

# Introduction to American and Texas Government

## Government 310L

The University of Texas at Austin

Unique Number 38535

Spring 2012

Professor Jason P. Casellas, Ph.D.

MWF 2:00-2:50 p.m.

Room: UTC 2.102A

Office Hours: WF 10:00-11:30 a.m.

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Uang: Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Kelly: Mondays, 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

Tafolar: Mondays, 9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m and Fridays 8:00 a.m.-9:30 a.m.

**Prerequisite:** Twelve semester hours of college coursework and a passing score on the reading section of the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) test (or an appropriate assessment test).

### Course Description:

This course will examine the foundations, principles, institutions, and processes of American government. Through the examination of the Constitution, federalism, and the American creed, we will gain an appreciation for the political institutions that have sustained the United States for more than two hundred years. We will examine in detail the characteristics of the three major branches of government, and how separation of powers has worked and works in today's polity. We will then discuss the various extra-governmental institutions, which have an influence on governmental decisions, such as interest groups, political parties, and the media. Finally, we will explore American elections, political participation, and public opinion in order to better understand the processes which give American politics its very life. The course will conclude with a discussion of domestic and foreign policy, with reference to current political events.

### Required Texts

Bianco, William and David Canon. 2011. *American Politics Today*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. W. W. Norton Publishers.

Kollman, Ken. 2012. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). *Readings in American Politics: Analysis and Perspectives*. W.W. Norton Publishers

University of Texas at Austin Online Project  
Texas Government Website  
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>

### **Recommended**

Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay. *The Federalist Papers*  
ed. George W. Carey and James McClellan, The Gideon Edition.

### **Newspapers and Online Sources**

Students should read a major newspaper, such as the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal* daily in order to monitor American politics. We will discuss current events in class as they relate to the course material.

### **Course Grading**

Grades will be computed as follows:

Exam I (February 17)	25%
Exam II (April 4 and 6)	30%
Exam III (May 2 and 4)	30%
Random Quizzes/Attendance Checks	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

The following scale will be used to calculate final grades:

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

### **Exams**

The exams will test your knowledge of the readings, lectures, and classroom discussions. Exams will combine multiple-choice questions, identifications, and short essays. Make up exams will not be granted unless there is a verified illness or family emergency.

*Attendance Policy:* If you are habitually late and/or absent, your grade will suffer as 15% of the final grade is composed of quizzes and random attendance checks.

*Excused Absences* can be granted for an illness certified by a doctor, for family emergencies approved by the Dean, or for official university events with documentation (i.e., a letter from the coach). In the case of planned events, advance notice of at least one week must be given. DO NOT miss class and then arrive the next time with a letter documenting the reason for the absence.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to follow the University Honor Code. Namely, cheating or plagiarism will NOT be tolerated. Any instances will be reported to the Dean. For more information, please consult <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/>.

### **Cancelled Classes**

At times, classes may be cancelled. The class will be informed of these dates by email and/or blackboard and will be held responsible for any readings or assignments.

### **Religious Holy Days**

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me 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. Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>

### **Special Needs**

If you need special assistance due to a disability, please notify me before the need arises. Information is available from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259. <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

### **Course Changes**

I reserve the right to change the contents of this syllabus as the needs of the course develop.

**Copyright notice from the Professor:** I have taken steps to ensure that all course material, including this syllabus and the lectures associated with this class, are protected by copyright law as my own original expression. Students are authorized to take notes in class and thus create their own "derivative work" from my lectures, but this authorization extends only to your personal use. Reproduction, distribution, or publication (on-line or otherwise) of transcribed or taped versions of my lecture are not permitted

without my express written consent.

