



**PSCI 2305.G4E — UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**  
COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2026 — CRN 82811 — South Grand Prairie High School

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Instructor: Arthur W. Turner  
Office Location: South Grand Prairie High School, Room DX101F  
Office Hours: Online, by appointment (scheduling link posted in D2L)  
Office Phone: N/A (contact by email)  
Office Fax: N/A  
University Email Address: Arthur.Turner@etamu.edu  
Preferred Form of Communication: ETAMU email (myLeo mail)  
Communication Response Time: Within 24 hours on school days

**COURSE INFORMATION**

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

**Textbook(s) Required**

Krutz, G., and Waskiewicz, S. American Government 4e. OpenStax. Free online at <https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-4e> — no purchase required.

**Software Required**

A modern web browser and reliable internet access. All course platforms are free, browser-based, and require no installation and no student account creation: myLeo Online (D2L); Branching Scenarios (scenarios.cruxlabs.academy); Essay Grader (essays.cruxlabs.academy); Video Quizzes (videos.cruxlabs.academy). Links and class codes are provided in D2L.

**Optional Texts and/or Materials**

None.

**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. (ETAMU Course Catalog; 3 semester credit hours.)

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

**Student Learning Outcomes** (Should be measurable; observable; use action verbs)

1. Explain what government does and analyze how the U.S. Constitution and federalism distribute power among national, state, and local governments.
2. Analyze the development and protection of civil liberties and civil rights, including the Equal Protection Clause and the movements that shaped it.
3. Evaluate how public opinion, the media, elections, political parties, and interest groups connect citizens to government and influence policy.
4. Analyze the institutional design and operation of Congress, the presidency, and the courts, including bicameralism, executive power, and judicial review.
5. Evaluate how the federal bureaucracy implements public policy and how domestic and foreign policy choices are made, constrained, and controlled.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Minimal Technical Skills Needed**

Students need reliable computer and internet access and must be able to use myLeo email, navigate myLeo Online (D2L), follow web links, and type and submit written work in a browser.

**Instructional Methods**

This face-to-face course combines classroom lecture and discussion with a consistent weekly digital routine posted in D2L. Each week's briefing page in D2L lists up to three tasks: Watch — a short instructional video with embedded checkpoint questions (video quiz); Play — an interactive decision scenario, a branching simulation in which you act as a decision-maker in American government and then write a graded reflection; and Write — constructed-response writing, including the five unit-exam FRQs, drafted and revised on the essay platform.

**Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course**

Start each week from the briefing page in D2L — it lists exactly what to watch, play, and write.

Use your exact roster name ("First Last") in all three course platforms so your work is credited correctly.

Scenario reflections are graded on the quality of your reasoning, not on reaching a "good" ending; exploring different paths is encouraged.

Essays and FRQs may be revised until their due date — start early enough to use the feedback you receive.

Have a backup plan for technology problems; computer trouble does not extend deadlines (see Technology-Related Issues below).

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

## 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

Weights of the assessments in the calculation of the final letter grade.

Video Quizzes – 20%

Decision Scenarios – 35%

FRQ Unit Exams – 45%

TOTAL – 100%

## Assessments

**Video Quizzes (20%).** Short lecture videos that pause at embedded checkpoints for comprehension questions, assigned most weeks and completed online.

**Decision Scenarios (35%).** Interactive branching simulations (approximately eleven across the semester) in which you make decisions as a governor, delegate, justice, advisor, lobbyist, or citizen. Each scenario ends with short written reflections graded with an outcome-neutral rubric: what counts is the quality of your reasoning and your use of course concepts, not which ending you reach. Scenarios may be replayed.

**FRQ Unit Exams (45%).** Five free-response question (FRQ) exams, one per unit, written and submitted through the essay platform: FRQ 1 — Federalism (Unit 1), due Friday, September 11; FRQ 2 — Equal Protection and Civil Rights (Unit 2), due Thursday, October 8; FRQ 3 — Interest Group Lobbying (Unit 3), due Friday, November 6; FRQ 4 — Bicameralism and Policymaking (Unit 4), due Friday, November 20; FRQ 5 — Bureaucratic Implementation and Control (Unit 5), due Friday, December 11.

**Revision Policy.** FRQs and other written work may be revised and resubmitted until the assignment's due date. Revisions are not accepted after the due date.

**Late Work.** Late submissions lose 1% of the earned grade per calendar day late. No work is accepted after Friday, December 11, 2026, the final day of the college term.

