

GOVERNMENT 310L

Introduction to U.S. and Texas Government

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Unique No.:	38570
Class meetings:	MWF 11:00-12:00 pm, CMA A2.320
Instructor:	Bartholomew H. Sparrow, Professor Office: Batts 3.142 Telephone: 232-7202 bhs@austin.utexas.edu
Office hours:	MW: 1:30-3:00 p.m. and by appt.
TAs:	Kanishka Marasinghe PhD Student, Dept. of Government Office Hours: T: 3:30-5:00; F: 12:30-2 Batts 1.118 kanishka.marasinghe@gmail.com Calla Hummel PhD Student, Dept. of Government Office Hours: M: 12:30-2:00; F: 12:30-2:00 Batts 1.118 calla.hummel@gmail.com

Description

This course introduces you to the politics and government of the United States (a lot) and the state of Texas (some). Among the issues we address are the following:

- What is politics?
- What is democracy?
- What is political science?
- What ideas about the political system have been most relevant to understanding the United States as a representative democracy?
 - What political processes and principal policies characterize the governments of the United States and of Texas, past and present?
 - What events, documents, and political realities lie behind the development of the United States from thirteen Atlantic colonies to its emergence as a superpower?
 - How do you, the citizen, fit into state and national politics and government?

The course concentrates on the political philosophy and political history of the United States and Texas. It also takes a critical look at the institutions and processes of American and state government as they have developed up to the present.

Films and guest lectures will supplement course lectures. Class attendance and participation is expected, and students may be called upon in class. The course is accompanied by a required text and a required course packet. The packet contains documents from the founding, Supreme Court cases, the texts of U.S. treaties, readings from American political science, and other materials.

By the end of the fall 2011 semester, students taking the course should be familiar with the main concepts, principles, political developments, and debates with respect to:

- the origins of the United States as a nation state
- the drafting and ratification of the U.S. Constitution
- the geographic expansion of the United States across the North American continent and then into the Caribbean and the Pacific
- the commercial development and political economy of the United States
- federalism and the balance of sovereignty between the national and state levels of governments
- ethnic identity and racial politics
- the major issues of Texas politics and government institutions
- the U.S. Congress, presidency and executive branch, and judiciary
- U.S. social policies, immigration policy, environmental policy, and foreign/national security policy

Students are expected to demonstrate the following values in class:

- respect for their fellow students, teaching assistants, and instructor
- a commitment to an on-going assessment of their own learning about American and Texas politics and government
- honesty, responsibility, self-motivation, and hard work
- an engagement with the actual policies, practices, and institutions of U.S. national and Texas state politics and government
- an appreciation of learning

Required Readings

- Thomas R. Dye, *Politics in America*, 9th Edition, Pearson Longman, 2011.
- Required Reading Packet, available at IT Copies at 512 W. MLK. Note that readings in the packet are marked by asterisks*** in the course schedule (below).

Assessment and Grades

Final grades will be determined in the following proportions. Your instructor and teaching assistants may also factor in your improvement over the course of the semester and take into account how your grades are distributed among the several course components.

1. Tests (3) 65%
The first is worth 20 percent of your grade, the second is worth 20 percent, and the third is worth 25 percent of your grade. These are multiple-choice tests with short essay components. There are no make-up tests. **There is no final exam** but the third test will be comprehensive in part.
2. Class exercises (5) 20%
You have five short assignments in which you have to learn about your congressional representative, U.S. senator, state representative (Texas, other), and state senator (Texas, other). You will also have to write a brief report about an out-of-class assignment for which you are to visit the Texas State Capitol. Each assignment is worth four percent of your course grade. The assignments will be described in more detail on the class's Blackboard site. Please note that you may turn in the exercises (to your teaching assistants) earlier than the due date. **Only hard copies are accepted.**
3. Quizzes (3) 15%
You are responsible for three quizzes on the assigned readings and lectures (5 percent each). Each quiz will test you on some of the basic facts of the readings, lectures, in-class discussion of current events, films, and guest lectures. Quizzes include materials up to that same day. **There are no make-up quizzes.**
4. Class participation bonus
In-class participation, such as questions, contributions to the Blackboard (BB) discussion site, and other indicators of interest and participation (speaking to your teaching assistants or instructor after class, in office hours, or by appointment) may be a tipping factor in the determination of overall grades.
5. Extra Credit 3 pts. each; 2 maximum
You may earn additional points (2 extra credit assignments maximum, with a total of three possible points each) by completing extra credit assignments: reviewing "Free Speech for Sale," "Hernandez v. Texas," or other political documentaries (clear them with your instructor first); reviewing books on politics (check with your instructor first); or volunteering to be part of a student polling pool (see instructor for details).
6. Notes
 - **Attendance is expected.** About half of the materials on the tests and quizzes will be derived from the lectures (rather than from the readings), and lectures will often refer to and complement the readings. But the two are in no way identical. Please realize that if you miss a class, you are wholly responsible for any changes in the course schedule or in the class requirements announced in that day in class, as well as for the content of that

day's lecture and discussion. **Advice: get to know at least one other classmate, and preferably two or three, who can help you out in case you have to miss a class.** You may also want to form a study group.

