Introduction to American and Texas Government GOV 310L Unique: 38360

Professor Eric L. McDaniel

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Fall 2010 Office: BATTS 4.122

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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 D. Stephen Voss. 2003. *The New American Democracy*. 5th edition. Longman Press.
- 2. Coursepack available at Paradigm Copies 407 West 24th Street
- 3. #2 pencils for the exams.

Coursework

Ouizzes 20%

Throughout the semester there will be several 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 or discussion section. 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.

Exams: worth 80%

There will be four 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 multiple choice. Each exam is worth 20% of your final grade.

Quizzes	20%
Exam One	20%
Exam Two	20%
Exam Three	20%
Final Four	20%
Total	100%

A 90-100 B 80-89 C 70-79 D 60-69 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 it.

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."

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. For further information, please visit the Student Judicial Services web site at www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/."

Special Needs

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY. If they certify your needs, I will work with you to make appropriate arrangements. Because the first exam is so soon, you will need to bring the necessary documentation to your teaching assistant by February 1, 2006.

Religious Holy Day Observance

If an assignment or exam falls due on a day when you are observing a religious holy day, we will work with you to find an acceptable alternative time to complete the assignment. Please notify us of any conflicts in advance.

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 will lower the probability of a response. For tips on proper e-mail etiquette please visit http://www.101emailetiquettetips.com/.

Extra Credit

Extra credit will be offered throughout the course. It will come in several forms, such as attending campus lectures, participation in research projects, and group projects. Students will be informed of extra credit opportunities as the semester progresses.

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 special cases, the lecture notes will be available on Blackboard as well. Make sure to regularly check Blackboard for announcements and assignments.

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 us at least a week before your scheduled absence. We 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. In order for this information to be better processed, make sure to contact one of the teaching assistants.

Make-up Exams

The make-up exams for this class will all be administered during the class's scheduled final exam time period December 8 2-5 PM. Students have the option of taking the make-up exam, no questions asked. Students must inform the teaching assistant within a week of the missed exam that they wish to take the make-up 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
25-Aug	Course Introduction	
27-Aug	What is Government?	Chapter One
30-Aug	What is Democracy?	Chapter One
1-Sep	What is Democracy?	Dahl, Robert A. 1961. <i>Who Governs?</i> New Haven: Yale University Press. pp. 1-10 {CP}
3-Sep	Constitution	Video: Founding Brothers
6-Sep	No Class	Labor Day
8-Sep	Constitution	Chapter Two
10-Sep	Constitution	Chapter Two
13-Sep	Federalism	Chapter Three

15-Sep	Federalism	Federalist no. 10 & 51 {Textbook Appendices}
17-Sep	American Creed	Chapter Four
		Huntington, Samuel P., and Alan Wolfe. 2004. Creedal Passions. <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 83 (5):155-159. {CP}
20-Sep	Public Opinion	Chapter Five
		Zaller, John R. 1992. <i>The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 40-52 {CP}
22-Sep	Public Opinion	Chapter Five
		Nyhan, Brendan. 2010. "The Fight is Over, the Myths Remain." <i>New York Times</i> , March 24. {CP}
24-Sep	Exam One	
27-Sep	Legislative Branch	Chapter 12
29-Sep	Legislative Branch	Chapter 12
		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):585-595. {CP}
1-Oct	Executive Branch	Chapter Thirteen
4-Oct	Bureaucracy	Chapter Fourteen
		Gaines, Brian J. 2002. Where's the Rally? Approval and Trust of the President, Cabinet, congress and Government Since September 11. <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i> 35 (5):530-536 {CP}
6-Oct	Judicial Branch	Chapter Fifteen
8-Oct		
0-001	Interest Groups	Chapter Seven
11-Oct	Interest Groups Interest Groups	Chapter Seven Chapter Seven
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15-Oct	Media	Chapter Nine
18-Oct	Media	Chapter Nine
		McQuail, Denis. 2000. The Influences and Effects of Mass Media. In <i>Media Power in Politics</i> , edited by D. A. Graber. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. {CP}
20-Oct	Political Parties	Chapter Eight
22-Oct	Political Parties	Chapter Eight
		Muirhead, Russell. 2006. A Defense of Party Spirit. Perspectives on Politics 4 (4):713-728. {CP}
25-Oct	Congressional Elections	Chapter Eleven
27-Oct	Congressional Elections	Chapter Eleven
29-Oct	Congressional Elections	Video: The Candidate
1-Nov	Congressional Elections	Video: The Candidate
3-Nov	Presidential Elections	Chapter Ten
5-Nov	Presidential Elections	Video: By the People: The Election of Barack Obama
8-Nov	Individual Participation	Chapter Six
		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. {CP}
10-Nov	Individual Participation	Chapter Six
12-Nov	Exam Three	
15-Nov	Civil Liberties	Chapter Sixteen
17-Nov	Civil Rights	Chapter Seventeen
19-Nov	Civil Rights	Video: Lemon Grove Incident
22-Nov	Domestic Policy	Chapter Eighteen
		Howlett, Michael, and M. Ramesh. 1995. <i>Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems</i> . New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 1-17 {CP}

24-Nov	Domestic Policy	Chapter Eighteen
26-Nov	No Class	Thanksgiving Break
29-Nov	Economic Policy	Chapter Nineteen
		Bosso, Christopher J. 1987. <i>Pesticides and Politics: The Life Cycle of a Public Issue</i> . Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. pp. 3-20 {CP}
1-Dec	Foreign Policy	Chapter Twenty
3-Dec	Exam Four	
8-Dec	Make-Up Exam	2-5 PM
		The room will be announced later in the semester