



PSCI 2305 Federal Government

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dottie Ulrich
Office Location: RCHS CCA 205
Office Hours: Wednesday Morning and Afternoon
Office Phone: 972-636-9991
Email Address: dottie.ulrich@rcisd.org
Preferred Form of Communication: email
Communication Response Time: 24 hours (Up to 48 hours during the weekends)

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Suggested Textbook(s):

Krutz, Glen, Sylvie Waskiewicz. 2025. American Government 4e. 2025.
OpenStax. ISBN: 978-1-961584-79-2

Ginsberg, Benjamin, Theodore Lowi, Margaret Weir, Caroline Tolbert, Andrea
Campbell, Megan Francis, and Robert Spitzer. 2022. We the People, 14th
Essentials Edition. New York, NY: W. W. Norton. ISBN: 9781324034629

Software Required: Word processing software such as Google Docs

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

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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.” (Quoted from the University Undergraduate Course Catalog)

Student Learning Outcomes

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.
5. Students will be able to:
 - 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.

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students will need to be familiar with the university learning management system, (myLeo Online), Google Classroom, know how to use a personal computer, navigate the Internet, and use basic word processing software such as Google Docs and Google Slides.

Instructional Methods

The following methods of instruction will be utilized for this course:

- Assigned readings from the required textbook.
- Lectures and discussions during assigned meeting times.
- Weekly course work on Google Classroom.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

All students are expected to comply with the following requirements.

- All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.
- Students are expected to regularly check the course site for announcements and updates.
- Students are expected to complete all course readings for each section of the course. Course readings drive class discussion.
- Students are expected to review any supplementary materials that the instructor provides, such as web links, news stories, etc.
- Students are expected to attend class regularly and to be on time to class.
- Students are expected to complete all assigned writing assignments, quizzes, class activities, and exams. Coursework will be submitted to Google Classroom.
- Students are expected to exhibit respect toward their fellow classmates and the instructor. This includes treating everyone with courtesy and esteem in all correspondence for the course. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.
- The university does not tolerate academic dishonesty.
 - Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited-
 - 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 or taking exams)
 - abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material.
 - For this course, academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic work. In particular, any student who passes off work as their own that was actually written by someone else, without proper citation or attribution, will be considered to have committed plagiarism. This holds true whether

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material comes from the textbook, another publication, an Internet source, or another student.

- Any act of academic dishonesty on an exam or quiz will result in a score of 0 for the exam or quiz. Any act of academic dishonesty on a writing assignment will result in a 0 for the entire semester's writing assignment grade. Instances of academic dishonesty may also be referred to the appropriate offices on campus and may result in significant administrative penalties.
- Students will comply with all myLeo Online/D2L and Google Classroom technical requirements in terms of training, computer access, & Internet access.

GRADING

Students will be given the following opportunities to demonstrate knowledge of course material.

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

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Current Event Assignments: | 20% |
| Activity Assignments: | 30% |
| Exams: | 50% |

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

| | |
|--------------|------------------|
| A = 90%-100% | D = 60%-69% |
| B = 80%-89% | F = 59% or Below |
| C = 70%-79% | |

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Assessments

Current Assignments:

Each week, students will complete a current event assignment that connects with unit content. The format, related support materials, and rubric will be provided in Google Classroom.

The dates and times for these assignments are on the course outline calendar and in Google Classroom. **Late assignments will not be accepted.**

Activity Assignments:

Students will complete writing assignments in which they will analyze issues, policies and political culture of the United States, evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties, and describe state and local political systems.

Students will produce written, oral, and/or visual evidence of knowledge of course material. Assignment descriptions as well as rubrics and citation requirements will be provided in Google Classroom.

These assignments will vary in terms of format, however, they could include: brief simulations, responding to prompts, or over provided videos, news stories, and unit content. The amount of time per activity will vary depending on the type. The dates and times for these assignments on the course outline calendar and in Google Classroom. **Late assignments will not be accepted.**

Exams:

Students will take four exams. All exams will include material from the textbook, lectures, and class discussions. These exams will contain multiple choice and constructed response questions. Students have one class period to complete each exam. The dates for exams will be listed on the course outline calendar in Google Classroom.

Students are responsible for communicating via email if they are unable to take the exam on the assigned due date due for any reason as well as any SDS approved accommodations.

