COURSE OBJECTIVES/DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the study of politics, the constitutions and the political institutions of the United States. The information in this course is more practical than you might think: whether you are an engineering, business, or political science major, as a citizen it is important that you be informed about how government works. Businessmen find it difficult to navigate government that they do not understand, and engineers cannot get a patent unless they know the rules and laws that protect inventions, and citizens have almost no hope of finding out anything by calling a government agency in a phone book.

Required Texts (available at the campus bookstore): Thomas Patterson, *We the People*. The bundle purchased via the University Bookstore will have both the book and the code needed for the Connect System. You may purchase just the online access and ebook via McGraw-Hill.

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Student Learning Outcomes

The four Core Objectives related to this course are: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.

By the end of the semester the course will have met these objectives...

- By having the students engage in critical thinking activities related to the Constitution, the political and philosophical foundations of the nation, governmental institutions, and political behavior.
- By having students engage in written, verbal or visual activities related to the Constitution, the political and philosophical foundations of the nation, governmental institutions, and political behavior.
- By having students engage in course related activities that connect personal responsibility and political ideology to encourage ethical decision making
By having students engage in course related activities that connect social responsibility to civil rights, civil liberties, and to voting and voting behavior.

Expectations and Assignments

This class will be largely lecture driven. That being said, Politics is about the free exchange of ideas, beliefs and values amongst an organized group of individuals. Keeping that in mind, I encourage and welcome questions, comments and discussions amongst the class. If you do not understand a concept or a point, there is a very good chance that one of your fellow classmates is having the same problem.

During the semester there will be four (4) exams that cover material from the lectures and the book. There will be eleven (11) assignments over the course of the semester that allow you an opportunity to explore more in-depth the government of the United States and your interaction/place within that structure. The assignments will be posted and turned-in online. Third, you will have 14 online quizzes that will prepare you for the exams. These quizzes are designed to help you identify concepts and terms that may appear on the exams. There are LearnSmart assignments for each chapter as well.

Instructions for the assignments will be posted online along with the due dates for each assignment. There are different options contained within each assignment in order for you to have a little bit of choice in the assignment. **There are no late assignments accepted in this course.**

**GRADING/EVALUATION:**

Your grade will consist of four exams (400 points), four written assignments (400 points), ten online quizzes (100 points) and attendance (100 points); for a total of 1000 points. The exams will not be cumulative.

4 Exams @ 100 points = 400
11 Assignments = 150
14 Quizzes (online) @ 10 points = 140
Written Assignments = 100
Attendance = 100
LearnSmart Activities = 200
Introduction Activity (First Day of Class) = 10
Total Points Possible= 1100
Grading Scale:
A: 990-1100 points;
B: 880-989 points;
C: 770-879 points;
D: 660-769 points;
F: 0-659 points.

EMAIL: david.smith2@tamucc.edu

1. Please consider email as official correspondence
2. Efforts will be made to respond to address your email within 24-48 hours. If you do not receive an email response within 48 hours, please send a follow-up email.
3. No email correspondence on weekends.
4. No email correspondence on the day before an exam or deadline.
5. Emails should be in regards to class business. It is NOT the place for summaries of lectures, discussions or readings.
6. PLEASE use the subject line in a way that indicates the content of the message. Please use professional language and include your full name, section number, and a complete inquiry in the body of the email. Unprofessional emails will result in a non-response.
7. DO NOT use your external (personal) accounts. They are filtered to my junk mail and will not be reviewed. Please use your University provided (Islander Email) address in order to communicate with your faculty.

General Course Policies and Exam Policies:

1. Make-ups (Examinations) – Make-up exams will be offered at the end of the semester. It is your responsibility to arrange to make up all missed exams, which are excused.

2. Freedom of Speech – Feel free to raise your hand with a question or comment. Reducing confusion, providing clarification, or responding to student curiosity is an important part of the classroom process and will be undertaken to the extent that time and class size permit. In most cases, if you did not understand something, it is because I did not explain it clearly, so you will be doing your colleagues and yourself a service if you request a clarification.
3. **Academic etiquette** – Universities must maintain standards of academic etiquette in order to affect an atmosphere conducive to learning. You are expected to demonstrate courtesy to one another in and out of the classroom. Talking to one’s neighbor(s) during class lectures or general discussions, chronic lateness, leaving class before it has been dismissed, etc., is inherently disruptive and thus injurious to the rights of others to the opportunity to learn. As such, it is unacceptable in a university classroom. Please do not bring things to eat into the classroom, but drinks are okay. As a courtesy to others, take your trash with you when class is over. **Students who are unable to abide by these rules of academic etiquette and normal civility will be removed from the class.**

4. **Academic Integrity** – Cheating or plagiarism on an assignment or test, or failure to complete any of the course requirements, will result in a zero grade for the assignment in question.

