

Political Science 2305  
United States Government  
Fall 2022

**Instructor Information:**

Megan Todd

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Office Hours: Tuesday 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Office Location: Ferguson Social Sciences Building 135A

**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.

You will not be taught *what* to think about political issues. You will be provided the knowledge base to determine *how* to think about political issues for *yourself*.

**Learning Objectives:**

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.

**Required Text:**

ISBN: 9781071816837

Abernathy, Scott F. *American Government: Stories of a Nation*. **Third ed.** Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2021.

The book is on reserve in the library. Electronic books (**e-books**) may be used outside of the classroom.

## Assignments and Grades:

### 1. Examinations: 450 points.

There will be three tests and one comprehensive final for a total of four exams. The tests are worth 100 points each. The comprehensive final exam is worth 150 points.

Each test will be available for 48 hours on D2L Brightspace. **If you miss an exam, you will receive a 0 for that exam.** If you are participating in an activity relating to the university that requires you to be away for the duration of the exam, be sure contact your instructor **prior** to the exam so accommodations can be made. It is your responsibility to ensure that the absence is documented. Do not assume that the department/group will email your instructor. **If you have a legitimate reason for not being able to complete the exam (illness that requires professional treatment, family emergency, legal obligations, etc), you may request a make-up exam by emailing your instructor.** You will need to explain why the exam could not be completed and provide supporting documentation.

The tests will consist of multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions in D2L Brightspace with a strictly enforced time limit. If you experience technical issues, contact your instructor and D2L Brightspace immediately with as much information and documentation (screenshots), as possible. Refer to the Technical Support section for information on how to contact D2L Brightspace.

**The comprehensive final exam will NOT be on D2L Brightspace. It will be conducted in-class during Finals Week.** You must supply your own scantron and pencil.

### 2. Weekly Worksheets: 120 points.

Students will be required to submit one worksheet per chapter in D2L Brightspace. Each worksheet is made up of two sections:

- **Learning Objectives:** In your own words, answer a "Think" question found for three separate objectives in the Chapter Review section at the end of each chapter. If you quote or paraphrase the book or other resource, you **must** cite that source. You may use the citation style that you are most familiar with: APA, Chicago, MLA, etc. Refer to the Academic Dishonesty section. Lack of citation qualifies as academic dishonesty.
- **Key Terms:** Using the definition in the book, write the definition of three key terms.

Late work is NOT accepted. Once the assignment has closed on D2L Brightspace, it will not be reopened. Extensions will only be granted for verifiable/documented reasons. Students may request an extension by emailing the instructor within three calendar days of the missed assignment, unless physically unable to do so. Not completing a worksheet due to lack of access to the book is not possible as it is on reserve in the library.

Students are responsible for ensuring that the correct document in an appropriate format has been successfully submitted. Neither handwritten, nor GoogleDocs, nor "Pages" are accepted formats for this course. The lowest three grades for the weekly worksheets will be dropped. Please note that any worksheet that receives a **0** due to academic dishonesty will NOT be dropped.

**Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work on D2L Brightspace in a timely and satisfactory manner.** Each student should have a backup plan to deal with any potential problems. This may include using an alternate computer at home, logging onto a computer at the university, borrowing a friend's laptop, utilizing a hot spot, connecting to Starbucks WiFi, etc.

3. Attendance: 25 points.

Students are required to attend class and attendance will be taken during each class session via a sign-in sheet. **If you have another student sign in for you, there will be serious repercussions.** Refer to the Academic Dishonesty section.

You may miss up to two class sessions without penalty. **More than two absences will result in a reduction in your grade.** If you miss class due to a university-related activity, that absence will not be held against you once the absence has been documented/confirmed. It is your responsibility to ensure that documentation is received by the instructor. **If you are experiencing COVID symptoms or under quarantine, please email your instructor as soon as possible.** Documented, verifiable absences that cannot be avoided may be excused at the instructor's discretion.

\*\*\*If you arrive 10 minutes after class begins or leave before the class is over, you forfeit your attendance points for the day.\*\*\*

Attendance Grade Scale

1-2 absences = no penalty  
3-4 absences = deduct 06.25 points  
5-6 absences = deduct 12.50 points  
7 + absences = deduct 25.00 points

4. Participation: 25 points.

**Participation is not simply showing up to class.** Participation consists of having read the material prior to class, being prepared to answer questions, and contribute to meaningful class discussion over the readings.

Students' participation grade may be further reduced by the following improper behaviors and may lead to being asked to leave class:

- Failure to abide by the Code of Student Conduct
  - offensive remarks, distracting your classmates
- Repeatedly arriving to class late, leaving class early, missing significant portions of class
- Sleeping
- Using an unapproved electronic device

The scale used in calculating final grades is as follows:

A: 558-620 points	D: 372-433 points
B: 496-557 points	F: 000-371 points
C: 434-495 points	

**Syllabus Change Policy:** As your instructor, I reserve the right to amend, modify, or adjust this syllabus as needed. Circumstances and events may make it necessary to alter the indicated schedule. Any adjustment(s) will be announced in class, on D2L Brightspace, and/or via university email.

