Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the American political system and is the large lecture component of Triad F, whose theme this semester is “gateways.” In this class, we will learn about the founding of the U.S. government and key political institutions including the presidency, legislature, and bureaucracy. We will also discuss the media, elections, and political parties, exploring how all of these serve as gateways for our nation's political processes, behavior, and policy outcomes.

Student Learning Objectives

At the end of the semester you will be able to:

- Recall basic facts related to the foundations of US national government.
- Describe key political concepts related to US institutions such as Congress, the Presidency, and the Judiciary.
- Demonstrate your understanding of key concepts relating to US political behavior such as voting, elections, political parties, interest groups and the media.

Required Materials

The following materials are required for this course. You are also expected to use Blackboard for all course information and content and your Islander account for course emails.


**Website:** Aplia – the companion website to the course textbook


**Clicker:** Turning Technologies clicker or ResponseWare

Clickers are available at the bookstore or ResponseWare may be purchased as an application for web-enabled (or “smart”) devices at: [http://store.turningtechnologies.com](http://store.turningtechnologies.com) with school code TaMcc3. Clickers devices and ResponseWare applications must be registered at: [http://webreg.turningtechnologies.com/](http://webreg.turningtechnologies.com/).

See the “Course Materials” tab in Blackboard for more information on purchase options and detailed instructions for registering accounts. Note that all materials should be purchased and registered no later than January 29, 2013 in order to complete required assignments and earn participation points.
Course Assignments and Grades

Course Grades

Course grades are based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade Assigned as follows:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20% Exam 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>A = 89.5 - 100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>20% Exam 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>B = 79.5 - 89.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>20% Exam 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>C = 69.5 - 79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15% Aplia online assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td>D = 59.5 - 69.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>10% Ideology essay</td>
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<td>F = 59.4 and below</td>
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<tr>
<td>15% Class participation</td>
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Exams

There will be three non-cumulative exams for the course, and an optional final to replace your lowest exam score. Each exam is worth 20% of your final course grade, totaling 60%. All exams will include 40 multiple choice questions and will be taken online on Blackboard. See the class schedule for exam dates.

Aplia

Aplia is a supplement to the course textbook, and you are responsible for completing online assignments each week on the Aplia website. These assignments are due by classtime on the dates noted on the class schedule and are worth 15% of your final course grade. Because the Aplia assignments cover the textbook chapters, you should plan to first complete the required reading for each week then attempt the Aplia assignments.

Ideology Essay

Throughout the semester we will learn how political ideology shapes American government and politics. You will write a 3 – 4 page essay making an argument that establishes the degree to which that knowledge of your personal political ideology type serves as a gateway for affecting politics in the United States. This essay will be due on Blackboard, Thursday, April 18 by 2pm and is worth 10% of your final course grade. It is also counted towards your final grade in seminar and composition. More instructions will be given closer to the due date to fully outline the expectations of this assignment.

Class Participation

We will have daily class activities, ranging from pop reading quizzes to small group discussions, which require your participation. These activities will be graded and cumulatively comprise 15% of your final course grade. If you are tardy or violate the expectations for class decorum, you will not be given the opportunity to earn participation points for the day. Make-ups for missed activities will only be allowed in the event of an excused absence (see the excused absence policy on the following page).
Grading Policies

Make-Up Exams and Assignments
Make-up exams and assignments will be given only if you have an excused absence which include: participation in a university-affiliated activity that requires you to miss class, a religious holiday, death or major illness in your immediate family, illness of a dependent family member, participation in legal proceedings that require your presence, injury or illness too severe to allow you to attend class, or required participation in military duties.

To be excused, you should notify your seminar instructor by email prior to the date of absence if possible. In cases where advance notification is not possible due to an emergency, you should provide notification by the end of the second day after the absence. You may be asked to provide documentation substantiating the reason for the absence within one week of your absence. Make-up exams and assignments must be completed on the day agreed upon by you and your seminar instructor.

Late Assignments
Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade per day late. In the event of an emergency or excused absence, a student may be given additional days to complete the assignment without penalty if we discuss it and agree that additional time is necessary.

Extra Credit
Extra credit is given periodically. Only students who are present in class are eligible for extra credit.

Grade Appeals
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, if you believe that you have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, you may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon you to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. If you have a complaint, please first discuss it with Dr. Ross. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at: http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, you may contact the Office of Student Affairs at 825-2612.

Dropping the Class
If you are considering dropping this course, please discuss it with Dr. Ross to be sure it is the best course of action. Should you decide to drop the course, you must initiate the process by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Simply stopping attendance and participation will NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 12, 2013 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.
Classroom Policies

Attendance and Tardiness
You are expected to attend class and be on time. Part of your course grade reflects your attendance and participation in class, and, therefore, it is imperative that you attend class to be successful in this course.

Class Decorum
During class you are expected to behave respectfully and contribute to a positive learning environment. This means that refrain from using technology inappropriately (i.e. text messaging) in class. Also, during class discussion, you are expected to be respectful of others’ opinions and open to a diversity of ideas.

Course Communication
All course communication is sent through your university email account (Islander account), and all course materials and announcements are posted to Blackboard. If you need assistance with these, contact the Student Computer Helpdesk at 361-825-5618.

Students with Disabilities
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Corpus Christi Hall 116, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see Dr. Ross as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity
You are expected to do your own work. If you are caught cheating in any way, your final grade will be changed to an F and the appropriate university officials will be contacted regarding your behavior.

Student Athletes
All student athletes should notify Dr. Ross and their seminar and composition instructors at the beginning of the semester that they are a member of a university sports team and provide the dates they will miss class. All Aplia assignments should be completed remotely. Make-ups for missed exams and other assignments should be arranged with your seminar instructor.

Academic Advising
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
<th>Assignment due by class time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>January 24</td>
<td>Overview of Course Expectations</td>
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<td>Aplia Week 1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Unit 1: US System of Government</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>January 29</td>
<td>Political Culture &amp; Ideology</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>Aplia Week 2</td>
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<td>January 31</td>
<td>Guest speaker</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>February 5</td>
<td>The Constitution</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>Aplia Week 3</td>
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<td>February 7</td>
<td>Federalism &amp; Immigration</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>February 12</td>
<td>Freedom of Expression</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
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<td>February 14</td>
<td>Civil Liberties</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>The Struggle for Civil Rights</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
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<td>February 21</td>
<td>Civil Rights Today</td>
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<td>February 26</td>
<td><strong>Unit 2: Campaigns &amp; Elections</strong></td>
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<td>February 28</td>
<td>EXAM 1</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>Political Parties</td>
<td>Chapter 8 &amp; 9</td>
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<td>March 7</td>
<td>Interest Groups</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>March 12 &amp; 14</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>Electoral College</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
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<td>March 21</td>
<td>Campaigns &amp; Voting</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>March 26</td>
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<td>Chapter 6 &amp; 7</td>
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<td>March 28</td>
<td>Movie: <em>The Campaign</em></td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>April 2</td>
<td><strong>Unit 3: Political Institutions</strong></td>
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<td>EXAM 2</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
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<td>Balance the Budget Day 1</td>
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<td>April 18</td>
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<td>April 23</td>
<td>The Presidency</td>
<td>Chapter 12 &amp; 13</td>
<td>Aplia Week 14</td>
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<td>April 25</td>
<td>The Bureaucracy</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>The Judiciary</td>
<td>Chapter 14</td>
<td>Aplia Week 15</td>
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<td>May 2</td>
<td>The Supreme Court</td>
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<td>Week 16</td>
<td>May 7</td>
<td><strong>EXAM 3</strong></td>
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<td>May 14</td>
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