

**American Government**  
**GOV 310L (38400)**  
The University of Texas at Austin  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 2-3:30 PM  
Garrison Hall 0.102

Fall 2010

## **Professor**

Dr. Samuel Workman  
Office: Mezes 3.128  
Email: [sworkman@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:sworkman@austin.utexas.edu)  
Phone: 512-232-1445  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM

## **Teaching Assistants**

Rachel Navarre  
[rnavarre@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:rnavarre@mail.utexas.edu)  
TU 12:30pm-2pm & TH 11am-12:30pm  
Batts Hall 1.118

Ariel Helfer  
[ariel.helfer@gmail.com](mailto:ariel.helfer@gmail.com)  
M and W 11am-12:30pm  
Batts Hall 1.118

## **Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to American politics. The course centers on the fundamental role played by the institutions of American government including Congress, the Presidency, Federal Judiciary, and the Bureaucracy in understanding political dynamics in the United States. The course also examines public opinion and participation as inputs to the institutions of American government, and the mediating role of organizations such as interest groups, the news media, and political parties. In addition to mastering basic facts about American government, the course will apply political science theories to the broader questions of democratic government and examine evidence assessing these theories. The course also makes connections between politics at the federal level of government and the political institutions and processes of the state of Texas.

## **Pre-requisites**

12 hours of college course-work and a passing score on the reading section on the THEA test. The course fulfills the first half of the legislative requirement for Government.

## Course Requirements

Students are required to attend each lecture and participate in class discussions. In addition, students should be prepared to discuss current events related to American politics. The best way to do this is browsing the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* online. Finally, students should also be prepared to discuss politics and current events relevant to Texas state politics. Students are also to complete supplemental readings as required and provided by the Professor. The required text for the course is *American Government: Power and Purpose, 11th Ed.* (FULL EDITION) by Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, and Ansolabehere. This text is available for purchase at the University Co-Op. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before each meeting of the course.

In addition to a concern with the institutions and processes that shape public policy at the Federal level, the course will frequently draw comparisons to, and focus on, state government in Texas including its unique political institutions and political processes. To facilitate this discussion, students will frequently be asked to become familiar with content maintained on the Texas Politics website at <http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>.

## Grading

Grading for the course is based on four midterm exams. Each exam is worth 100 points and will constitute 25 percent of the students grade. There will be no final examination during the University-scheduled finals week. Each exam is based equally on both the assigned readings and class lecture. This means that things will go drastically wrong for you if you do not both read the assigned text(s), attend each class, and take good notes. This course will use plus/minus grading. *Grades will not be curved and are not negotiable (do not even think about sending me that email).* The grading scale is as follows:

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

## Make-Up Exam Policy

Do not miss regularly scheduled exams. You do not want to take the make-up exam. There will be one makeup exam offered at the end of the semester and students will be permitted to take this exam only under the most extreme and dire circumstances preventing the student from taking the regularly scheduled exam. Students will not be permitted to take the makeup exam without prior *documentation* and *approval* by the Professor. Students missing an exam should notify the Professor immediately, or if possible, before the exam. Students may make-up only one exam with no exceptions. Note that this means failure to take two or more exams results in grades of zero for the second, third, and fourth missed exam.

## Texts and Materials

Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, and Ansolabehere. 2010. *American Government: Power and Purpose*. 11th Edition. New York: W.W. Norton.

Texas Politics. <http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>

Other supplemental readings as selected by the Professor.

## Contacting the Professor

Students should address questions first to the Teaching Assistants, and only then to the Professor. The Teaching Assistants are there to help students understand the material and field general course questions. In addition, I tend to check my email only once every 24 hours. Depending on when I check my email on a given day, the earliest time at which a response may be expected is within 24 hours. Please be aware that I also do not respond to emails on the weekend.

## Academic Dishonesty

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are 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. During examinations, you must do your own work. Copying and collaboration with others is strictly prohibited. At a minimum, any collaborative behavior during the examinations will result in failure of the exam.

## University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

## Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>. If you require accommodation, it is your responsibility to bring your note to me *early* in the semester so we can work our arrangements.

## Important Administrative Dates

First Day of Class	Thursday, August 26
Last Day of Official Add/Drop Period	August 30
Labor Day Holiday	September 6
Last Day to Drop without possible Academic Penalty	September 22
Academic Advising Dates	October 21-22, 25-27
Thanksgiving Holiday	November 25-27
Last Day of Class	Thursday, December 2

## Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
Thursday, August 26	Fundamental Tensions in American Government	Lowi, et al Chapter 1
Tuesday, August 31	History and the Structure of Government	Lowi, et al Chapters 2 and 3
Thursday, September 2	Chance for Bonus Points	LAST CHANCE
Tuesday, September 7	Civil Rights, Liberties, and Law	Lowi, et al Chapter 4
Thursday, September 9	Introducing American Political Institutions	
Tuesday, September 14	<b>First Midterm Examination</b>	Bring a Blue Book
Thursday, September 16	Congress the Institution	Lowi, et al Chapter 5
Tuesday, September 21	Members of Congress	
Thursday, September 23	Presidential Power	Lowi, et al Chapter 6
Tuesday, September 28	Presidential Governance	
Thursday, September 30	Interbranch Politics-The Budget	
Tuesday, October 5	The Federal Bureaucracy	Lowi, et al Chapter 7
Thursday, October 7	The Federal Judiciary	Lowi, et al Chapter 8
Tuesday, October 12	<b>Second Midterm Examination</b>	Bring a Blue Book
Thursday, October 14	Organized Interests	Lowi, et al Chapter 12
Tuesday, October 19	The Media	Lowi, et al Chapter 13
Thursday, October 21	Political Parties	Lowi, et al Chapter 11
Tuesday, October 26	Public Opinion	Lowi, et al Chapter 9
Thursday, October 28	Elections and Voting	Lowi, et al Chapter 10
Tuesday, November 2	<b>Third Midterm Examination</b>	Bring a Blue Book
Thursday, November 4	The Policy Process, Stages and Theories	
Tuesday, November 9	Economic Policy General Outlines	Lowi, et al Chapter 14
Thursday, November 11	Economic Policy Broad Approaches	
Tuesday, November 16	Social Welfare Policy	Lowi, et al Chapter 15
Thursday, November 18	The Politics of Public Risks	
Tuesday, November 23	Foreign Policy	Lowi, et al Chapter 16
Thursday, November 25	Turkey and Football	Thanksgiving Holiday
Tuesday, November 30	<b>Makeup Examination</b>	Bring a Blue Book
Thursday, December 2	<b>Fourth Midterm Examination</b>	Bring a Blue Book