U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A basic survey of American government, including fundamental political institutions, with special attention to the United States Constitution. Meets the University core requirement and the Texas state statutory requirement for U.S constitution.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

On completion of this course students will be able to:

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

MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be required to take three in-class tests during the course of the semester, in addition to one comprehensive final exam at the end of the semester. Students are also required to write an issue position paper. Students will also earn credit for attendance and in class clicker quizzes. There are also online computer assignments, which are accessible via Blackboard.

Tests

The tests will all be multiple choice. There will be 50 objective questions (combination of multiple choice and true-false questions). Each objective question will be worth 2 points each.
Test Schedule

Test 1- Sept 21
Test 2- Oct 12
Test 3- Nov 9

Learnsmart (Smartbook) assignments

Students are required to submit regular online assignments through the Connect Platform, which is accessible through Blackboard. There is one assignment due for each chapter of the textbook. The list of assignments, together with relevant deadlines is available within Connect. You are responsible for meeting the relevant deadlines without any further reminders from the instructor. No late work is accepted under any circumstance. However, the lowest two scores are dropped from the calculation of your average assignment score.

The assignments are “open book.” However, you are expected to work alone, and any collusion/working in groups/sharing of answers represents academic dishonesty (see below for policy on academic dishonesty).

Final Exam

The comprehensive final exam will comprise of 100 objective multiple choice/true-false questions relating to material covered in class and in readings. The final exam is at 7.15pm on 7th December.

Issue Position Paper

Students are required to write one issue position paper on a topic related to the course. All topics must be submitted for approval of the instructor. The topic needs to fulfill the following criteria:

1. Relevance to US politics/public policy
2. Be the product of independent research
3. Contain appropriate referencing- please refer to issue position paper guide
4. 5-10 pages text in length
Papers are due by class time on Nov 2. A 10% late penalty will apply for every day the paper is late.

Students must submit a hard copy of their paper to the instructor AND submit an electronic copy of their paper to the class account on www.turnitin.com. The paper is deemed late until both the hard copy and electronic submission have been received. Late papers should be instructed electronically via e-mail attachment and to Turnitin.com

**Turnitin.com**

You must create an account at www.turnitin.com as soon as possible, and by no later than 9th October in any event. The process for creating an account and submitting your papers is set out as follows:

**Step 1**
To register and create a user profile, go to www.turnitin.com and select your language from the drop down menu.

Click on the "Create Account" link on the homepage and the Create a User Profile page will open.

Click on the "Student" link. Fill in the required information in the new user profile form. In order to create a profile, you must have a class ID and an enrollment password. You can get this information from your instructor.

Class ID: 10151640
Enrollment Password: 2305-007

Once you have created your profile, click the "I Agree" button to log into Turnitin.

**Step 2 - Student Homepage**

Your class will show up on your Student Homepage. Click on the name of your class to open your class portfolio.

**Step 3 - Class Portfolio**

Your Class Portfolio shows the assignments your instructor has created and your submissions to the class.

**Step 4 - Submitting a Paper**

To submit a paper, click the "Submit" button next to the paper assignment.
The paper submission page will open. Enter a title for your paper. To select a paper for submission, click the browse button and locate the paper on your computer. We accept submissions in these formats:

- MS Word, WordPerfect, RTF, PDF, PostScript, HTML, plain text (.txt)

After entering a title for your paper and selecting a file, click "Upload" to upload your paper.

If your paper is in a format that we do not accept, you can submit it by cut and paste. To submit a paper this way, select cut & paste upload using the pulldown at the top of the form.

Copy the text of your paper from a word processing program and then paste it into the text box in the submission form. If you submit your paper using the cut and paste method, you can skip the next step.

**Step 5 - Submitting a Paper Confirmation**

The paper you chose to submit will be in the preview. Look over all the information and make sure that it is correct. To confirm the submission, click the "Submit" button.

After you confirm your submission, a digital receipt will be shown. A copy of the receipt will be e-mailed to you. To return to your portfolio and view your submission, click the "Go to Portfolio" button.

**Clicker Quizzes/Attendance**

Students will be assessed on the basis of their performance on regular in class clicker quizzes. There will usually be 10 clicker questions each week with students receiving 1 or 2 points for every correct response. The quizzes will be based on the reading/lecture material for the previous and/or current week. Students will also receive credit for attendance (typically 5 points at the beginning of each class and 5 points at the end of class). There are no makeups for missed class quizzes. However, the lowest class quiz score is dropped.

**Clicker Options**

In this course, you have the option of using an i>clicker, i>clicker+, or i>clicker2 remote, or using REEF polling, which enables you to vote via a web-enabled device like a laptop or smart phone. PLEASE NOTE that REEF polling cannot be used in a course where your instructor has not enabled REEF polling. Check with your other instructors to ensure that REEF polling is permitted in each course you take—otherwise, you may want to consider purchasing a remote so that you can use it in all your courses. Only purchase a REEF pollingsubscription if:

You will not be using i>clicker in another course that does not allow REEF polling as an
alternative to purchasing a remote.  
You do not plan to sell back a remote to the bookstore.  
You have access to a wireless device (i.e. a laptop, iPhone, iPod Touch, or Android) running a 
browser that supports AJAX, JavaScript, and HTTPS requests such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, 
Chrome or Safari.  
Be sure to check with your other instructors if you have questions about the possibility of using 
REEF polling in your course(s).  

