



EAST TEXAS A&M

UNIVERSITY

PSCI 2305.03W

United States Government

Spring 2026

January 12th - May 8th 2026

Instructor: Rebecca Lynch

Office Location: Ferguson SS Political Science Office

Office Phone: (903) 886-5317

Office Hours: Virtual Office Hours Only

Virtual Meetings via Zoom available by appt.

University Email Address: Rebecca.lynch@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: Email

Communication Response Time: 24 Hours **excluding weekends**

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook: We The People 14th Ed. Essentials Edition (Physical or Ebook is acceptable and you will **not** need the access codes)

ISBN: 9781324034797

Course Description: This course is a survey of the institutions and policies of the American governing bodies. You will learn about formal and informal institutions of the national government and how they play into the creation and implementation of public policy. Topics considered include the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, bureaucracies, public policies (formulation and implementation), and global forces that continue to shape our understanding of the relationship between the people and government.

● Please note that you will not be taught what to think about political issues in this course. Rather, you will be provided with the knowledge to determine how to think about political issues for yourself.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Critical Thinking: Students will be able to differentiate between fact and opinion.
2. Communication: Student communication will be clear, purposeful, and make appropriate use of evidence, data and technology as applicable. In written, oral, and/or visual communication, East Texas A&M students will communicate in a manner appropriate to the audience and occasion, with an evident message and organizational structure.
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. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.
7. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.

8. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
9. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.
10. Analyze the election process.
11. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens
12. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students will need to be familiar with the University learning management system (D2L/Brightspace), know how to use a personal computer, navigate the internet, and use basic word processing software such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint.

Instructional Methods

Each week module will consist of and involve quizzes, and discussion boards over the assigned readings and any other supplemental readings the instructor wishes to add. You will regularly be asked to contribute your opinions and answer questions about the readings.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and engage in class discussions/writing assignments. Complete all assignments. Be prepared to discuss the topics presented in class. Be courteous to and respectful of your fellow students and instructors.

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

This following is the breakdown for grades and points in class based on a 1000 point scale:

Introduction Post and Political Spectrum: 50 Points Total

Current Event Writing Assignments: 200 Points Total (4 @ 50 points each)

Writing Assignment: 150 Points Total

Exams: 400 Points Total (4 @ 100 points each)

Final Exam: 200 Points Total

AI Statement East Texas A&M University has adopted the following statement for inclusion on faculty syllabi: 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. **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 instructor's 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. **In the context of this class, DO NOT USE AI.** Programs that save you all the trouble of reading, thinking, and presenting your thoughts and ideas are antithetical to university education. **If it is apparent that you used**

AI in writing any assignment in this course, you will receive a 0 on that assignment with no opportunity to make it up. I cannot stress this enough, do not use AI software to complete assignments for this class. If you need assistance with writing, I suggest using our writing center or having someone peer edit your assignments. AI use of any kind will result in a zero for the assignment. Multiple infractions will be sent to our Department Chair and potentially the Dean to be dealt with. I also strongly encourage you to work in a document that uses timestamps so that you have documentation that you yourself wrote your assignments. If you use any type of editing or translation software that will also flag your assignment. If you have any concerns about editing or translation services for your assignment please reach out to me **beforehand.**

Course Calendar

Subject to Change

For the assigned readings please follow along according to the chapter titles. My copy of the book is slightly different from the essentials edition and the ebook and physical copies sometimes differ as well. Please email me if you have questions. This semester we will be using a four week module schedule. Assignments will open every four weeks and be due at the end of that four weeks. This will allow you to work at your own pace within that time frame. **Each module will open on Mondays at 12:01 am and close on Sundays at 11:59pm.**

Module 1: January 12th - February 8th (assignments close 11:59pm) 1 Discussion Board Post, 1 Exam, & 1 Current Event		
Weekly Dates	Readings	Assignments
Week 1: January 12th - January 18th	Chapter 1 - The Citizen and Government Allegory of the Cave Mayflower Compact Declaration of Independence	Introduction post and political spectrum discussion
Week 2: January 19th - January 25th	Chapter 2 - The Founding the Constitution Federalist # 51	Current Event 1
Week 3: January 26th - February 1st	Chapter 3 - Federalism	
Week 4: February 2nd - February 8th	Chapter 6 - Public Opinion	Exam 1 - Chapters 1-3 & 6 & All additional readings assigned

Module 2: February 9th - March 8th (assignments close 11:59pm)**1 Exam & 1 Current Event**

Week 5: February 9th - February 15th	Chapter 4 - Civil Liberties <i>Letter from a Birmingham Jail</i>	Current Event 2
Week 6: February 16th - February 22nd	Chapter 5 - Civil Rights	
Week 7: February 23rd - March 1st	Chapter 8 - Political Parties & Interest Groups	
Week 8: March 2nd - March 8th	Chapter 9 - Participation, Campaigns & Elections	Exam 2 - Chapters 4-5 & 8-9 & additional readings

Module 3: March 9th - April 12th (assignments close 11:59pm)**1 Current Event & 1 Exam****Spring Break - March 9th-13th**

Week 9: March 16th - March 22nd	Chapter 10 - Congress Burke - Speech to the Electors of Bristol	Current Event 3
Week 10: March 23rd - March 29th	Chapter 11 - The Presidency & Executive Federalist #70	Begin on writing assignment
Week 11: March 30th - April 5th	Chapter 12 - The Bureaucracy	
Week 12: April 6th - 12th	Chapter 13 - The Federal Courts Federalist # 78-80	Exam 3 - Chapters 10-13 & additional readings

Module 4: April 13th - May 1st (assignments close 11:59pm)**1 Current Event 1 Exam 1 Writing Assignment**

Week 13: April 13th - April 19th	Chapter 7 - The Media	Current Event 4
Week 14: April 20th - April 26th	Chapter 14 - Domestic Policy Washington's Farewell Address	
Week 15: April 27th - May 1st	Chapter 15 - Foreign Policy	Exam 4 - Chapters 7 & 14-15 Writing Assignment Due

Finals Week: May 2nd - May 8th *Per
College Academic Calendar**

Finals Week

**Final Exam Due May 8th
@11:59pm**

******Your professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus at any point during the semester and will inform students of alterations. ******

Assessments

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.

