

Introduction to American and Texas Government

GOV 310L

Unique: 38555

Professor Eric L. McDaniel

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Teaching Assistants:

Students A-G

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Fall 2011
Time: 8-9:15

Days: Tuesdays and Thursdays
Lecture Classroom: Jester A121A

Instructor Information

Office: Batts 4.122

Office Hours Tuesdays and Thursdays
9:30-11:30

Phone: 512-232-7268

Teaching Assistants Information

Office: Batts 1.118

Office Hours

Mishrikey

Friday 8-11

Fern

Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-11

Siddiqi

Wednesday 11-2

Course Description

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the processes and issues of United States and Texas government. The course will cover the relevant institutions in the development of the governmental process as well as discuss the role of the citizens in shaping our government.

Required Texts

1. Fiorina, Morris P., Paul E. Peterson, Bertram Johnson, and William G. Mayer. 2011. *The New American Democracy*. 7th edition. Longman Press.

2. Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard {BB}.

3. Bluebooks for exams

Films

1. Belton, David. 2010. "A New Eden." In *God In America*, ed. David Belton. Boston: WGBH Educational Foundation.

The purpose of this film is to establish an understanding of how religion was approached in the early years of the nation. My showing of this film is not an attempt to indoctrinate any thinking about how religion should operate in America. When watching this film pay particular attention to the discussion of separation of church and state as well as the discussion of religious freedom.

2. Espinosa, Paul. 1985. *The Lemon Grove Incident*. Espinosa Productions.

The purpose of this film is to provide a vivid example of how the nation has come to define civil rights. When watching this film pay special attention to the cause of the conflict, how the decision was contested, the final outcome and the logic behind the final outcome.

Coursework

Quizzes 25%

Throughout the semester there will be numerous quizzes given, which will pertain to the readings as well as class lectures. The quizzes will not be announced and there will be no make-ups for missed quizzes. The quizzes will be given at any time during the lecture. Multiple quizzes may be given in class. If you miss more than four quizzes, you will receive a zero for your quiz grade for the semester. The quizzes are worth 20% of the final grade.

Surveys

In order to enhance research and teaching at the University of Texas you will be asked to participate in a series of surveys throughout the semester. Because the surveys will be used as tools for educational purposes, students will be required to participate, however if students object to participating in the survey, they may complete an alternative assignment. The alternative assignments will include activities, such as attending a campus lecture or writing a movie review. You must inform your teaching assistant that you choose to participate in the alternative assignment at least one week before the survey deadline and turn in the alternative assignment within a week after the survey deadline. For instance, if the deadline to complete a survey is October 8, you must inform your teaching assistant that you want to participate in the alternative assignment by October 1 and turn in that alternative assignment by October 15. Participation in the survey or alternative assignment will count as a quiz grade. Failure to participate in a survey or the alternative will count as a missed quiz.

Exams: worth 75%

There will be three exams in this course. The exams will address all of the topics addressed in the course and center on how they relate to each other. The format of the exams will be short answer. Each exam is worth 25% of your final grade.

Quizzes	25%
Exam One	25%
Exam Two	25%
<u>Exam Three</u>	<u>25%</u>
Total	100%

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	63-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-	60-62
B	83-86	C-	70-72	F	0-59

Expectations

Preparation

Doing well in this class necessitates that students are informed and prepared. Therefore, you will be expected to complete the readings prior to when class meets. This course covers a large amount of material in a short amount of time. If you do not keep up with the readings, your grade will reflect your preparation.

Professionalism

Remember that this is an academic environment. Therefore, I ask that you minimize unnecessary disruptions. This includes (but it is not limited to) side conversations, cell phone calls and pagers. If you come to class late or have to leave early, please do so quietly. I also ask that you be proactive if any conflict occurs. This means notifying me ahead of time if you are unable to meet the requirements of the course.

Ground Rules

Because this course will sometimes deal with sensitive material, it is imperative that we set a series of ground rules.

1. Respect others. There will be times when you disagree with an idea that has been presented to the class. Although you have the right to disagree with someone, you must remember to challenge the idea and not the person.
2. Listen attentively. The purpose of this course is to present and discuss different ideas. In order to reap the benefits of such an exchange, you must be willing to pay attention to what others have to say.
3. Think before you speak. Refrain from making broad, general, and/or unsubstantiated comments. Make sure that you use evidence and provide a rationale for your statements.
4. Maintain the dignity of the academic environment. Your ideas should be presented using Standard English, minus the use of any profanity.
5. Raise your hand. This helps to maintain order in the classroom and helps to ensure that everyone has a chance to talk.
6. Be courteous. Refrain from interrupting or engaging in private conversation while others are speaking. Also, limit disruptive behavior, such as newspaper reading, personal grooming, etc.

Procedures for Dealing with Grade/Evaluation Concerns

Grade/evaluation concerns will only be considered if the following procedure is followed:

All grade complaints must be **TYPED** and must clearly express the student's specific concerns. These written statements must be accompanied by citations of support from course materials, i.e. readings, textbook, and/or lecture notes, in order to ensure accuracy.

Written statements will not be considered until one week **AFTER** the assignment is returned to students. This allows the student time to reread his/her answers and think carefully about what improvements could have been made.

Grievances will not be considered once two weeks have passed. For example, if I return a graded assignment on Monday, the student must submit a complaint **BEFORE** the Friday of the following week. Once class is over on that Friday, no complaints will be considered for that assignment.

Since class time is limited, we will only deal with questions or concerns during scheduled office hours. You will need to file the grievance with the individual who graded your exam or assignment and in addition, you will need to meet with them to discuss the grievance.