Registration  

You are required to purchase an i>clicker remote or a REEF polling subscription for in-class 
participation. i>clicker is a response system that allows you to respond to questions I pose 
during class, and you will be graded on that feedback and/or your in-class participation (REEF 
polling works the same way). In order to receive this credit, you will need to register your 
i>clicker remote or set up your REEF polling account by September 21. If you have decided to 
use REEF polling instead of a remote, please see below for registration instructions.  

i>clicker remote registration:  

You must have come to class at least once and voted on at least one question in order to complete 
this registration properly. Once you have responded to a question with your i>clicker remote, go 
to http://www.iclicker.com/registration. Complete the fields with your first name, last name, 
student ID, and remote ID. Your student ID will be your Islander ID. The remote ID is the series 
of numbers and sometimes letters found on the bottom of the back of your i>clicker remote. 
i>clicker will be used every day in class, and you are responsible for bringing your remote daily.  

REEF Polling by i>clicker  

You also have the option of using REEF Polling by i>clicker in class this term. REEF Polling 
helps me to understand what you know, gives everyone a chance to participate in class, and 
allows you to review the quiz material after class. I will use REEF Polling to keep track of 
attendance; please refer to the attendance policy on page 9 of this syllabus. Participation with 
REEF Polling and your performance on in class quizzes will account for 15 % of your final 
grade. You will need to create a REEF Polling account to vote in class using your laptop, smart phone, 
or tablet connected to the university’s Wi-Fi. You may also use your i>clicker remote in 
combination with your REEF Polling account.
Creating Your REEF Polling Account

Go to [http://reef-education.com](http://reef-education.com) or download the REEF Polling app for iPhone/iPad to sign up for a REEF Polling account. You should use your university email address and your Islander ID in the Student ID field. If you need to change your email address, password, or student ID, edit your account profile. Do not create and use more than one REEF Polling account as you will only receive credit from a single account.

Creating a REEF Polling account automatically starts a free trial subscription that is valid for

Add a Clicker to Your REEF Polling Account

If you want to use your i>clicker + or i>clicker 2 remote, you must register it with your REEF account. Register your clicker by logging into REEF Polling, navigate to your profile, and then enter your 8-character clicker ID. You may use either your smart device or registered clicker to vote in classroom polls throughout the term and will be able to review your session history no matter which device you use.

Add This Course to Your REEF Polling Account

Search with the following information to find this course and add it to your REEF Polling account:
Institution: Texas A and M at Corpus Christi
Course: POLS-2305-007

Cheating

I consider bringing a fellow student’s i>clicker to class to be cheating and a violation of the University Honor Code. If you are caught with a remote other than your own or have votes in a class that you did not attend, you will forfeit all clicker points and may face additional disciplinary action.

Other forms of cheating include calling out/whispering answers and looking at another student’s response to questions. Such behavior will also result in disciplinary action.

Grading Scheme

Attendance/Quizzes (15%)
Learnsmart Assignments (10%)
Tests: (35 %)
Final Exam: (20 %)
Research Paper: (20 %)

A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; F = Less than 60

REQUIRED TEXT

Where and How to Get It:
Student Options for Purchasing AND Registering Into the Course
CHOICES:

1. **Bookstore**: Your bookstore has this package which includes the print book and the Connect Code. (The Connect code you will need to access the online study modules is included in the package.) To register you follow the same steps as below but you enter your code.

OR:

2. **Buy the package on the direct to student purchasing site**:  

3. **Online**: All DIGITAL. You can purchase Connect Plus (no print book, Ebook and access to all the Connect/Learnsmart content) directly from the course website.
   - Go to Blackboard, and click on the first assignment listed in “Learnsmart Assignments folder listed under Content (left hand menu).
   - Click the “Register Now” Button.
   - Enter your email address.
   - Enter your access code, select “Buy Online”, or you can “Start Free Trial” if you don’t have an access code.
   - Complete the registration form, click “Submit”

EXAMPLE:
REQUIRED HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

i>Clicker Remote or REEF polling Software

In this course, you have the option of using an i>clicker, i>clicker+, or i>clicker2 remote, or using REEF polling, which enables you to vote via a web-enabled device like a laptop or smart phone.

COURSE POLICIES

1. Attendance/tardiness- Regular attendance is required for this course. It is in students’ interest to attend class, since there is a strong relationship between attendance and participation and semester
grades. Approximately 50% of the Clicker Grade will be based on attendance. Paying close attention and taking notes is essential to your success in the class. Attendance data may be taken into consideration in determining students’ grades for border line cases (i.e. students with scores falling on borderline between two grades). Your lowest weekly clicker score will be dropped at the end of the semester. Students should arrive to class on time, since tardiness is disruptive to class proceedings.