Participation: With this being an online course, you will need to login to D2L and access this course regularly throughout the week and/or modules. Not logging in and keeping up with due dates and weekly readings and assignments will have a detrimental effect on your grade.

Introduction Post: During the first module, you will be asked to make an introduction post for me and your classmates to read through. In addition to the introduction post, you will also share a short non-invasive reflection after you have taken a political spectrum survey. Your results from this survey are for you and you alone. You do not have to include any details you do not wish to. You are welcome to share if you like, but again it is not required. Additional details for the post will be posted in D2L.

Current Events: To be civically engaged, it is important to have an idea of what is going on in the world, country, state, and local areas. You will have a current event assignment for modules 1-4. Further instructions and expectations will be posted in D2L.

Exams: There will be four exams given during the semester in addition to a final exam to be administered during finals week. They comprise a significant portion of your grade, so it would be beneficial to be prepared for your exams. **Since there is a multi-day window for exams, makeup exams will not be given.** If you have an athletic or academic reason as to why you are not able to take the exam during the window it is open, you must email me **IMMEDIATELY** so that other arrangements can be made. This means emailing me **BEFORE/DURING** the exam window, not after the window has closed. However since the modules are opened for multiple weeks makeup exams will be extremely rare if given at all.

Writing Assignment: There will be a short writing assignment for this course. The assignment will primarily ask you to consider a state issue or policy and write your thoughts and ideas on why you chose that particular issue and propose potential solutions. Further details will be posted in D2L.

Extra Credit: Extra credit will be given at the instructor's discretion. I will NOT create extra credit for any student at any time because they "need to get" a certain grade or because they have chosen not to do the original assignments assigned. I do not "give" grades rather you EARN your grade. I cannot stress this enough: keep up with your assignments and your grade in the gradebook throughout the whole semester and not just at the end.

Submitting Assignments & Late Assignments: Late work will not be accepted. Each assignment is given with enough time to complete it. You are responsible for attaching the correct assignment to the correct folder in D2L Brightspace. Once you submit your assignment you should always click on the document to guarantee that it has been submitted correctly, or no document is counted as failure to complete the assignment on time. Poor internet connection, dead laptop batteries, etc. are not valid reasons for an assignment not being completed. If for some reason you are having difficulty uploading your assignment please email me a PDF version before the deadline and explain the situation, but please only use this as a last option.

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

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.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor. I am here to help, but cannot help if I do not know what is going on. Communication is key!

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>

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

Student emails will be responded to within 24 hours except for on weekends. Weekly assignments will regularly be graded and inputted into the grade book. Any student wishing to

discuss a grade or assignment should email me or request to schedule a video conference and will receive a response within 24-36 hours.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY 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.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx> 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>

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage and Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01.

<https://inside.tamuc.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

https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03.pdf?_gl=1*ism39g*_gcl_aw*R0NMLjE3NjI2OTg0OTkuQ2p3S0NBaUFsTUhJQmhBY0Vpd0FaaFpCVWprcVIITWVqZ1ILNXU4MndwcnhuNIozR0RUVIBoVWtvLUc5enpYM2lvTmZxNEZHTU55clNSb0NFY1FRQXZEX0J3RQ..*_gcl_au*MTEzMDg2NTM0Ni4xNzYxNDA0Njgx*_ga*MTI3NjcyMjU1LjE3NTI1MTQzMDE.*_ga_WMPJF2FXDN*czE3NjY3Nzk2MjlkbzE1JGcxJHQxNzY2Nzc5OTA1JGo0MCRsMCRoMA..

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
Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: StudentDisabilityServices@etamu.edu

Website: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

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

The Counseling Center

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 <https://www.etamu.edu/counseling-center/>

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: <https://www.etamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/882e4456-34.06.02.r1.pdf>

Withdrawals

Dropping the Class: If you need to adjust your schedule by dropping this course, please contact your Academic Coach. Please be aware that dropping your course may impact your financial aid, veterans and military benefits, three peat, 45-hour, and 30-hour rules. It is the student's responsibility to drop the course. If you fail to officially drop the class, a failing grade shall be assigned.

Student Withdrawal: A student wishing to withdraw from all courses before the end of a term for which he/she is registered must clear his or her record by filing an application for voluntary withdrawal. Please contact your Academic Coach. This action must be taken by the date stated in the Academic Calendar as the last day to drop a class or withdraw. Any student who withdraws from the university is subject to the conditions outlined in the section regarding Scholastic Probation or Suspension in the university catalog. It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from classes if he or she does not plan to attend during the semester in which he/she has enrolled.

A student has one year from the first day of a semester to appeal a withdrawal refund. Courses withdrawn are counted as attempted hours and count towards the three-peat, 45-hour and 30-hour rules and financial aid and veterans and military benefits.

Instructor Withdrawal: Your instructor of record reserves the right to withdraw a student from his or her course based on inadequate performance and progress in the course materials, and or behavior.

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.

Your instructor reserves the right to alter or change the syllabus at any time during the semester and will inform students of any changes.