extra Credit:** Extra credit will be given at the instructor's discretion. I will NOT create extra credit for any student at any time because they "need to get" a certain grade. I do not "give" grades rather you EARN your grade.

**Submitting Assignments & Late Assignments:** Assignments (book review) without cover pages and/or no name will not be graded. I **DO NOT** accept late work. Each assignment is given with enough time to complete it. Assignments that have to be submitted to the dropbox are **ALWAYS** due at 8 pm the day they are due. **Assignments submitted online after 8 pm will not be opened or graded.** You are responsible for attaching the correct assignment to the correct folder in D2L Brightspace. Once you submit your assignment you should always click on the document, or no document is counted as failure to complete the assignment on time.

### **Student Responsibilities**

- Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before class and engage in class discussions
- Complete all assignments
- Be prepared to discuss the topics presented in class
- Be courteous to and respectful of your fellow students and instructors

## **Course Requirements:**

### **Minimal Technical Skills Needed**

Students will need to be familiar with University learning management system (D2L/Brightspace), know how to use a personal computer, navigate the internet, and use basic word processing software such as Microsoft Word and Power Point.

### **Access and Navigation**

Students will access this course using D2L (Brightspace), the learning management system used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. Students can access their online courses through the myLeo portal or directly from the URL <http://onlinetamuc.edu>. In order to login, students will need both their CWID and password to access the myLeo site. If you do not know what your CWID or password is, please contact Technology Services at 903-468-6000 or by email, [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

### **D2L(BrightSpace)**

Student Technical Support Technical support for D2L(BrightSpace) is provided around the clock (24 hours a day/7 days a week) so if students experience technical issues with the class page itself they should contact the student help desk for assistance. Students can access support through one of three following methods: 1. Chat support: Students can access real-time chat support from within the course page by clicking on “Tech Support” in the tool bar and then clicking on “Chat Online.” 2. Phone: Students can access phone support by calling the toll-free phone number for eCollege, 1-866-656-5511. 3. E- mail: Students can request assistance by e-mailing eCollege directly at [helpdesk@online.tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@online.tamuc.edu). Please note that you might not receive a response for 24 hours if you use the e-mail option. eCollege also has extensive help files available. These can be accessed by clicking the ‘Help’ button on the toolbar. Technology Requirements

- Computer/Internet access and connection: high-speed preferred (not dial up)
  - Speakers - so you can hear audio enhanced assignments throughout the semester
  - Headset/Microphone • Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- As a student enrolled at Texas A&M University-Commerce, you have access to an email account via myLeo - all my emails sent from D2L(BrightSpace) (and all other university emails) will go to this account, so please be sure to check it regularly. Conversely, you are to email me via the eCollege email system or your myLeo email, as our spam filters will catch Yahoo, Hotmail, etc. Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, or 8.0). Your courses will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser on both Windows and Mac operating systems.

## **Policies:**

**Academic Dishonesty: Any student who is caught committing any kind of academic dishonesty will receive an “F” in this course and be reported to the University administration.** This is nonnegotiable! “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 any assignments.**

**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](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

**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.

**Conduct:** “All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” Faculty have 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 actions.

**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.

**Dropping the Class:** If you need to adjust your schedule by dropping this course, please contact your academic success coach. Please be aware that dropping your course may impact your financial aid, veterans and military benefits, three part, 45 hour, and 30 hour rules. It is the student’s responsibility to drop the course. If you fail to officially drop the class you may be issued a failing grade.

**Student Withdrawal:** A student wishing to withdraw from all courses before the end of a term for which he/she is registered must clear his or her record by filing an application for voluntary withdrawal. Please contact your academic success coach. This action must be taken by the date

stated in the academic calendar as the last day to drop a class or withdraw. Any student who withdraws from the university is subject to conditions outlined in the section regarding scholastic probation or suspension in the university catalog. It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from classes if he or she does not plan to attend during the semester in which he/she is enrolled.

**Instructor Drop:** Your instructor reserves the right to drop any student from their course based on inadequate performance and progress with the course materials.

### Course Calendar/Outline

Below are the reading assignments, assignment due dates, and exam schedule. In addition to the readings from the textbooks, students should also keep informed of the news and current events. This calendar is subject to change.

Dates	Topic	Reading/Assignments Due
January 14 – 18	Introduction and U.S. Political Culture	Syllabus & We the People Ch. 1
January 21 – 25	Texas Political Culture	Lone Star Politics Ch. 1
January 28 – February 1	The Founding and the U.S. Constitution and Founding Documents	We the People Ch. 2 and Documents posted in D2L
February 4 – 8	Texas Constitution(s)	Lone Star Politics Ch. 2
February 11 – 15	Exam 1	Exam 1
February 18 – 22	Federalism	We the People Ch. 3
February 25 – March 1	Civil Liberties/Civil Rights	We the People Ch. 4&
March 4 – 8	Exam 2	Exam 2
March 11 – 15	U.S. Political Parties, Participation, and Elections	We the People Ch. 8,9&10
March 18 – 22	Spring Break	Catch up
March 25 – 29	Texas Elections	Lone Star Politics Ch. 8
April 1 – 5	Exam 3	Exam 3
April 8 – 12	Public Opinion	We the People Ch. 6
April 15 – 19	Interest Groups	We the People 11
April 22 – 26	The Media	We the People Ch. 7
April 29 – May 3	The Media Cont.	We the People Ch. 7
May 6 – 10	Finals Week	Final Exam

**\*\*\*Your instructor reserves the right to change or alter the syllabus as they see necessary and you will be informed of these changes. \*\*\***