2. Make-ups (Examinations) – Students are required to take examinations at the scheduled class time. In a limited set of circumstances e.g. illness with a supporting doctor’s note, participation in University athletic events- students will be eligible to take a make-up examination. In most circumstances, this should be arranged with the instructor BEFORE the examination, or at the very latest within 24 hours of the time of the test. Failure to comply with this requirement means that the students forfeits the opportunity to sit a make-up. There are NO makeups for missed quizzes, but the lowest class quiz score is dropped. There are no make-ups for missed Learnsmart assignments, but the lowest two scores are dropped.

3. Extra Credit -- A limited amount of extra credit may be available to students over the course of the semester. Any extra credit assignment will be made available to all students on an ad hoc basis and announced in class. Students might, for example, be offered option of attending an on campus lecture, or event, and write a short paper on the event with a strict deadline for the assignment announced in class. There will also be a discussion board in Blackboard in which I will “throw out” controversial topics for discussion. Participation in these discussions is optional, but the instructor MAY award extra credit to students who participate in radomly designated threads. Ignorance about an assignment (eg resulting from a failure to attend class) does not entitle students to submit the assignment after the deadline. There will be no “tailor made” extra credit (provided to students on an individual basis) and students should not count on extra credit as a means for remedying poor performance on tests and/or papers. There is no general entitlement to extra credit.

4. Incompletes – Will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

5. Assistance -- Please feel free to talk with me about your work or about politics and political science in general before or after class, or during the class “break”. If you wish to meet me at another time, please see me to arrange an appointment. You should also avail yourself of the opportunity to seek assistance from the Tutoring and Learning Center in the Bell Library. Political Science tutors may also available.

6. Academic etiquette -- Students are expected to attend and participate in class in professional manner.
This means: Arriving to class on time/ or if unavoidably detained, entering class in a quiet manner
Turning off ringers on cell phones
Not reading/texting/using internet while in class
Remaining in class for duration
Not talking to fellow students except to address class

7 Academic Integrity -- University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with
the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to
penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination
materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work
of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of
academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in the score of a 0 for the assignment.

8. Dropping a Class – I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class.
However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please
consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the
course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the
Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and
participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. November 6th
is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

9. Academic Advising -- The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic
Adisor 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.

10. Electronics-- Please turn off all electronic communication devices before you enter the
classroom. It is an extreme distraction when beepers, pagers, and cell phones ring during class. No
electronic devices will be permitted during exams.

PREFERRED METHOD OF SCHOLARLY CITATION

Students should use MLA style for their issue position papers.

CLASSROOM/PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

STATEMENT OF CIVILITY

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

GRADE APPEALS

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final
degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call (361) 825-3466.

Disabilities Accommodations*

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Statement of Academic Continuity
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHEDULE</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 7</td>
<td>Chapter 1- Democracy and American Politics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 14</td>
<td>Chapter 2- The Founding and the Constitution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 21</td>
<td>Chapter 3- Federalism</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Test 1:</strong></td>
<td><strong>September 21</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 28</td>
<td>Chapter 4- Civil Liberties</td>
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Oct 5    Chapter 5- Civil Rights

Oct 12   Chapter 12- Congress

**Test 2:**   **October 12**

Oct 19   Chapter 13- The Presidency

Oct 26   Chapter 14- The Bureaucracy

Nov 2    Chapter 15- The Judiciary

**PAPERS DUE**   **Nov 2**

Nov 9    Chapter 6- Public Opinion and Political Socialization

**Test 3:**   **Nov 9**

Nov 16   Chapter 10- Interest Groups and Chapter 7- Political Parties

Nov 23   Chapter 8- Nominations & Elections Chapter 9- Participation, Voting Behavior, and Campaigns

Nov 30   Chapter 11- Media & Politics

**Dec 7**   **Final Exam 7.15-9.45**
Issue Position Paper Format and Requirements

Structural Requirements

1. Length: 5-10 pages (double spaced, typed, no more than 12pt font)
2. Format- MLA, See http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/ for assistance with MLA style
3. Sources: Minimum of 4 primary references, limit of 2 secondary sources

Topics and Contents

Your mission (if accepted) is to provide an issue position paper on an issue of current political controversy, which is of relevance to national politics. It may help you prepare for this assignment if you think of yourself as an advisor to the US President, or candidate during a political campaign.

Topics

1. Topic must be relevant to course
2. Approval of instructor is necessary
3. Textbooks are good starting point for your research beginning with table of contents

Contents

1. Must introduce issue and briefly set out your position in debate
2. Main text must review arguments on both sides of debate (including use of primary sources)
3. Conclusion- you must explain/persuade reader of the merits of your position in debate

Please do not hesitate to contact your instructor for further advice on your project