SYLLABUS

Lamar University, a member of The Texas State University System, is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award Associate, Baccalaureate, Masters, and Doctorate degrees (more details at http://www.lamar.edu).

Semester
College/Department: Arts and Sciences/Political Science
Course Number: POLS 2301
Course Title: Introduction to American Government I
Instructor:
Instructor Information: Office Location:
E-mail:
Office Phone:
Office Hours:

Class Information: Class Location:
Class Time:
Class Time:

Course Description
This course introduces you to the study of American Politics/Government and covers the National & Texas Constitutions; Federalism; Political Socialization and Participation; Public Opinion and Interest Groups; Political Parties, the Media; and Campaigns and Elections. We will study these concepts from both the perspective of the US system as well as that of Texas.

Course Purpose
The purpose of POLS 2301 is to provide students basic knowledge of the American and TX political systems in order for them to better analyze the political world and its impact on our daily lives. The ultimate goal of the course is to allow students an opportunity to become more informed and active participants in the American democratic experience. Specifically, students are taught the basic structure of U.S., state, and local government, the U.S. and TX constitutions, federalism, political socialization and participation, public opinion and the media, interest groups, parties, voting and elections.

Course Objectives
The objectives of the course are to provide students with knowledge to analyze government and governmental activities, engage in political discussion and activities, and to obtain further education in political science, law, and other social sciences. The knowledge gained from this course will encourage and empower students to participate more meaningfully and fully in the American and Texas political experience.
At the conclusion of the semester, students are expected to:

1. Know the nature of politics and democracy and the basic elements of a democratic governing system as compared to other forms of government;

2. Demonstrate an understanding of the elements of the national government, the federal system, and Texas government;

3. Understand the roles and influences of political parties, interest groups, public opinion, the mass media, political participation, and campaigns and elections in the American system of government;

4. Think critically about American and Texas government and their various components.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

**Learning Outcome #1** – The Constitution – Students will be able to identify the powers assigned to Congress, the Presidency and the Courts based on the separation of powers specified in the United States Constitution.

**Learning Outcome #2** – Comparing the Federal and State Constitutions – Students will be able to differentiate between the powers and functions of the United States Constitution and the Texas State Constitution.

**Learning Outcome #3** – Campaigns and Elections – Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the basic elements of the U.S. system of campaigns and elections.

**Learning Outcome #4** – Personal Responsibility – Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of how to register to vote and the expectations of citizenship in the United States. This outcome will be assessed on the exams throughout the semester.

**Learning Outcome #5** – Social Responsibility – Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of political parties and interest group role in the political process and how an individual can effectively engage in these groups to achieve political outcomes. This outcome will be assessed on the exams throughout the semester.

**Learning Outcome #6** – Communication Skills – Students will be able to effectively develop and express an argument supported by fact regarding a political problem or question. This outcome will be assessed on the writing assignment.

**Learning Outcome #7** – Critical Thinking – Students will be able to analyze a political problem and synthesis a solution to the problem. This outcome will be assessed on the writing assignment.

**Required Textbook**


The textbook provides a number of resources for your benefit – The end of each chapter contains a study outline, practice quiz, a list of key terms and a list of recommended readings. Additionally, the online website for the textbook – [http://www.wwnorton.com/college/polisci/we-the-people8/texas/](http://www.wwnorton.com/college/polisci/we-the-people8/texas/) provides a feature called “Study Space” which will help you to study for this class as well as to preview and review course material. I **HIGHLY** suggest that you use this material to help you prepare for this course. In addition to the textbook, it is expected that students will keep abreast of developments regarding American Politics by reading a daily newspaper or following one online. Additional readings may be assigned periodically throughout the semester and will be made available by the instructor.
Students are also strongly encouraged to keep up with current political events through objective
internet site or newspaper reading. Please note that information provided on the Wikipedia website is
open to submission by any and all readers and is not considered to be an objective and accurate source
of information. Citation of Wikipedia or any Wiki-based course will result in an automatic zero on the
assignment.

Course Management Policies

1. Disability Accommodation – Americans with Disabilities Act
   It is the policy of Lamar University to comply with the fundamental principles of nondiscrimination
   and accommodation in academic programs set forth in the implementing regulations for Section 504 of
   the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; these regulations
   provide that: No qualified student with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from
   participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any ...
   postsecondary education program or activity. Rules governing accommodations are available on the
   University’s website at http://dept.lamar.edu/sfswd. If you are a student requiring an accommodation,
   please contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, Room 105 in the Communications
   Building, online at http://dept.lamar.edu/sfswd, or by phone at (409) 880-8347.

