

U.S. National Government
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
GOVERNMENT 2013.06
FALL 2017
MONDAY / WEDNESDAY 11:00 – 12:20PM
ASB 304

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:30 – 3:30; Wednesday 1:30 – 2:30, and by appointment

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 – 12:00pm

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is intended as an introduction to American Government and political institutions. We will cover the construction of the constitution; the three branches of government (Congress, the Presidency, and the Judiciary) and the role of the bureaucracy; the role of intermediary organizations (interest groups, media, and parties); and the relationship between the public and politics (public opinion and participation). Students will learn theories that help make sense of American politics, and learn to apply these theories to real world scenarios.

MATERIALS

Monroe and Kersh “By the People”
ISBN 978-0-19-029841-8

Readings and Media posted to Canvas

ASSIGNMENTS

10% 10 Reading Quizzes (1% each)
10% 5 In class writing assignments (2% each)
10% Attendance and participation
10% Two one-page essays (5% each)
20% Exam 1
20% Exam 2
20% Exam 3
Optional Final (will replace lowest Exam grade)
Extra Credit: Community Engagement Exercise (2pts on to final grade)

Reading Quizzes: Open Book /Notes quizzes posted on Canvas over reading assignments. Must be completed *the night before class*. Correct Answers will be shown the morning of class. I will post 11 reading quizzes, and drop the lowest grade. If you complete all 11 reading you may receive up to 1 extra credit point on your final grade.

In Class Writing Assignments: Several times during the course I will pose a question to the class and ask you to get out a piece of paper and write a paragraph, question, or other short prompt (1/2 page or less). These are opportunities for you to express your opinion about a question relevant to our course and for me to learn more about your ideas. A thoughtful response will earn the writer full credit (2 points), a messy, incomplete response will earn half credit (1 points), and no response will earn no credit. Students will earn a maximum of 10 points this way, for 10% of their total grade. The dates for these writing exercises will not be announced in advance. I understand that your lives are busy and complicated. However, I cannot offer “make ups” for this portion of the course. Therefore, I will offer at least 7 opportunities to earn these 10 points.

Attendance: I will take attendance each day by passing around a sign-in sheet. You are required to attend, be on time, and remain in class throughout the duration of all class sessions. All absences will be considered unexcused, and students will be allowed 3 “free” absences, excepting extenuating emergency circumstances (which must be discussed with the professor, and will be considered on a case-by-case basis). Each following absence will be a deduction of one percentage point from the student’s attendance grade.

- A syllabus quiz, to be taken by the second day of classes, will be included as part of this grade. (Worth 2 points)

Essays: I will assign, on Canvas, two one-page, double spaced, essays. The essay must begin with a separate cover page, which will include your name as well as the class section. Essay must be double spaced and have standard 1" margins. Text should be in 12-point font, which may be Times, Times New Roman, Calibri, or similar (do not use Arial). Paragraphs should be indented; there should not be an additional blank line between paragraphs. Essays should clearly remain on topic and address the prompt, relying on the textbook and lectures for support. Sources, such as the textbook or lecture, should be cited with an in-text parenthetical, including the page number or date if appropriate. For example, (Monroe and Kersh, 96). Students should answer the question indicated in the prompt clearly, using proper grammar and spelling. Demonstrate understanding of the concepts and rely on critical thinking skills to answer the question posed.

Exams: Students will take 3 exams throughout the class, each worth 20% of their course grade. These exams will contain 50 multiple choice and / or matching questions, each worth 2 points. Exams must be taken in class, on the day that they are administered (see make-up policy), failure to do so will result in a 0. Students should use readings, reading quizzes, notes, power points, lectures, and the provided review sheet to prepare.

- Exam corrections: There will be no curve on exams. However, students will be allowed to collect their exam and scantron after each test. Students will have 1 week to correct their exam for .5 additional credit added to their grade (ex: a student who makes an 80 on the exam, could bring their grade up to an 85). In order to receive credit, student write the correct answer, and 1-2 sentences explaining *why* this answer is correct.

- Curving: After the exam, I will additionally give the number of points required to bring the highest grade in the class up to a 100.

Optional Final: There will be an optional final, offered during the designated class final exam time. Students must sign up for this exam. The optional final will be comprehensive, and will replace a student's lowest exam grade, regardless of whether the new exam grade is higher or lower. Exam corrections will not be offered for the optional final.

Extra Credit: Community Engagement Exercise: I encourage students to learn about politics by actively engaging in the community. You may do this by attending some of the many political events in the Denton area and on campus. Throughout the semester I will invite students to participate in political events, attend political meetings (such as city council meetings), volunteer in the community, or attend rallies or protests (for example). Students should then write a two page, double-spaced report (12 point font, standard margins, single spaced heading taking up no more than 2 lines) detailing what you learned at the event, and explain how it relates to topics you've learned about in class. In addition to those announced in class, students may also come up with their own political event ideas. In order to receive the full 2 points added on to your final grade, ***you must turn in this assignment within one week of attending the event.*** Only a well done and thoughtful response will earn the writer full extra credit (2 points).

Class Policies:

Etiquette:

A government class will necessarily touch on topics that are sensitive, controversial, and difficult. Accordingly, I ask that above all students remain *respectful of one another*. Personal attacks and comments that discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, religion, political party affiliation or national background will not be permitted, inside or outside of the classroom. I cannot promise that you will never perceive my political beliefs and positions; but I do promise that I will not push or force them upon you, I ask that you behave similarly. Further, in the name of fostering a respectful classroom environment, please refrain from engaging in talking or texting during class. I encourage you to participate in class discussions, ask questions, and respond when I ask you questions. However, side discussions during lecture are distracting. Similarly, please do not play video games, Tweet, Instagram, Facebook, Snap, etc. etc. etc. during class. Laptops will be allowed, unless students report distracting behavior. If you struggle to abide by these etiquette rules, you may be asked to leave.