**Email Policy:** The **first** place to check for answers to any questions regarding class is this syllabus. Class policies and the calendar are clearly outlined. If you email me a question and the answer can be found in this syllabus, you will not receive a response. I attempt to respond to emails Monday through Friday within one business day. Example: if you email me at 5:30 PM on Friday, you should not expect a response email until Monday. If I do not respond to you within two business days, please send a follow-up email as I may not have received your initial contact. Feel free to speak with me the next class period.

**Electronics Policy:** Cellular telephones, tablets, laptops, and any other gadgets must be turned off and put away during class. Man lived without electronic devices for thousands of years. You will survive one class period. If you are caught using any electronic device that is not authorized by the Students with Disabilities office, including earbuds, you will receive **one** warning. If you are caught using an unauthorized device after that initial warning, you will be asked to leave class and lose your attendance credit for the day.

\*\*\*You will need a writing apparatus and paper to take notes for this course.\*\*\*

**Non-Discrimination Notice:** 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 from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

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

The immediate consequence for any form of academic dishonesty in this class is an immediate 0 on assignment. In the event that the lowest grade(s) are dropped for assignments, any 0 recorded due to academic dishonesty will **not** be dropped. Additionally, 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. Repeated occurrences of academic dishonesty may result in your expulsion from the university.

**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.

**Code of Student Conduct:** "All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment." (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct) 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 action. Failure to comply with the Code of Student Conduct and commonsensical directions listed above may result in a verbal request to cease inappropriate behavior, your immediate removal from the class, being immediately dropped from the class, and/or a review by an appropriate university disciplinary agency.

**COVID-19 Statement:** A&M-Commerce recommends the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories.

**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).**

**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 162

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

Fax: (903) 468-8148

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

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### ***Student Responsibilities***

- Students are expected to attend class regularly.
- Students are expected to complete the assigned readings **prior** to class and to engage in class discussions.
- Students are expected to complete all assignments including exams and worksheets prior in a timely fashion.
- Students are expected to regularly check the course site for announcements and updates.
- Students are expected to respect their fellow classmates and instructor.
- Students will comply with any and all D2L Brightspace technical requirements in terms of training, computer access, and internet access.

### ***Access and Navigation***

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course via MyLeo. 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).

### ***Minimal Technical Skills Needed***

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

### *Technology Requirements*

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>

### *Technical Support*

If you are having technical difficulties 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>

### *Browser Information*

Google Chrome or Firefox are the best browsers to use for D2L Brightspace. There have been noted issues when using this platform on Microsoft Explorer and Edge.

### **Student Statement of Personal Responsibility:**

You must complete an assignment on D2L Brightspace demonstrating that you have read, understand, and agree to abide by the rules of this course by **11:45 PM CT on Tuesday, September 13 on D2L Brightspace.**

Statement: I have read the syllabus and understand the guidelines and policies therein. I recognize that this contract is a condition of the course. I understand that if I do not sign and return this contract to Ms. Todd by the due date that I will be dropped from the class or receive an "F" as my final grade. Furthermore, I am aware of my obligation to adhere to the guidelines and policies contained in the syllabus and that failure to do so could result in my being dropped from the course or receiving a final grade of an "F" in the course.

## Course Calendar

(All dates and content are subject to change.)

- MODULE ONE:
  - Chapter 1. American Political Stories: Claiming Rights, Demanding to be Heard
    - August 30 – September 1
  - Chapter 2. The Constitution of the United States: A New Vision of Representative Government
    - September 6 – September 8
  - Chapter 4. Civil Liberties: Building and Defending Fences
    - September 13 – September 15
  - Chapter 5. Civil Rights: How Equal is Equal?
    - September 20 – September 22
  - **Test One opens at 12:00 PM CT September 22. Ends at 12:00 PM CT September 24.**
- MODULE TWO:
  - Chapter 3. Federalism: The Changing Boundaries between the Nation and the States
    - September 27 – September 29
  - Chapter 12. Congress: Representation, Organization, and Legislation
    - October 4 – October 6
  - Chapter 13. The American Presidency: Individuals, Institutions, and Power
    - October 11 – October 13
  - Chapter 15. The Federal Judiciary: Politics, Power, and the “Least Dangerous” Branch
    - October 18 – October 20
  - **Test Two opens at 12:00 PM CT October 20. Ends at 12:00 PM CT October 22.**
- MODULE THREE:
  - Chapter 6. Political Participation: Carry That Weight
    - October 25 – October 2
  - Chapter 8. The Media: Truth, Trust, and Power
    - November 1 – November 3
  - Chapter 9. Political Parties: The Insurgents versus the Establishment
    - November 8 – November 10
  - Chapter 10. Campaigns and Elections: Candidates & Voters in a Time of Uncertainty & Change
    - November 15 – November 17
  - **Thanksgiving**
    - **No class November 22 – November 24**
  - Chapter 11. Interest Groups and Social Movements: Collective Action, Power, & Representation
    - November 29 – December 1
  - **Test Three opens at 12:00 PM CT December 1. Ends at 12:00 PM CT December 3.**
  - **Review Preparation Day:**
    - **No class December 6**
  - Comprehensive Review Day: December 8
  - **Comprehensive Final Exam: refer to the university’s Final Exam schedule**