**Course Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Readings</b>
<b>January 18</b>	Introduction	<b>This document</b>
<b>January 20</b>	Democracy	<b>Bianco and Canon Chapter 1 The Declaration of Independence (7/4/1776) Kollman, 1.1</b>
<b>January 23</b>	Constitution and the Founding	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 2 and “The Constitution” TX Politics Website</b> Discuss results of South Carolina Primary
<b>January 25</b>	Constitution and the Founding	<b>Kollman, 2.1</b>
<b>January 27</b>	Constitution	<b>Kollman, 2.4</b>
<b>January 30</b>	Federalism and Texas	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 3</b>
<b>February 1</b>	Federalism	<b>Kollman, 2.2 Kollman, 2.3 Discuss results of Florida primary</b>
<b>February 3</b>	American Creed	<b>“Political Culture” TX Politics Website Kollman, 3.4 and 10.3</b>
<b>February 6</b>	Legislative	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 10 and “Legislative Branch” TX Politics</b>
<b>February 8</b>	Legislative Branch/Texas Legislature	<b>Kollman, 5.1 and 5.2</b>
<b>February 10</b>	Executive	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 11, “Executive Branch” TX Politics</b>
<b>February 13</b>	Executive	<b>Kollman, 6.1 and 6.5</b>
<b>February 15</b>	Executive Branch	<b>Lincoln, Abraham, <i>First Inaugural Address</i></b> <b>(<a href="http://libertyonline.hypermall.com/Lincoln/lincoln-1.html">http://libertyonline.hypermall.com/Lincoln/lincoln-1.html</a>)</b>

<b>February 17</b>	<b>→→→→</b>	<b><u>Exam One</u></b>
<b>February 20</b>	Judicial Branch	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 13, “Judicial Politics” TX Politics</b>
<b>February 22</b>	Judicial Branch	<b>Kollman, 8.1 and 8.2</b>
<b>February 24</b>	Elections	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 8</b>
<b>February 27</b>	Elections	<b>Kollman, 13.1 and 13.3</b>
<b>February 29</b>	Bureaucracy	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 12 and “Bureaucracy” TX Politics Kollman, 7.1</b>

<b>March 2</b>	Media	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 6</b>
<b>March 5</b>	Media	<b>Kollman, 14.1 and 14.2</b>
<b>March 7</b>	Parties	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 7 and “Political Parties” TX Politics</b>
<b>March 9</b>	Parties	<b>Kollman, 12.1</b>
<b>March 19</b>	Third Parties	<b>Kollman, 12.2</b>
<b>March 21</b>	Third Parties	<b>“Voting, Campaigns and Elections” TX Politics website</b>
<b>March 23</b>	Texas Politics Film	<b><i>Last Man Standing</i></b>
<b>March 26</b>	Interest Groups	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 9 and “Interest Groups” TX Politics</b>
<b>March 28</b>	Interest Groups	<b>Kollman, 11.1</b>
<b>March 30</b>	Public Opinion	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 5</b>
<b>April 2</b>	Public Opinion	<b>Kollman, 9.2 and 9.3</b>

April 4	→→→	<u>Exam Two (Part One)</u>
April 6	→→→	<u>Exam Two (Part Two)</u>
April 9	Participation	Kollman, 10.1 and 10.2
April 11	Civ Liberties	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 4</b>
April 13	Civil Liberties	<b>Kollman, Chapter Four</b>
April 16	Civil Liberties	<b>Catch up on readings or read ahead</b>
April 18	Civil Rights	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 14</b>
April 20	Civil Rights	<b>Lincoln, Abraham, “The Emancipation Proclamation”</b> ( <a href="http://libertyonline.hypermall.com/Lincoln/emancipate.html">http://libertyonline.hypermall.com/Lincoln/emancipate.html</a> ) <b>King Jr., Rev. Martin Luther, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”</b> ( <a href="http://www.almaz.com/nobel/peace/MLK-jail.html">http://www.almaz.com/nobel/peace/MLK-jail.html</a> )
April 23	Economic Policy	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 15</b> <b>Kollman, Chapter 14</b>
April 25	Social Policy	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 16</b> <b>Kollman, Chapter 16</b>
April 27	Foreign Policy	<b>B&amp;C: Chapter 17</b>
April 30	Catch Up	<b>Kollman, Chapter 17</b>
May 2	→→→→	<u>Exam Three (Part One)</u>

May 4	→→→→	<u>Exam Three (Part Two)</u>
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