



Political Science 2305.02W: U.S. Government and Politics

Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. Jeffrey C. Herndon

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Virtual office hours by appointment

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Course Information

Textbooks Required

Campbell, Andrea et.al. 2018. *We the People*, essentials 12th edition. W.W. Norton. New York. [ISBN: 978-0-393-69613-4] [WTP]

In addition, material and documents will be posted to D2L. It is also advisable that you acquaint yourself with a reliable news source (e.g. CNN, MSNBC, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Dallas Morning News, KETR, etc.) as there will be current events quizzes from time to time.

Course Description

Designed to introduce the students to the principles and function of the government of the United States, this course examines the principles underlying the development of the U.S. Constitution, the operations of the U.S. government under the Constitution, and the opportunities and constraints imposed by and on the political system in the U.S. Topics to be covered include the philosophical preconditions of the American experiment in self-government with justice, the documentary history of American government, the actual function and practice of government under the Constitution, and the actors engaged in the American political system.

Student Learning Outcomes

Core

1. Critical Thinking—Students will be able to differentiate between fact and opinion.
2. Communications—Student Communication will be clear, purposeful, and make appropriate use of evidence, data and technology as applicable.
3. Personal Responsibility—Students will be able to understand their role in their own education.
4. Social Responsibility—Students will demonstrate awareness of societal and/or civic issues.

Content

1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.
6. Analyze the election process.
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens
8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

Course Requirements

Instructional Methods

This course is a traditional university class that will consist of lectures and interactive discussion. The degree to which students contribute to the overall discussion will determine how much lecture/presentation will be required. As an online course, your instructor will lecture and engage in discussion with the class synchronously and record those sessions for those students who cannot attend. Your instructor will log-in to YouSeeU on days and times to be determined by student availability for lectures, discussion, and class room activities. In addition, students will undertake basic research to develop academically and increase understanding of the government of the United States.

Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for completing assigned readings and or homework prior to the class for which they are assigned.

Students will succeed to the degree that they apply themselves to the material. Ultimately, a university education is up to the student—you own it. It is the recommendation of your instructor that you review materials developed in class on the day that it is presented as well as periodically throughout the semester. Experience has demonstrated that attempting to “cram” for tests rarely works.

Students are also responsible for being engaged in the class by contributing to discussions both in class and via the online discussion boards.

Grading and Assessment

There will be four tests and one comprehensive final exam in this course. The tests will be worth 50 points each and the final exam will be worth 100 points. In addition, there will be at least 15 daily quizzes covering daily readings and/or current events from which the highest 10 quiz scores determine your overall quiz grade. In addition, you have 50 attendance/participation points (see attendance policy regarding assessment).

Finally, students will contribute to the online discussion boards on a weekly basis with at least one original post and comments on at least two posts by their classmates per week.

Your grade will be determined using the following assessment tools that taken together total 600 possible points:

Test One	50	Quizzes	100
Test Two	50	Comprehensive Final	100
Test Three	50	Attendance/Participation	50
Test Four	50	Discussion Boards	50

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Final grades are determined on the following scale:

455-500	A	300-349	D
405-454	B	0-299	F
350-404	C		

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Attendance: Students are expected to log-in to D2L at least twice a week to complete assignments, review posted materials, and contribute to class discussions on the discussion boards. Failure to log-in will count as an absence for purposes of attendance. Each student will be allowed 3 absences (i.e. days in which they do not log-in). Every absence after this will incur a 5 point deduction in the “Attendance and Participation” grade.

In addition, current events and readings quizzes given on particular class days may not be made up. There will be multiple opportunities to take quizzes and, depending upon the actual number of quizzes given, numerous opportunities to drop the lowest quiz grades (see section on “Academic Dishonesty” for the exception).

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty consists of any form of cheating or academic misconduct related to your role as a student. Examples of academic dishonesty may include, but is not limited to, plagiarism, copying another student’s work, cheating on exams, quizzes, and/or assignments.

The penalty for academic dishonesty in this class is an immediate “0” on the graded material on which the cheating was discovered. For those assignments that might otherwise be among grades dropped in the calculation of final grades (readings quizzes for example), the “0” recorded for academic dishonesty will not be among those dropped.

In addition, in accordance with university procedure [13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty](#), you will be reported to the academic dean of the college in which your major department is housed and the department head in your major department so that a record of your offense may be maintained for purposes of future disciplinary action should it be required.

Under the policy, repeat instances of academic dishonesty may, under university policy and procedure, result your expulsion from the university. With this in mind, consider that any short-term gain that you hope to attain by engaging in unethical behavior is simply not worth it.

Conduct

Student conduct in the university is governed by university procedure [13.02.99.R0.06 Standards of Student Conduct](#). The university requires that all syllabi include a statement from section 2.2 of that procedure. Section 2.2 of the policy deals with student “obligations and responsibilities.” Under the terms of the procedure, students have the obligation “to follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior commensurate with aspiration implied by a college education.”

Bear in mind that your behavior reflects not only upon you, but also upon the university. You are expected to demonstrate respect for the institution, your professors, and your fellow students in addition to your own education. This is true even in the context of courses in which controversial topics and issues (such as a political science course) may be discussed.

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Your professor will serve as the arbiter of what constitutes appropriate respect and behavior in the context of this class. Students who fail to treat the institution, class, professor, and/or other students appropriately may be dropped from the class and reported to the Dean of Students for further disciplinary action should it be required.

Contrary to what many people seem to believe, a university education is not a right. Rather it is privilege—and it ought to be treated as such. You should remember that this course is part of YOUR education. And your education is, in turn, ultimately your responsibility. Experience demonstrates that some students seek to shift responsibility to others: faculty, other students, etc. This is unfortunate and demonstrates an unwillingness to own that which is yours to own. Your professors and other university staff are here to help you to succeed, but it is up to you to decide that you are going to succeed and take the steps necessary to make that happen.

Your professor cannot force you to do your homework, read the material assigned for class, or study material presented in class, etc.—that is up to you. But it is true that your success is dependent upon you doing those sorts of things. If you choose not to and your academic performance is less than adequate, it is not the fault of your professor or anyone else. It is yours.

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

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

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.

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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.

COVID-19 Statement

A&M-Commerce requires the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories. Exceptions may be made by faculty where warranted. Faculty have management over their classrooms. Students not using face-coverings can be required to leave class. Repetitive refusal to comply can be reported to the Office of Students' Rights and Responsibilities as a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

"Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support the student getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.

COURSE OUTLINE / READINGS CALENDAR

Thinking About Politics

Introduction to the Course

Plato, "Allegory of the Cave"/Aristotle "Selections"/ Locke, "excerpt from the Second Treatise"

WTP, Chapter One/Declaration of Independence

Federalism, Popular Sovereignty, and the American Founding

WTP, Chapter Two/Federalist 10/Federalist 51

WTP, Chapter Three

WTP, Chapter Five

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American Institutions and Constitutional Structure

WTP, Chapter Nine
WTP, Chapter Ten
WTP, Chapter Twelve

Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

WTP, Chapter Four
WTP, Chapter Four/Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
WTP, Chapter Four

Public Policy: Domestic and Foreign

WTP, Chapter Five
WTP, Chapter Six
WTP, Chapter Eight
WTP, Chapter Eleven
WTP, Chapter Thirteen
WTP, Chapter Fourteen

Test Dates

Test One: September 10-12

Test Two: October 01-03

Test Three: October 22-24

Test Four: November 10-12

Comprehensive Final Examination: December 5-7

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

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.

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

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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.

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>

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