Introduction to American and Texas Government GOV 310L

Unique: 38565
Professor Eric L. McDaniel

Fall 2012 Days: Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Time: 10-11 AM Lecture Classroom: Jester A121A

Instructor Information

Office: Phone:

Teaching Assistants Information
Office:
Office Hours

Rachel German Hector Ibarra-Rueda Alexander Hudson

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 and Items

- 1. Kollman, Ken. 2012. The American Political System. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. \$98.65 EBook Alternative \$32.89
- 2. Additional readings and videos will be posted on Blackboard {BB}.
- 3. Students are expected to be aware of current events and regularly read either the New York Times or Washington Post. Articles from these two media sources will be posted throughout the semester. Students should be prepared to answer questions related to the posted articles for quizzes and exams.
- 4. Top Hat Monocle license

The license is available at the COOP or online. The instructions for online purchase and set up are in the syllabus section of Blackboard.

- 5. Bluebooks for exams.
- 6. #2 Pencils for exams.

Films

All of the films are available on Blackboard. They will not be shown in class, it is the student's responsibility to take the time to watch the film and take notes.

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.

3. Kirk, Michael. 2010. "Obama's Deal." In Frontline. Boston: WGBH.
The purpose of this film is to provide an example of how the president works with Congress to pass legislation. Using the example of the 2010 health care reform bills, I expect student to have a better understanding of congressional behavior and how the president can influence policy making. This is not an attempt to garner support or opposition for health care reform or the Obama administration. The purpose of this film is to provide a clear example of how a bill is passed.

4. Stekler, Paul Jeffery. 2004. "Last Man Standing: Politics, Texas Style." New Video.

The purpose of this film is to provide a glimpse of how a campaign is carried out. Using an election in Texas, this film provides a detailed account of how candidates reach out to voters and how voters evaluate candidates. When watching this film, make sure to be aware of the various mobilization efforts by candidates as well as how they use the media to get their message to the public.

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 be given on Blackboard during a specific time period. There are no make-ups for missed quizzes. The quizzes are worth 25% 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 8th, you must inform your teaching assistant that you want to participate in the alternative assignment by October 1st and turn in that alternative assignment by October 15th. 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 exams will use multiple choice and essay formats. Each exam will take place over two class periods, the first day will be essay and the second day will be multiple choice. Each exam is worth 25% of your final grade.

Test Preparation

The best way to prepare for the exam is to make sure that you fully understand the core concepts and how to apply them to a give situation. Your knowledge of the concepts should be developed well enough that you can explain it back to someone else. If you can teach the concepts to someone else, you will be able to successfully master the essay exam. This also holds for the multiple choice, while there will be some factual questions, such as names, dates and percentages, the majority of the exam will be conceptual and applied. To do well in this course, you should plan to devote 2-3 hours of study for every hour of class time.

Quizz	es	2.	5%				
Exam	One	2.	5%				
Exam	Two	2!	5%				
<u>Exam</u>	Three	2.	<u>5%</u>				
Total		100%					
Α	93-100	В	83-86	С	73-76	D	63-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	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 may be submitted for consideration **AFTER** one week has passed since the assignment was returned to students. This allows the student time to re-read his/her answers and think carefully about what improvements could have been made.

Grade complaints will not be considered once two weeks have passed. For example, if I return a graded assignment on Thursday February 14th, students must submit a complaint **BEFORE** the Thursday February 28th. Once class is over on that Thursday, 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

<u>E-mail</u>

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.101emailetiquettetips.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, class announcements and quizzes 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.

	Со	urse Schedule
Date	Class Topic	Reading
29-Aug	Class Introduction	
31-Aug	What is Government?	Chapter One
3-Sep	Labor Day No Class	
5-Sep	What is Government?	
7-Sep	What is Government?	
10-Sep	Public Policy	Chapter 15
12-Sep	Public Policy	Chapter 16
14-Sep	Public Policy	
17-Sep	Constitutions	Chapter 2
19-Sep	Constitutions	
21-Sep	Federalism	Chapter 3
24-Sep	Federalism	
26-Sep	Civil Rights and Civil Liberties	Chapter 4
28-Sep	Civil Rights and Civil Liberties	Davis, Darren W., and Brian D. Silver. 2004. "Civil Liberties vs. Security: Public Opinion in the Context of the Terrorist Attacks on America." American Journal of Political Science 48:28-46. {BB} God In America {BB}
1-Oct	Civil Rights and Civil Liberties	Lemon Grove Incident {BB}
3-Oct	Exam One	Bring Bluebook and Pen or Pencil
5-Oct	Exam One	Bring #2 Pencil
8-Oct	Congress	Chapter 5
10-Oct	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." Legislative Studies Quarterly 23 (4):585-95. {BB}

12-Oct	Congress	Obama's Deal {BB}
15-Oct	Presidency	Chapter 6
17-Oct	Presidency	
19-Oct	Bureaucracy	Chapter 7
22-Oct	Judiciary	Chapter 8
24-Oct	Judiciary	
26-Oct	Political Parties	Chapter 12
29-Oct	Political Parties	Philpot, Tasha S. 2004. "A Party of a Different Color? Race, Campaign Communication, and Party Politics." Political Behavior 26 (3):249-70. {BB}
31-Oct	Interest Groups	Interest Groups
2-Nov	Interest Groups	Walker, Jack L. 1983. The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America. The American Political Science Review 77 (2):390-406. {BB}
5-Nov	Interest Groups	
3-1404	Interest Groups	
7-Nov	Exam Two	Bring Bluebook and Pen or Pencil
	·	Bring Bluebook and Pen or Pencil Bring #2 Pencil
7-Nov	Exam Two	
7-Nov 9-Nov	Exam Two Exam Two	Bring #2 Pencil
7-Nov 9-Nov 12-Nov	Exam Two Exam Two Media	Bring #2 Pencil
7-Nov 9-Nov 12-Nov 14-Nov	Exam Two Exam Two Media Media	Bring #2 Pencil Chapter 14
7-Nov 9-Nov 12-Nov 14-Nov	Exam Two Exam Two Media Media Campaigns and Elections	Bring #2 Pencil Chapter 14 Chapter 13
7-Nov 9-Nov 12-Nov 14-Nov 16-Nov	Exam Two Exam Two Media Media Campaigns and Elections Campaigns and Elections	Bring #2 Pencil Chapter 14 Chapter 13
7-Nov 9-Nov 12-Nov 14-Nov 16-Nov 21-Nov	Exam Two Exam Two Media Media Campaigns and Elections Campaigns and Elections Campaigns and Elections	Bring #2 Pencil Chapter 14 Chapter 13 Last Man Standing {BB}

30-Nov	Political Participation	Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady. 1999. Civic Participation and the Equality Problem. In Civic Engagement in American Democracy, edited by T. Skocpol and M. P. Fiorina. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. {BB}
3-Dec	Foreign Policy	Chapter 17
5-Dec	Exam Three	Bring Bluebook and Pen or Pencil
7-Dec	Exam Three	Bring #2 Pencil