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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

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.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@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 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 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. Students are encouraged to use email, class time, and office hours to seek clarification of course content. Students are encouraged to use RCHS email to contact the instructor--Please be advised that the university system will only send out emails to a student's official university email and all grades will be recorded in MyLeo.

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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Interaction with Instructor Statement

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

- Pre-plan with your instructor if you are going to be absent for exams. Make arrangements with your instructor for the assignment you are going to miss. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor if an absence occurs. If prior arrangements are not made, students will not be allowed to make up missed assignments. In the event of a school activity on an exam date, students must pre-plan with the instructor. Arrangements must be made prior to the missed exam. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor if an absence occurs. Any absence not pre-planned, or a missed appointment, will result in a zero for the exam.
- Students are expected to come to class prepared to interact with the instructor and other students by respectfully listening, discussing, questioning, and taking notes relating to the topic at hand. Cell phones will not be used for notetaking or quizzes. All students will need a Chromebook, notebook and pens or pencils. Students must use appropriate language in all emails, class discussions, and postings.
- Class attendance and participation is critical for the successful completion of this course.
- Class Conduct: Please turn off or silence and put away all cell phones, headphones, etc. before entering the classroom. No obscene/vulgar language will be permitted in the classroom.
- Academic Honesty: Students are expected to abide by the university guidelines regarding academic integrity and honesty.

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.tamuc.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>

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University Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedures 13.99.99.R0.01](#)
<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

Academic Integrity

Students at the 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.tamuc.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.tamuc.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

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

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

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Student Disability Services](#)

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

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

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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 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.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

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

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>

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AI use policy [Draft 2, May 25, 2023]

Texas A&M University-Commerce 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.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

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.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

| Week of | Week | We The People Text | Open Stax OER | Topic | Grades |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1/12 | Week 1 | Ch 1 | Ch 1 | The Citizen and Government | Government Activity Current Event #1 |
| 1/19 Student Holiday Mon | Week 2 | Ch 1&2 | Ch 2 | The Founding and the Constitution | Current Event #2 |
| 1/26 | Week 3 | Ch 2 | Ch 2 | The Founding and the Constitution | Current Event #3 |
| 1/29 | Week 4 | Ch 3 | Ch 3 | Federalism | Constitution Activity Current Event #4 |
| 2/2 | Week 5 | Ch 6,7 | Ch 3 | Federalism | Current Event #5 Unit 1 Ch 1-3 Test |

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| 2/9 Student Holiday Mon | Week 6 | Ch 8,9 | Ch 6,8 | Public Opinion; the Media | Current Event #6 Ideology Activity Political Socialization Activity assigned |
| 2/16 Student Holiday Mon | Week 7 | Ch 10 | Ch 7,9,10 | Political Parties and Interest Groups; Participation, Campaigns, and Elections | Current Event #7 Congress Chart |
| 2/23 | Week 8 | Ch 10 | Ch 7,9,10 | Political Parties and Interest Groups; Participation, Campaigns, and Elections | Current Event #8 Political Socialization Activity due 2/23 Ch 6-10 Test |
| 3/2 | Week 9 | Ch 11 | Ch 11 | The Legislature | Current Event #9 |
| 3/9 | Week 10 | Ch 11 | Ch 12 | The Executive Branch | Current Event #10 War Powers Resolution Activity |
| Spring Break | | | | | |
| 3/23 Student Holiday Mon | Week 11 | Ch 12 | Ch 15 | Bureaucracy | Current Event #11 Bureaucracy Activity Assign 3/24 |
| 3/30-drop day Student Holiday Fri | Week 12 | Ch 13 | Ch 13 | The Judiciary: Federal Courts | Current Event #12 |
| 4/6 Student Holiday Mon | Week 13 | Ch 4 | Ch 4 | Civil Liberties | Current Event #13 Ch 10-13, 15 Test 4/11 Bureaucracy Activity Due 4/15 |
| 4/13 | Week 14 | Ch 5 | Ch 4 | Civil Liberties | Current Event #14 |
| 4/20 | Week 15 | Ch 14 and 15 | Ch 5 | Civil Rights | Current Event #15 Court Case Presentation Activity assign 4/20 |
| 4/27 | Week 16 | Ch 14 and 15 | Ch 16 &17 | Domestic and Foreign Policy | Court Case Presentation 4/27 |
| 5/4 | Week 17 | Review | | Comprehensive Final Exam | |

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