Finally, submitting a grade grievance will result in a complete re-grade of the assignment.

Academic Dishonesty

The University defines scholastic dishonesty in the following way:

“According to the *Institutional Rules*, scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and falsifying academic records.” For a detailed explanation of the University's honor code and definition of plagiarism please refer to the following website <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>.

In the event that a student violates the University policy on scholastic dishonesty, he or she will be subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

Religious Holy Day Observance

By UT Austin policy, you must notify your instructor of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy

day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

In the event of a fire or other emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a building rapidly. Upon the activation of a fire alarm or the announcement of an emergency in a university building, all occupants of the building are required to evacuate and assemble outside. Once evacuated, no one may re-enter the building without instruction to do so from the Austin Fire Department, University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Students should familiarize themselves with all the exit doors of each room and building they occupy at the university, and should remember that the nearest exit routes may not be the same as the way they typically enter buildings.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructors in writing during the first week of class. Faculty members must then provide this information to the Fire Prevention Services office by fax (512-232-2759), with "Attn. Mr. Roosevelt Easley" written in the subject line.

Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>

E-mail

As stated above no assignment is to be e-mailed to me. Also I do regularly check my e-mail, but sometimes I am unable to respond quickly. Please allow one to two days for an e-mail response. In addition, please limit your e-mails to questions about class topics. Any grievances involving the class must be handled during my office hours. Make sure to check the syllabus or Blackboard first before sending an e-mail. In many cases they will answer your question. Finally, I ask that you use proper etiquette when sending e-mail messages, failure to follow proper etiquette may delay my response. For tips on proper e-mail etiquette visit <http://www.101emailtippetips.com/>.

Cancelled Classes

Periodically class may be canceled. The class will be informed of these dates and will be held accountable for the readings of that day.

Blackboard

The syllabus, course assignments, and class announcements are posted on Blackboard for reference. In addition, a portion of the course reading will also be available on Blackboard. In special cases, the lecture notes will be available on Blackboard as well. Make sure to regularly check Blackboard for announcements and assignments. Before you contact me with a question for the class, *make sure to check Blackboard first.*

Excused Absences

An absence from class will only be excused if proper documentation is presented. In the case of an illness you will need to produce a note from the doctor stating that you could not attend class that day. In all other cases you will need to provide documentation from the university. In the case of planned activities, the documentation must be presented to at least a week before your scheduled absence. I will not accept a planned activity as a valid excuse for an absence after the fact. In the case of unexpected circumstances, the documentation must be turned in within a week of your return.

Make-up Exams

The make-up exams for this class will be administered during your teaching assistant's office hours. Students have the option of taking the make-up exam, no questions asked. Students must inform the teaching assistant within 48 hours of the missed exam that they wish to take the make-up exam. Further, students must complete the make-up exam by the following Wednesday of the original exam date. Students do not have the option of taking the make-up exam if they take the original exam. In order to be fair to those students who take the exam on the scheduled date, the format of the make-up exam will be different.

Q-Drop Policy

If a student wishes to Q-drop this class before 40% of the class has been completed, the student may do so. After 40% of the class has been completed whether or not the student receives a Q or an F will be based upon the student's grade at that point. This grade will include attendance.

Changes to the Course

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus in order to better facilitate the needs of the course.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
8/25	What is Government	Chapter One
8/30	Domestic Policy	Chapter Eighteen
9/1	Economic Policy	Chapter Nineteen
9/6	Constitutions	Chapter Two
9/8	Federalism	Chapter Three
9/13	American Political Culture	Chapter Four
9/15	Film: God in America	

9/20	Public Opinion	Chapter Five
9/22	Exam One	Bring Bluebooks
9/27	Congress	Chapter Twelve
9/29	Congress	Adler, E. Scott, Chariti E. Gent, and Cary B. Overmeyer. 1998. "The home style homepage: Legislator use of the World Wide Web for constituency contact." <i>Legislative Studies Quarterly</i> 23 (4):585-95. {BB}
10/4	Presidency	Chapter Thirteen
10/6	Bureaucracy	Chapter Fourteen
10/11	Courts	Chapter Fifteen
10/13	Interest Groups	Walker, Jack L. 1983. The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America. <i>The American Political Science Review</i> 77 (2):390-406. {BB}
10/18	Media	Chapter Nine
10/20	Parties	Chapter Eight
10/25	Parties	Philpot, Tasha S. 2004. "A Party of a Different Color? Race, Campaign Communication, and Party Politics." <i>Political Behavior</i> 26 (3):249-70. {BB}
10/27	Exam Two	Bring Bluebooks
11/1	Congressional Elections	Chapter Eleven
11/3	Presidential Elections	Chapter Ten
11/8	Political Participation	Chapter Six
11/10	Political Participation	Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady. 1999. Civic Participation and the Equality Problem. In <i>Civic Engagement in American Democracy</i> , edited by T. Skocpol and M. P. Fiorina. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. {BB}

11/15	Civil Liberties	Chapter Sixteen
11/17	Film: The Lemon Grove Incident	Davis, Darren W., and Brian D. Silver. 2004. "Civil Liberties vs. Security: Public Opinion in the Context of the Terrorist Attacks on America." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 48:28-46. {BB}
11/22	Civil Rights	Chapter Seventeen
11/24	<i>Thanksgiving</i>	<i>No Class</i>
11/29	Foreign Policy	Chapter Twenty
12/1	<i>Exam Three</i>	<i>Bring Bluebooks</i>