



EAST TEXAS A&M

— UNIVERSITY —

American Government
CME 84192

COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2025

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Barbara Laubenthal

Office Location: SS-162

Phone number: (903) 886-5317

Office Hours: Wednesday 2-4pm and by appointment (in-person or zoom). Please send me an email if you would like to make an appointment.

Email: Barbara.Laubenthal@etamu.edu

The best way to contact me is via email.

COURSE INFORMATION

Textbook for this course:



American Government -
4e

(45 reviews)



Glen Krutz, University of Oklahoma

Sylvie Waskiewicz

Copyright Year: 2025

ISBN 13: 9781961584792

Publisher: [OpenStax CNX](#)

Language: English

[American Government - 4e - Open Textbook Library](#)

Additional texts and/or materials will be provided either in D2L or in class.

Course Description

This course is a survey of the underlying ideas, principles, and participatory practices of constitutional government in the United States. Topics considered include civil liberties and civil rights, constitutionalism, federalism, institutions, pluralism, political culture and socialization, political parties and interest groups, public opinion, and voting and electoral politics.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to

1. Explain the history of the U.S. Constitution.
2. Identify the function and powers of the three branches of the federal government as well as those of state/local governments.
3. Identify the history and evolution of civil liberties in American society.
4. Analyze the roles of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties.
5. Evaluate the election process and political participation.
6. Interpret data and foundational documents.
7. Use their analytical skills, approach a topic with an analytical mindset.
8. Understand the basics and central elements of the scientific research process.
9. Understand how political scientists analyze aspects of the American political system, political behavior, and events.

Instructional Methods

- Lectures
- Group work
- Project based learning
- Discussions

Tips for Success in this Course

- For work assignments, pick a topic that you are really interested in.
- Ask any question in class – there are no “wrong” or “stupid” questions.
- Be conscientious about your reading assignments.
- Summarize chapters and texts that you read in a few paragraphs as a “journal” of the course – this will help you with all assignments.
- Stay up to date on our schedule, deadlines and assignments.
- Set up a work plan with dates – when will you study for which assignment, what are your internal deadlines?

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%
C = 70%-79%
D = 60%-69%
F = 59% or Below

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades

A = 451- 500 Points
B = 401- 450 Points
C = 351- 400 Points
D = 301- 350 Points
F = 300 & > Points

Assignments

- A) Three tests: 30%. Each test will make up 10% of your grade.
- B) Project “Founding a Nation” 15%
- C) Agency or Interest group pitch 15%
- D) Weekly reading question/comment on D2L discussion board: 10%
- E) Short research paper (+/- 1000 words) 20%
- F) Participation: 10%
 - Participation grade profiles: A (98) volunteers frequently and is always well-prepared; B (89) volunteers sometimes and is often prepared; C (79) does not usually volunteer but is moderately prepared; D (69) does not volunteer and is generally poorly prepared; F (0) is consistently unprepared.

Communication with the class

I will sometimes send you information through the D2L email or announcements. Please make sure to regularly check the email address that is connected to your D2L account. If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material or have other issues that you would like to discuss, please contact me. I am here to help!

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University 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

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.etamu.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

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@etamu.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>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific 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.

<https://inside.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>.

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 [Procedures 13.99.99.R0.01](#)
<http://www.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University 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](#)
[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

Graduate Students Academic Integrity Policy and Form

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<https://inside.etamu.edu/aboutus/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.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

East Texas A&M University
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

Website: [Student Disability Services](#)

<https://www.etamu.edu/student-disability-services/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M 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.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, 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.etamu.edu/counsel

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



<http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html>

AI Policy in this course

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

For this course, students are prohibited from using AI to complete all assignments. Any use will result in a 0 for said assignment.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

WORK PLAN AND SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic	Readings (due each Tuesday)	Assignment
Week 1	8/25-8/31	Introduction		
Week 2	9/1-9/7	The Constitution and its Origins	Chapter 2	Every week: post reading question or comment
Week 3	9/8-9/14	Federalism	Chapter 3	
Week 4	9/15-9/21	Civil liberties and civil rights	Chapter 4,5	
Week 5	9/22-9/28	Voting and elections	Chapter 7	Test 1
Week 6	9/29-10/5	The Presidency	Chapter 12	
Week 7	10/6-10/12	Congress	Chapter 11	
Week 8	10/13-10/19	"Happitopia"- Founding a nation		Founding a nation presentations

Week 9	10/20–10/26	Federal courts and the Supreme Court	Chapter 13	
Week 10	10/27–11/2	Political participation and Interest groups	Chapter 10	Test 2
Week 11	11/3–11/9	Politics, media and the internet	Chapter 8	
Week 12	11/10–11/16	Agency or interest group pitch		Agency/Interest group presentations
Week 13	11/17-11/23	Analyzing a policy field	tbd	
Week 14	<i>Thanksgiving, no class.</i>			
Week 15	12/1–12/7	Recap for test 3		Research paper due
Finals week				Test 3