



“Never be cruel. Never be cowardly.  
Remember, hate is always foolish and love is always wise.  
Always try to be nice—but never fail to be kind.”

## **Political Science 2305.02E: U.S. Government and Politics**

Fall 2021

Instructor: Dr. Jeffrey C. Herndon

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Virtual office hours by appointment

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### **Course Information**

#### Textbook Required

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

In addition, material and documents are available on 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 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.

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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.
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.

Your instructor DOES NOT lecture from the book. Instead, I believe that university students have at least basic literacy skills. I am happy to answer any questions/issues that you have with regard to your book/readings before the tests/quizzes—but it is incumbent upon you to attend class regularly and complete the assigned readings. Indeed, since we will be operating on two tracks (in class lectures and discussions/readings) it is incumbent upon you to attend class regularly.

#### 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 my recommendation that you review materials presented in class on the day that the material 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.

#### 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

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daily quizzes covering daily readings and/or current events from which the highest 10 quiz scores determine your overall quiz grade.

When current events/readings quizzes are given, they will be available for a minimum of 10 hours. You must login on days in which class meets to see if there is a quiz (or quizzes) for that day. Some quizzes may be face-to-face.

Exams will be available in D2L for no less than 48 hours. It is your responsibility to login during that time to take the exam. You will only have the opportunity for a make-up exam under extreme **verifiable** circumstances. Your instructor recommends that you take your exams on a computer rather than your telephone.

Another thing about tests: Let's be honest, your tests are going to be online. It is my expectation that you will have materials available to assist you (you'd be crazy not to!). However, tests and quizzes are timed exercises—that means that you need to have your test-taking aids organized and ready. The tests and quizzes begin with the assumption that you know some of the material on the test/exam and can access the things that you do not know quickly and efficiently. Furthermore, tests may cover anything from your reading assignments or material covered in class. I DO NOT lecture from the book. Instead, I believe that university students have at least basic literacy skills. I will be happy to answer any questions/issues that you have with regard to your book/readings before the tests/quizzes—but it is incumbent upon you to attend class regularly and complete the assigned readings.

Your grade will be determined using these assessment tools that, taken together, total 400 possible points:

Test One	50	Quizzes	100
Test Two	50	Comprehensive Final	100
Test Three	50		
Test Four	50		

Final grades are determined on the following scale:

364-400	A	240-279	D
324-363	B	0-239	F
280-323	C		

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

**Attendance:** You should attend class—after all, you paid for the ticket. Attendance will be taken daily since attendance information is now required by the state and by the office of financial aid. However, as noted above, your education is yours to do with as you will. Now, with that said, experience has demonstrated that regular attendance is essential to success in class. To reiterate, your instructor DOES NOT lecture from the textbook. What this means is that there will be material delivered in class that you will need to succeed in the course.

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

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given (there will be a minimum of 15 quizzes, of which only the 10 highest scores will count toward your grade), numerous opportunities to drop the lowest quiz grades (see section on “Academic Dishonesty” for the exception).

**Electronics Policy:** Experience has demonstrated that students do not really understand appropriate ways to use technology while in class.

#### Cell phones

Numerous studies have demonstrated a strong correlation between phone use in class and poor academic performance (at least three different studies have determined that phone use in class may result in the drop of an entire letter grade for students who insist that the world will end if they aren’t engaged in texting or scrolling through social media). For this reason, the following guidelines are in effect for this class.

You are not allowed to use your phone during class.

Students are expected to place their phones face down on the desk in front of them where the phone itself is visible. Once placed there, you should not touch it again until class is over.

Failure to comply with this dictate will result in the imposition of a “telephone tax.” If you are touching or using your phone in class, you will be assessed a five point penalty on your grade for each infraction. There is no appeal or excuse that is acceptable, so please do not attempt to make such an appeal or excuse.

#### Laptops and Tablets

The use of laptops and tablets for note-taking must be approved by the professor. Again, science indicates that taking notes by hand is more effective at helping students process and retain information. This, in turn, assists in developing analytical and critical thinking skills appropriate to the university as a learning environment and for persons receiving a university degree.

#### Earbuds, Media Players, and Other Electronic Devices

While it is possible to carry your entertainment options wherever you go and wherever you happen to be, this class is not such a venue. Earbuds, headphones, etc. are a distraction for both you, as a student who is supposed to be actively engaged and responsible for your own education, and your professor. Put simply, it is rude to be listening to something else when you are in class. Failure to remove such distractions will incur a “tonal tariff.” For each violation you will have five points deducted from your overall grade. Rather than listening to your earbuds or headphones, you should be engaged in “active listening” and engagement in what is happening in class.