2. Academic Honesty Statement
   Students are specifically warned against all forms of cheating and plagiarism. The Lamar
   University Student Handbook states: Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic
   work will be subject to disciplinary action. Punishable offences include, but are not limited to,
   cheating on an examination or academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion, and the
   abuse of resource materials. One aspect of the handbook’s definition of cheating is, “purchasing, or
   otherwise acquiring and submitting as one’s own work any research paper or other writing assignment
   prepared by an individual or firm”. Plagiarism is defined as, “the appropriation and the
   unacknowledged incorporation of another’s work or ideas into one’s own offered for credit”. Students
   seeking to avoid plagiarism should consult with the course instructor or recent handbooks such as the
   MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (6th edition). Faculty members in the College of Arts
   and Sciences investigate all cases of suspected plagiarism. Any student who submits plagiarized work
   in POLS 2301 will fail the course.

   Students are encouraged to discuss the ideas needed for implementing programming
   assignments, but copying code or allowing another to copy your own source code is an act of
   plagiarism and will result in a zero grade on the assignments where this occurs.
3. Course Evaluation
Instruction as well as student performance is subject to evaluation. Procedures may be instituted for this purpose near the end of this course.

4. Sexual Harassment
In accordance with administrative policy, sexual harassment is reprehensible and will not be tolerated by the university. Behavior in the course must conform to the university policy.

5. Grading and Evaluation Policy (number and types of assignments, weight for each assignment, criteria for evaluating assignments, and method for determining final course grade)

6. Grading Scale
Final grades will be calculated by adding the total number of points earned and applying the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 - 90%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89 - 80%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79 - 70%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69 - 60%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59% and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
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7. Make-Up Exams: Make-up exams will be given if students provide prior notification and a valid excuse for missing the exam. Make-up exams will only be given without prior notification in extreme circumstances. Students may only make up one exam. Students missing more than one exam should withdraw from the course.

8. Cheating: Cheating will not be tolerated. Students caught cheating will receive an F in the class. All exams are expected to be completed with closed books and no notes. Extra Credit: I do not offer extra credit.

9. Attendance Policy (include any make-up policy)

10. Census Date (Six Drop Rule does not apply) (WILL CHANGE EACH SEMESTER)

   Monday, February 4: Census Date/12th Class Day. Students may drop or withdraw without consulting with their Instructor, Department Chair or the Records Office. The Six Drop Rule does not apply to students who drop before 5:00 p.m. on February 4.

   Drop Dates (Six Drop Rule applies)
   Tuesday, February 19: Last day to drop or withdraw from the course without academic penalty and receive a Q. Six Drop Rule applies beginning on February 5. Students should consult with Instructor and the Records Office to initiate a drop between the dates of 2/5-2/19.
   Tuesday, April 2: Last day to drop or withdraw with academic penalty. Student must be passing the course at the time of the requested drop in order to receive a Q. The drop form, including all required signatures, must arrive in the Records Office by no later than 4:00 p.m. on April 2. Six Drop Rule applies.
   *Note: Any student seeking to drop after April 2 must submit a fairly thorough written explanation, including supporting documents if applicable, of the extenuating circumstances for which the action is being requested. The explanation must be shared with and approved by the Instructor, the Department...
Chair, and the Dean of the college before the drop form will be sent to the Senior Associate Provost for a final review and decision.

*Link to List View of Academic Calendar*
http://events.lamar.edu/academic-calendar-listing.html

### COURSE SYLLABUS
(cOURSE sUBJECT mATTER oUTLINE: readings, assignments, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>18-F</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-M</td>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. No Classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23-W</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25-F</td>
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<td>28-M</td>
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<td>30-W</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>1-F</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-M</td>
<td>12th Class Day</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>6-M</td>
<td>Last MWF class day for Spring 2013 (no exams or assignments)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### May Date and Day Final Exam Time (2 and ½ hours)

*Link to Final Exam Schedule*
http://www.lamar.edu/_files/documents/current-students/course-schedules/Spring%202013%20Final%20Exam%20Schedule.pdf