American Government
GOV 310L (38585)
The University of Texas at Austin
Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 2-3:00 PM
Mezes Hall 1.306

Fall 2011

Professor

Dr. Samuel Workman
Office: Mezes 3.128
Email: sworkman@austin.utexas.edu
Phone: 512-232-1445
Office Hours: Wednesday 12-2:00 PM, 3-4:00 PM

Teaching Assistants

TA	Office Hours	Location	Email
Kristie Kelly	8-11 AM, Monday	Batts Hall 1.118	kristie.kelly@gmail.com

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to American politics. The course centers on the fundamental role played by the institutions of American government including Congress, the Presidency, Federal Judiciary, and the Bureaucracy in understanding political dynamics in the United States. The course also examines public opinion and participation as inputs to the institutions of American government, and the mediating role of organizations such as interest groups, the news media, and political parties. In addition to mastering basic facts about American government, the course will apply political science theories to the broader questions of democratic government and examine evidence assessing these theories. The course also makes connections between politics at the federal level of government and the political institutions and processes of the state of Texas.

Pre-requisites

12 hours of college course-work and a passing score on the reading section on the THEA test. The course fulfills the first half of the legislative requirement for Government.

Course Requirements

Students are required to attend each lecture and participate in class discussions. In addition, students should be prepared to discuss current events related to American politics. The best way to do this is browsing the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* online. Finally, students should also be prepared to discuss politics and current events relevant to Texas state politics. Students are also to complete supplemental readings as required and provided by the Professor. The required text for the course is *American Government: Power and Purpose, 11th Ed.* (Paperback FULL EDITION) by Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, and Ansolabehere. This text is available for purchase at the University Co-Op. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before each meeting of the course.

In addition to a concern with the institutions and processes that shape public policy at the Federal level, the course will frequently draw comparisons to, and focus on, state government in Texas including its unique political institutions and political processes. To facilitate this discussion, students will frequently be asked to become familiar with content maintained on the Texas Politics website at http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/.

Grading

Grading for the course is based on four exams. Each exam is worth 100 points and will constitute 25 percent of the students grade. There will be no final examination during the University-scheduled finals week. Each exam is based equally on both the assigned readings and class lecture. This means that things will go drastically wrong for you if you do not both read the assigned text(s), attend each class, and take good notes. This course will use plus/minus grading. *Grades will not be curved and are not negotiable (do not even think about sending me that email).* The grading scale is as follows:

A	93-100%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	77-79%	F	<60%

Make-Up Exam Policy

Do not miss regularly scheduled exams. You do not want to take the make-up exam. There will be one makeup exam offered at the end of the semester and students will be permitted to take this exam only under the most extreme and dire circumstances preventing the student from taking the regularly scheduled exam. Students will not be permitted to take the makeup exam without prior *documentation* and *approval* by the Professor. Students missing an exam should notify the Professor immediately, or if possible, before the exam. Students may make-up only one exam with no exceptions. Note that this means failure to take two or more exams results in grades of zero for the second, third, and fourth missed exam.

Texts and Materials

Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, and Ansolabehere. 2010. *American Government: Power and Purpose.* 11th Edition. New York: W.W. Norton.

Texas Politics. http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/

Other supplemental readings as selected by the Professor.

Contacting the Professor

Students should address questions first to the Teaching Assistants, and only then to the Professor. The Teaching Assistants are there to help students understand the material and field general course questions. In addition, I tend to check my email only once every 24 hours. Depending on when I check my email on a given day, the earliest time at which a response may be expected is within 24 hours. Please be aware that I also do not respond to emails on the weekend.

Academic Dishonesty

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. During examinations, you must do your own work. Copying and collaboration with others is strictly prohibited. At a minimum, any collaborative behavior during the examinations will result in failure of the exam. A statement regarding UT Honor Code (or statement of ethics) and an explanation or example of what constitutes plagiarism (Link to University Honor Code: http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html).

