

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
PSCI 2305
Summer I 2020

Dr. Ozum Yesiltas

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to study the underlying ideas, principles, and participatory practices of constitutional government in the United States. This course will introduce you to the formation of the federal constitution, and the challenges and opportunities granted by federalism and representative government in the United States. We will also analyze civil liberties and civil rights and the roles that public opinion and the media play in U.S. politics.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.
- Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
- Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.
- Analyze the election process.
- Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens 8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

FORMAT OF THE COURSE

This is a fully online class. You're required to follow the course requirements on D2L on a regular and timely basis. Study guides, the grading rubric for your writing assignment, PowerPoints and lecture notes can be found on D2L.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Paula D. McClain and Steven C. Tauber, *American Government in Black and White*, 4th edition, Oxford University Press, 2019.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Weekly Discussions: Every week, on Sunday, I will post a discussion question on D2L relevant to that week's material. You are responsible to post an answer until next **Sunday, 11.55 pm**, every week. Discussion posts must be about 250-300 words, concise, and to the point. You must be making the relevant connections to class material within your post. You won't get full credit if you use fillers (irrelevant words or statements) in your posts just to reach the required word count.

Weekly Exams: You will have weekly multiple-choice exams (total of 5). Each exam will be composed of 30 multiple-choice questions. You will be able to take them online through D2L each week. I will set up the exams on D2L every Thursday and you will have until Sunday to take it. Exams will be timed and must be completed at one sitting. Exams won't be cumulative. Study guides will be provided.

Critical Op-ed: The "op-ed", or opinion piece, is a classic form of essay which is meant to express well-informed, well-articulated opinions for publication in the editorial pages of newspapers. Op-eds are subjective pieces and reflect the author's personal opinion on a particular topic but the author is responsible for backing his/her opinions with facts and evidence. A well-written op-ed must be concise while still being comprehensive.

To complete the op-ed assignment, students are required to write a critical opinion piece on a topic of their choice. Op-eds must be 500-750 words in length (no less, no more), double-spaced, written with Times New Roman, 12-point font. The deadline for submitting the op-ed is **June 28, 11.55 pm** on D2L. A detailed guideline and grading rubric for the op-ed assignment can be found on D2L.

GRADING

Your final course grade will be determined by your performance on the following components:

Course Requirements	Weight
Weekly Discussions	10% (2% each)
Exams	75% (15% each)
Op-ed	15%
Total	100%

GRADE SCALE

90-100 = A
80-90 = B
70-80 = C
60-70 = D
Below 60 =F

MAKE-UP POLICY

- Make-ups are allowed under special circumstances such as medical or family emergencies. However, you must request them prior to the exam/deadline and present documentary proof. Make-ups requested after the exam/deadline will not be granted.
- Late submissions of written assignments are not accepted. Please turn in all assignments on time. If you submit any of your assignments late without an excuse, I will cut off 5 points for each day after the deadline for up to 3 days.

CIVILITY AND RESPECT

All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. I expect everyone to be respectful of each other's perspectives and opinions while posting responses for discussion questions. Offensive/disrespectful comments will not be tolerated.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student is required to be responsible for purposefully pursuing and honestly submitting research and work that is original and is the sole work of the individual. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism occurs when a student purposefully or unintentionally takes information directly from a source without proper citation. If you are unclear about the ethics of an academic action, please consult me during my office hours.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

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 discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

The American 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 [\(903 886-5150\)](tel:9038865150) or [\(903\) 886-5835](tel:9038865835) Fax [\(903\) 468-8148](tel:9034688148) StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

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 34.06.02R1, 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/34.06.02R1.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](tel:903-886-5868) or 9-1-1.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

American Government and Politics in a Racially Divided World McLain & Tauber Ch 1
The Constitution McLain & Tauber Ch 2

Week 2

Federalism McLain & Tauber Ch 3
Civil Liberties McLain & Tauber Ch 4
Civil Rights McLain & Tauber Ch 5

Week 3

Congress McLain & Tauber Ch 6
The Presidency McLain & Tauber Ch 7

Week 4

The Judiciary McLain & Tauber Ch 9
Public Opinion McLain & Tauber Ch 10
Media McLain & Tauber Ch 11

Week 5

Political Parties McLain & Tauber Ch 14
Voting and Elections McLain & Tauber Ch 15