For further reading on the deleterious effects of technology:

[Cell phone use in class](#)

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2158244015573169>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01443410.2018.1489046>

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<https://www.psypost.org/2018/05/just-cell-phone-possession-can-impair-learning-study-suggests-51228>

<http://www.longwood.edu/news/2015/college-students-test-scores-suffer/>

<https://www.mnn.com/family/family-activities/blogs/students-get-better-grades-when-phones-are-banned>

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/cellphones-classrooms-contribute-failing-grades-study/story?id=56837614>

<https://news.rutgers.edu/cellphone-distraction-classroom-can-lead-lower-grades-rutgers-study-finds/20180723#.XMju4P1Kipp>

### Note-taking

<https://linguistics.ucla.edu/people/hayes/Teaching/papers/MuellerAndOppenheimer2014OnTakingNotesByHand.pdf>

<https://www.collegeraptor.com/find-colleges/articles/tips-tools-advice/laptop-vs-notebook-better-take-notes/>

[https://www.eecs.yorku.ca/course\\_archive/2015-16/F/2011/laptop%20in%20classroom%20article.pdf](https://www.eecs.yorku.ca/course_archive/2015-16/F/2011/laptop%20in%20classroom%20article.pdf)

[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/SingleStudyReviews/wwc\\_carter\\_022217.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/SingleStudyReviews/wwc_carter_022217.pdf)

[https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/03/science/whats-lost-as-handwriting-fades.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/03/science/whats-lost-as-handwriting-fades.html?_r=0)

### Active listening

<https://www.thoughtco.com/how-to-be-a-good-listener-31438>

<https://www.educationcorner.com/listening-skills.html>

<https://blog.cengage.com/tips-students-become-better-listener/>

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/communication-activities-adults-students/>

### 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.

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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 result in 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. It is my expectation that you will 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) are discussed. (I will explain why you were taught to never discuss religion and politics in polite company on the first class day.)

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 may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

Contrary to what many people seem to believe, a university education is not a right. Rather it is privilege—and you ought to treat it that way. You should remember that this course is part of YOUR education. Your education is, in turn, 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 take ownership of what belongs to you. 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.

I 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. With that said, your success (in all of your courses) 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.

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Finally, most classes will end with an admonition to be kind. You never know the burdens that those with whom you interact may be carrying. Kindness does not cost anyone anything and it may benefit someone in ways that you cannot imagine—in addition to the benefits that you will receive from the active exercise of civility and kindness. It is good for them AND good for you.

### **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

### **University Policies and Procedures**

#### **Counseling Center Information**

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit [www.tamuc.edu/counsel](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel).

[If you need help, get help! Your emotional and mental well-being is very important. Many of us put a lot of pressure upon ourselves and sometimes we need some help. Fortunately, A&M-Commerce is a place that recognizes this and provides services to address these issues. Take advantage of them should you need to!]

#### **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/)

<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

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gender expression will be maintained. [Your instructor's side note: I will not tolerate ANY bigotry in this class on the basis of any of the categories listed in the university non-discrimination notice.]

### **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 recommends the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories.

## **COURSE OUTLINE / READINGS CALENDAR**

### Thinking About Politics

Introduction to the Course (08/30)

The Declaration of Independence (09/01-09/03)

### Federalism, Popular Sovereignty, and the American Founding

The Articles of Confederation and The Constitution (09/08-09/10)

Selling the Constitution—The Federalist 10 (09/13)

Separation of powers, checks and balances, and Constitutional Structure—The Federalist 51 (09/17)

### **09/19-09/21 Test One (WTP Chapters 1 and 2)**

### American Institutions and Constitutional Structure

Congress (09/22-09/27)

The Executive (09/29-10/01)

The Judiciary (10/11)

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**10/12-10/14 Test Two (WTP, Chapters 3, 9, and 10)**

Civil Rights and Liberties

Civil Liberties in the United States (10/15-10/20)

Civil Rights in the United States (10/21-10/29)

**10/31-11/03 Test Three (WTP, Chapters 12 and 4)\***

Political Participation

Political Socialization (11/05)

Public Opinion (11/08)

The Media (11/10)

Political Parties and Elections (11/15-11/19)

**(11/21-11/23) Test Four (WTP, Chapters 5-7)**

Public Policy

Interest Groups (11/24-11/29)

The Bureaucracy (12/01-12/03)

Domestic Public Policy (12/06-12/08)

Foreign Policy (12/10)

**12/12-12/15 Comprehensive Final Exam (WTP Chapters 8, 11, 13-14)**

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).

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**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.

### **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>