



EAST TEXAS A&M

UNIVERSITY

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PSCI 2305-01W Spring 2026

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Ferguson Social Sciences 148
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**Office Hours: T-Th 9.30 am-11.00 am
2.00 pm-3.00 pm
and by appointment**

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.

FORMAT OF THE COURSE

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

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. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

Unit Name

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REQUIRED TEXTS

Paula D. McClain and Steven C. Tauber. 2023. *American Government in Black and White*, 6th edition. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0197677520.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Weekly Discussions: Every week, there will be a discussion forum on D2L on a topic relevant to that week's course material. Your contributions to the weekly discussion forum are due every Sunday, 11.59 pm. The requirement for full credit is completing your own post and commenting on at least one of your peers' post. Discussion posts must be about 250-300 words, concise, to the point. You must make relevant connections to class material within your post.

Midterm Exams: You will have 5 midterm exams. Each exam will be composed of 30 multiple-choice questions. You will be able to take the exams online through D2L. Exams won't be cumulative. They will be timed and must be completed at one sitting. Study guides will be provided. Exam dates can be found on the course schedule.

Final Exam: There will be a cumulative final exam during the finals week.

GRADING

Course Requirements	Weight
Weekly Discussions	20%
Midterm Exams	60% (12% each)
Final Exam	20%
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. You are required to request your make-up prior to the deadline. Documentary proof for your request might be required based on the circumstances. Post-deadline late extension requests will not be granted. Post-deadline submission of assignments without an excuse will lead to loss of points.

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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 comments to discussion forums. Offensive/disrespectful comments will not be tolerated.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student is required to be responsible for 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 through email or make an appointment for a zoom meeting.

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 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148 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. 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 January 12-18

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

Week 2 January 19-25

The Constitution McLain & Tauber Ch 2

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Week 3 January 26-February 1

Federalism McLain & Tauber Ch 3

Exam 1

Week 4 February 2-8

Civil Liberties McLain & Tauber Ch 4

Civil Rights McLain & Tauber Ch 5

Week 5 February 9-15

Congress McLain & Tauber Ch 6

Week 6 February 16-22

The Presidency McLain & Tauber Ch 7

Exam 2

Week 7 February 23-March 1

The Bureaucracy McLain & Tauber Ch 8

Week 8 March 2-8

The Judiciary McLain & Tauber Ch 9

Week 9 March 9-15

Spring Break

Week 10 March 16-22

Public Opinion McLain & Tauber Ch 10

Media McLain & Tauber Ch 11

Exam 3

Week 11 March 23-29

Social Movements McLain & Tauber Ch 12

Week 12 March 30-April 5

Interest Groups McLain & Tauber Ch 13

Week 13 April 6-12

Political Parties McLain & Tauber Ch 14

Exam 4

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Week 14 April 13-19

Voting and Elections McLain & Tauber Ch 15

Week 15 April 20-26

The Making of Domestic and Foreign Policy McLain & Tauber Ch 16

Week 16 April 27-May 1

Exam 5

Week 16 May 4-8

Final Exam Date TBA

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