Power Point Slides:

Power Point slides will be posted to Canvas

Readings:

You should perform the readings listed on the syllabus in preparation for the day on which they are listed. In other words, the reading assigned on September 6th should be completed before attending class on September 6th. Reading quizzes will be due the night before class, with the expectation that you should be reading in advance.

Exam Review:

At the beginning of each class period I will offer students a recap of the previous class lecture, a few salient points from that day's reading, and a roadmap for the next class. I will also provide a *very* general review sheet and an in-class review session for students. I do not recommend that students rely on crowd-sourced reviews such as google-docs, I have seen these go very wrong. Remember that in a class this large, you have no way of knowing how attentive or honest your fellow students posting to the google doc are. I do recommend and have seen great success from small, in-person, study groups.

Communication:

Email correspondence is welcome. Please format your emails as business correspondence (with a greeting and signature), ***and please realize that I may not be able to get to them right away.*** I will try to get to your emails within 24 hours or, at the latest, during my next scheduled office hours, unless the answer to a question is in the syllabus or was discussed in class (in which case you should consult a classmate). If you email me with a question that is answered in the syllabus, I will simply refer you back to this document. I may also answer through Canvas or a general email to the class, rather than writing you back personally, if your question reflects a general concern. I am also available after class, during office hours, or by appointment if you cannot make my office hours.

Academic Accommodations:

If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the office of Disability Support Services (CFO 106, 940.898.3835, dss@twu.edu) in order to obtain the required official notification of your accommodation needs. Please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss approved accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate.

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism, cheating, and other academic misconduct are serious violations of your contract as a student. Plagiarism is using someone else's language without quotations and attribution or using someone else's idea (even in different language) without attribution. Honesty in completing assignments is essential to the mission of TWU and to the development of the personal integrity of students. In submitting graded assignments, students affirm that they have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance, and that they have abided by all other provisions of the Code of Conduct in the TWU Student Handbook. Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or other kinds of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate sanctions that may include failing the assignment, failing the class, or being suspended or expelled. Suspected cases of dishonesty in this course may be reported to Student Life. The specific disciplinary process for academic dishonesty is found in the TWU Student Handbook. Tools to help you avoid plagiarism are available through the TWU Libraries at:
http://www.twu.edu/library/res/res_plagiarism.htm.

For more on academic integrity, see: <http://www.twu.edu/student-life-office/academic-integrity.asp>

Make-up Policy and Late Assignments:

Full credit make-up exams will only be allowed for (1) University sanctioned events (verification required), (2) exceptional circumstances (with verification such as a physicians note), or (3) religious observations. If you intend to miss class for a religious holiday, you must notify me of your pending absence at least 14 days in advance. Late assignments are not permitted. For all other missed exams, students may opt to take the optional final.

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 17: Introduction, Collective Action Problems

- Chapter 1: The Spirit of American Politics

January 22: Democracy in the United States & Articles of Confederation

- Chapter 3: The Constitution
- Syllabus Quiz

January 24: Establishing a Constitutional Democracy

- Federalist Papers 10, 51
- Reading Quiz

January 29: Federalism

- Chapter 4: Federalism and Nationalism
- Essay: Federalists and Modern America

January 31: American Political Culture and Social Trust

- Chapter 2: The Ideas that Shape America

February 5: Social Capital

- Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone*, selections
- Reading Quiz

February 7: Civil Liberties

- Chapter 5: Civil Liberties

February 12: Civil Rights

- Letter from a Birmingham Jail
- The Ballot or the Bullet
- Chapter 6: Civil Rights
- Reading Quiz

February 14: In Class Review

February 19: **Exam 1**

February 21: The Presidency

- Chapter 14: The Presidency

- Reading Quiz

February 26: The Presidency Day II

- Exam 1 Revisions Due (in class)

February 28: Congress

- Chapter 13: Congress

March 5: Congress Day II

- Mayhew, David R. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, selections
- Reading Quiz

March 7: No Class: Political Parties, recorded lecture

- Chapter 11: Political Parties
- Reading Quiz
- Essay: Balance of Powers

March 12-16: Spring Break

March 19: The Bureaucracy

- Chapter 15: The Bureaucracy

March 21: The Courts

- Chapter 16: The Judicial Branch
- Reading Quiz

March 26: Political Action Committees and Interest Groups

- McElroy, Lisa. SCOTUS Blog: *Citizens United v. FEC* in plain English

March 28: Interest Groups

- Olson, Mancur, *The Logic of Collective Action*, selections
- Chapter 12: Interest Groups
- Reading Quiz

April 2: In Class Review

April 4: **Exam 2**

April 9: Individual Participation

- Chapter 8: Individual Participation
- Reading Quiz

April 11: Electing Congress and the President

- Chapter 10: Campaigns and Elections
- Exam 2 Revisions Due (in class)

April 16: Public Opinion

- Chapter 7: Public Opinion

April 18: Public Opinion Day II

- Vox Podcast: “The Weeds: How Politics is making us stupid” (through 50 minute mark)
- Blackboard, Gladwell, Malcolm. *Blink*, “*The Warren Harding Error: Why we fall for tall, dark, and handsome men*”
- Reading Quiz

April 23: Media

- Chapter 9: Media, Technology, and Government
- Reading Quiz

April 25: Social Policy

- NPR Podcast: “Hidden Brain: The Scarcity Trap”
- Chapter 17: Public Policymaking and Budgeting

April 30: In Class Review

- Extra Credit Due

May 2: **Exam 3**

May 9: Exam 3 Revisions Due by 5pm