**Use of AI in This Course.** AI tools may be used as a study aid (for example, explaining concepts or quizzing yourself). Any AI-generated text in submitted work must be documented; submitting unedited AI output as your own work is academic dishonesty under University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.03. The instructor uses AI-assisted feedback tools in grading; all grades are reviewed and determined by the instructor.

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

### Course Outline/Calendar

Classes meet beginning Tuesday, August 11; D2L and the online platforms open Thursday, August 20. All college-graded work is due by Friday, December 11, the final day of the ETAMU term. The calendar is a guide and may be adjusted as announced in class and in D2L.

| Week of | Chapter(s)                           | Scenario / activity                   | Due                                                              |
|---------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aug 11  | Introduction; Ch 1 begins            | In class only                         |                                                                  |
| Aug 17  | Ch 1 — Civic Engagement              | Liberty Park Under Threat             | D2L and platforms open Thu, Aug 20                               |
| Aug 24  | Ch 2 — The Constitution              | The Philadelphia Compromise           |                                                                  |
| Aug 31  | Ch 3 — Federalism                    | A Nation Divided: The Cherokee Choice |                                                                  |
| Sep 8   | Unit 1 review                        |                                       | FRQ 1 — Fri, Sep 11                                              |
| Sep 14  | Ch 4 + 5 — Liberties and Rights      | Probable Cause                        |                                                                  |
| Sep 21  | Ch 6 — Public Opinion                |                                       |                                                                  |
| Sep 28  | Ch 7 — Voting and Elections          | The Motor Voter Decision              |                                                                  |
| Oct 5   | Unit 2 review                        |                                       | FRQ 2 — Thu, Oct 8 (Fall Break Oct 9–13)                         |
| Oct 14  | Ch 8 — The Media (3-day week)        |                                       |                                                                  |
| Oct 19  | Ch 9 — Political Parties             | Party Realignment                     |                                                                  |
| Oct 26  | Ch 10 — Interest Groups              | Shaping the ACA: A Lobbyist's Gambit  |                                                                  |
| Nov 4   | Unit 3 review (3-day week)           |                                       | FRQ 3 — Fri, Nov 6                                               |
| Nov 9   | Ch 11 — Congress                     | Drawing the Lines                     |                                                                  |
| Nov 16  | Ch 12 — The Presidency               | Japanese Internment                   | FRQ 4 — Fri, Nov 20;<br>Thanksgiving Break Nov 23–27             |
| Nov 30  | Ch 13 + 14 — Courts; State and Local | The Marshall Gambit                   | Rio Grande Dilemma — Fri, Dec 4                                  |
| Dec 7   | Ch 15–17 — Bureaucracy and Policy    | The Hainan Island Incident            | FRQ 5 and all remaining work — Fri, Dec 11 (end of college term) |
| Dec 14  | Buffer week (high school calendar)   | Revisions and make-up work            |                                                                  |

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

## 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](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](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@etamu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@etamu.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 TAMUC 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.

### 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>

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COURSE

### CWID and Password

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](mailto:helpdesk@etamu.edu).

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

### **Technology-Related Issues**

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 ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

---

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT**

### **Minimal Technical Skills Needed**

Students will need reliable computer and internet access for this course. Students must be able to effectively use myLeo email, myLeo Online D2L, and Microsoft Office.

### **Learning Management System (LMS) – D2L**

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 the technical requirements:

- View the [Learning Management System Requirements Webpage](#).
- Learn more on the [LMS Browser Support Webpage](#).

### **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 on the [Brightspace Support Webpage](#).

---

## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

### **Interaction with Instructor Statement**

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your instructor. Correspondence will always be through university email (your “myLeo” mail) and announcements in myLeo online (D2L). You will not RECEIVE email through D2L, so be sure to check your ETAMU email for communication. Students are encouraged to check university email daily.

### **Include the Following in Emails with Instructor:**

- Course name and subject in the subject line
- Salutation (Good afternoon, Dr. Jackson)

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

- Proper email etiquette (no “text” emails – use proper grammar and punctuation)
  - Student name and CWID after the body of the email (possibly add to student signature on email)
- 

## **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.

### **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 online in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Students should also consult the [Rules of Netiquette Webpage](#) for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum.

### **ETAMU Attendance**

For more information about the attendance policy, please view the [Attendance Webpage](#) and the [Class Attendance Policy](#).

### **Academic Integrity**

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

### **Use of Artificial Intelligence**

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

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 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

### **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](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu)

Website: [Office of 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**

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

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 ETAMU 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.

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

### **East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health – Counseling Services**

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, 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)

### **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.



*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*