5. **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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.** 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. April 6th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

6. **Attendance** – Attendance in this course is critical to your success. For purposes of grading, no distinction will be made between excused and unexcused absences (excluding absences for recognized religious holidays, death in your family, doctor’s excuse with documentation and approved university functions.) Your absence affects the progress of your academic endeavors. Each absence in excess of four will lower your average in the course by a **FULL Letter Grade**. More than seven (6) absences will result in a failing grade for the course. Exceptions under **EXTREME** circumstances may be made at the discretion of the professor. You **MUST** consult with me immediately to make such an exception viable.

7. **Attendance Form Dishonesty** – Signing the attendance form for a fellow classmate or having it signed for you will be treated the same as a case of Academic Dishonesty under the University Guidelines found in the Handbook.

8. **Classroom 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.

9. **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.

**Things I Must Say:**

**Computer Usage and Cell Phones in the Classroom:** Understandably, many students now use laptops to take notes in class. Please know that laptop usage is a privilege, not a right, and I will ban all computers in class if they become a distraction to others. If you must use a computer in class, please sit in the back 2 rows or the first row of the class. Do not use your computer for anything other than note taking. Use of computers to play games, Skype your friends, update your Facebook status, or for any other reason than note taking is strictly prohibited. If you are found doing these things, at the very least your computer will be closed and you will not be able to use it for the remainder of the class period. You may also be asked to leave the class. Additionally, cell phone use is prohibited. In fact, you should not have your cell phones out or visible during class. If you are waiting for an emergency phone call, please notify me before class. Otherwise, if you use your cell phone for any reason during class, you will be asked to leave and will be given a zero for any in-class assignments due that day.

**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.

**Grade Appeals Process:** As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, *Student Grade Appeals*, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate
academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

**Disability Services:** 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.
# GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE

We will attempt to stick as closely to this schedule as possible; however, this serves as a guideline and may be updated as the semester progresses. Updates will be posted on Blackboard.

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<th>Week #1</th>
<th>Introduction and Syllabus</th>
<th>Read Chapter 1-Chapter 2 and</th>
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<td>Week #2</td>
<td>Foundations of Government</td>
<td>Reading Chap 3 Appendix C</td>
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<td>Week #3</td>
<td>Concepts of Government</td>
<td>Preparing for First Exam</td>
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<td>Week #4</td>
<td>Concepts of Govt cont and Exam #1 Prep</td>
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<td>Week #5</td>
<td>Exam #1 and Parties</td>
<td>Reading Ch 9 &amp; 8</td>
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<td>Week #6</td>
<td>Parties and Interest Groups</td>
<td>Reading Ch 10</td>
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<td>Week #7</td>
<td>Elections and Exam #2</td>
<td>Reading Ch 6 &amp; 7</td>
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<td>Week #8</td>
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<td>Week #9</td>
<td>Congress and the President</td>
<td>Reading Ch 12 &amp; 13</td>
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<td>Week #10</td>
<td>The President and Bureaucracy</td>
<td>Finish Reading Ch 13 &amp; Preparing for Exam #3</td>
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<td>Week #11</td>
<td>Exam #3 and the Judiciary</td>
<td>Reading Ch 14</td>
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<td>Week #12</td>
<td>The Judiciary &amp; Civil Liberties</td>
<td>Reading Ch 4 &amp; Ch 5</td>
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<td>Week #13</td>
<td>Civil Liberties &amp; Civil Rights</td>
<td>Finish Reading Ch 5 and Preparing for Exam #4</td>
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<td>Week #14</td>
<td>Finish Civil Rights</td>
<td>Last Questions</td>
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<td>Week #15</td>
<td>Prep for Exam #4 (Final Exam)</td>
<td>Exam #4 (Final Exam)</td>
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<td>Week #16</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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