University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd. If you require accommodation, it is your responsibility to bring your note to me *early* in the semester so we can work out arrangements.

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class or an examination in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event of a fire or other emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a building rapidly. Upon the activation of a fire alarm or the announcement of an emergency in a university building, all occupants of the building are required to evacuate and assemble outside. Once evacuated, no one may re-enter the building without instruction to do so from the Austin Fire Department, University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. Students should familiarize themselves with all the exit

doors of each room and building they occupy at the university, and should remember that the nearest exit routes may not be the same as the way they typically enter buildings. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructors in writing during the first week of class. Faculty members must then provide this information to the Fire Prevention Services office by fax (512-232-2759), with ”Attn. Mr. Roosevelt Easley” written in the subject line. Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at http://www.utexas.edu/emergency.

Important Administrative Dates

First Day of Class	August 24
Last Day of Official Add/Drop Period	August 29
Labor Day Holiday	September 5
Last Day to Drop with Dean’s Approval	November 1
Academic Advising Dates	October 20-21, 24-26
Thanksgiving Holiday	November 24-26
Last Day of Class	Friday, December 2

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
Wednesday, August 24	Introduction & Course Overview	
Friday, August 26	The Fundamental Tensions of American Government	Lowi, et al Chapter 1
Monday, August 29	Structure of the American System of Government	Lowi, et al Chapter 2
Wednesday, August 31	First Chance for Bonus Points	
Friday, September 2	Civil Rights & Civil Liberties	Lowi, et al Chapter 4
Wednesday, September 7	The Rule of Law	
Friday, September 9	Political Power in the American System	
Monday, September 12	Federalism & Separation of Powers	Lowi, et al Chapter 3
Wednesday, September 14	Second Chance for Bonus Points	
Friday, September 16	Special Topics in American Politics	
Monday, September 19	**First Examination**	Bring a Bluebook
Wednesday, September 21	Introduction to American Political Institutions	
Friday, September 23	Congress the Institution	Lowi, et al Chapter 5
Monday, September 26	Congressional Policymaking & Organization	
Wednesday, September 28	Members of Congress	
Friday, September 30	The Presidency	Lowi, et al Chapter 6
Monday, October 3	Presidential Power	
Wednesday, October 5	The Administrative Presidency & Management Styles	
Friday, October 7	Interbranch Politics–The U.S. Budget	
Monday, October 10	The U.S. Federal Bureaucracy	Lowi, et al Chapter 7
Wednesday, October 12	The Administrative State & Policy Subsystems	
Friday, October 14	Bureaucratic Policymaking	
Monday, October 17	Policy Implementation & Street-Level Bureaucrats	
Wednesday, October 19	**Second Examination**	Bring a Bluebook
Friday, October 21	The Federal Judiciary	Lowi, et al Chapter 8
Monday, October 24	Judicial Policymaking	
Wednesday, October 26	Organized Interests in American Politics	Lowi, et al Chapter 12
Friday, October 28	Theories of Advocacy &	
Monday, October 31	The Media in American Politics	Lowi, et al Chapter 13
Wednesday, November 2	Theories of Media Influence	
Friday, November 4	American Political Parties	Lowi, et al Chapter 11
Monday, November 7	Public Opinion in American Politics	Lowi, et al Chapter 9
Wednesday, November 9	**Third Examination**	Bring a Bluebook
Friday, November 11	Elections & Voting	Lowi, et al Chapter 10
Monday, November 14	The Policy Process	
Wednesday, November 16	Theories of the Policy Process	
Friday, November 18	Economic Policy	
Monday, November 20	Foreign Policy	
Wednesday, November 23	The Policy of Public Risks	
Monday, November 28	Politics of Bureaucratic Reform	
Wednesday, November 30	**Fourth Examination**	Bring a Blue Book
Friday, December 2	**Makeup Examination**	Bring a Blue Book