



**PSCI 2301.01W  
20237  
Principles of United States and Texas Government  
Course Syllabus: Spring 2020**

**Instructor Information**

Instructor: Rebecca Lynch  
Office Location: Ferguson SS 135  
Office Hours: Virtual Office Hours M-R 8-9pm  
University Email Address: [Rebecca.lynch@tamuc.edu](mailto:Rebecca.lynch@tamuc.edu)  
Preferred Form of Communication: Email  
Communication Response Time: 24 Hours **excluding weekends**

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings**

Textbook(s) Required:  
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.

**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 Outcomes:**

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

## **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.

### **Instructional Methods**

Each week 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.

### **Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course**

- 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

## GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale based on a 1000 total points.

A = 90%-100%

**B = 80%-89%**

**C = 70%-79%**

**D = 60%-69%**

**F = 59% or Below**

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

Exam 1 – 100pts.

Exam 2 – 100pts.

Exam 3 – 100pts.

Final Exam – 300pts.

Discussion Board Posts – 280pts.(20 pts/week)

Quizzes – 120pts.

### Assessments

**Note: Personal computer and internet connection 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, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.**

**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 Monday at 8:00 am and close Thursday of the same week at 11:00 pm.** Since there is a multi-day window for exams, makeup exams will not be given. 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 IMMEDIATELY so that other arrangements can be made. This means emailing me BEFORE the exam opens not after the fact. There will be absolutely no exceptions to this policy.

**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 every week during the semester. Quizzes cannot be made up if they are missed. Quizzes will open on **Monday at 8:00 am and close Thursday at 11:00 pm each week.**

**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 least 350 words and you are also responsible for responding to at least TWO other classmates' responses with a minimum of at least 150 words per response. **Original discussion posts are due FRIDAY of each week by 11 pm and peer responses (2) are due SUNDAY of each week by 11 pm. Late responses or original responses will not be accepted or graded.** You should make three total posts each week. Discussion posts are worth 20 points each week with the original post being ten points and the two responses being worth five points each. In your discussion posts please include a word count. (Points for this assignment along with all others will lose points for not following directions.)

**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 or because they have chosen not to do the original assignments assigned. I do not "give" grades rather you EARN your grade. I cannot stress this enough: **keep up with your assignments and your grade in the gradebook throughout the whole semester and not just at the end.**

**Submitting Assignments & Late Assignments:** Writing assignments 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 11:00 pm the day they are due. **Assignments submitted online after 11:00 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 to guarantee that it has been submitted correctly, or no document is counted as failure to complete the assignment on time. Poor internet connection, dead laptop batteries, etc. are not valid reasons for an assignment not being completed.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

### LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

[https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser\\_support.htm](https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm)

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

## **ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

### **Technical Support**

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

### **Interaction with Instructor Statement:**

Student emails will be responded to within 24 hours except for on weekends. Weekly assignments will regularly be graded and inputted into the grade. Any student wishing to discuss a grade or assignment should email me and will receive a response within 24 hours.

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **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. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

## **TAMUC Attendance**

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

## **Academic Integrity**

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

## **Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement**

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 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<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.

## **Campus Concealed Carry Statement**

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 the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

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.

## COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

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 13 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup>	Introduction and U.S. Political Culture	Syllabus & We the People Ch. 1 Discussion Board 1 and Quiz 1
January 20 <sup>th</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup>	Texas Political Culture	Lone Star Politics Ch. 1 Discussion Board 2 and Quiz 2
January 27 <sup>th</sup> – February 2 <sup>nd</sup>	The Founding and the U.S. Constitution and Founding Documents	We the People Ch. 2 and Documents posted in D2L Discussion Board 3 and Quiz 3
February 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup>	Texas Constitution(s)	Lone Star Politics Ch. 2 Discussion Board 4 and Quiz 4
February 10 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup>	Exam 1	Exam 1 Discussion Board 5
February 17 <sup>th</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Federalism	We the People Ch. 3 Discussion Board 6 and Quiz 5
February 24 <sup>th</sup> – March 1 <sup>st</sup>	Civil Liberties/Civil Rights	We the People Ch. 4 Discussion Board 7 and Quiz 6
March 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>	Texas Elections	Lone Star Politics Ch. 8 Discussion Board 8 and Quiz 6
March 9 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup>	Spring Break	Spring Break
March 16 <sup>th</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Exam 2	Exam 2
March 23 <sup>rd</sup> – 29 <sup>th</sup>	U.S. Political Parties, Participation, and Elections	We the People Ch. 8-10 Discussion Board 9 and Quiz 7
March 30 <sup>th</sup> – April 5 <sup>th</sup>	U.S. Political Parties, Participation, and Elections	We the People Ch. 8-10 Discussion Board 10 and Quiz 8
April 6 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup>	Public Opinion	We the People Ch. 5 Discussion Board 11 and Quiz 9
April 13 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup>	The Media	We the People Ch. 6 Discussion Board 12 and Quiz 10
April 20 <sup>th</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup>	Interest Groups	We the People Ch. 11 Discussion Board 13 and Quiz 11
April 27 <sup>th</sup> – May 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Exam 3	Exam 3 Discussion Board 14 and Quiz 12
May 4 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>	Finals Week	Finals Week



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