- **Computers may be used** in class for note taking and, on occasion, timely research of materials being discussed in class. Experiments have shown, however, that students attending lectures who were multitasking (that is, using their computers for other purposes) retained about half as much as those who were solely focused on the lecture.
- **Final grades** are on an A-F scale, with pluses and minuses. Test, quiz, and other grades will be bestowed on a 100-point scale. To use Bs as an example, grades from 87 to 89 equal a B+, grades in the 83-86 range equal a B, and grades in the 80-82 range equal a B-. And so on for the other grades, although there is no A+. Note that I consider improvement over the semester and the overall pattern of grades (compare one student with all As except for one C vs. one with all high Bs) in the determination of your final course grade.
- **Students with disabilities** may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>
- **The UT 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. Any work that is not the student's own and not attributed to others constitutes *plagiarism*. Instances of student plagiarism are grounds for failure and more serious academic penalties.

Class Guidelines

With a class of two hundred students, it is imperative that we have agreed-upon guidelines. I shall do my part to start and end class punctually – within a minute or two – so you can make your next meeting, to be as clear as possible, and to be available for any questions or concerns you may have.

- Come to class on time and do not leave until dismissed. It is disruptive (and rude) for you to come in late or leave in the middle of class. So let your instructor know in advance if you know that you'll be late for class or if you

have to leave early (e.g., job interview, court appearance). And let him know if you have to miss an assignment or a deadline for an unavoidable reason.

- At the end of class, as we approach 11:50 pm, please wait until class is dismissed before packing up and leave. This allows me to finish making a point or enables other student to finish hearing what's being said before class gets disrupted. As noted, I shall attempt to end class promptly, even if not always at 11:50 sharp, so that you can get to where you need to go.
- Misconduct will detract from your participation grade. Misconduct is any disruptive behavior and includes the following: ¶ activated cell phones (including text messaging); ¶ playing iPods, MP3 players, and other devices; ¶ exiting and reentering the classroom; ¶ conducting private conversations in class; ¶ reading newspapers/magazines; ¶ studying for another class; ¶ using laptops for reasons not connected to the class; ¶ other disruptive behavior as interpreted by your instructor. Inappropriate classroom actions may result in your dismissal from the classroom. Misconduct, especially serious or serial misconduct, may result in a lowering of your grade, as the instructor judges.
- Tests must be taken when scheduled. If you have special needs, such as a disability, you have to inform the instructor by the 2nd week of the semester.
- You will need to consult the course Blackboard site regularly. I shall also regularly post class announcements and related course materials on BB.
- Emails are an official UT form of correspondence. I reply to emails promptly or during my next assigned office hours. Please note that you need to acknowledge receipt of my emails and that I may not answer emails if I have already covered something in class, if it is in the syllabus, if it has already been posted on BB, or if it is not professionally composed and addressed. You should sign the emails with your given name at the end of the message (since email addresses often don't contain actual names) and you should be sure to use an appropriate form of address – e.g., “Dear Professor,” “Professor Sparrow,” etc., and not “hey prof.” :)
- By UT Austin policy, you must notify me at least fourteen days before the date of observance of a religious holy day if you have to miss class. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project 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.
- A typical part of being at UT is, unfortunately, large classes – especially in many introductory courses. It is nonetheless possible to make your

education a more personal experience. Office hours are *your* time; take advantage of them. Talk to your professor in office hours or before or after class; get to know your fellow students; and meet with one or both of your teaching assistants.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Foundations: Concepts and Background

- August 24: Introduction
Course overview; review of the syllabus
- August 26: American Government and Political Science: How to Study
and How to Study a Discipline
Politics in America, Ch. 1
- August 29: Colonial America and Revolution
The Mayflower Compact (locate online; one paragraph only)
The Declaration of Independence (in *Politics in America*)
- August 31 Arguments on the Constitution
C. Beard, "The Constitution as an Economic Document"; R.
Brown, response, in *Enduring Debate*, pp. 23-33***
- September 2 Political Culture
Politics in America, Ch. 2
- September 5 LABOR DAY
No Class
- September 7 The Political Economy
Politics in America, Ch. 16
Film: "Inside Job" video documentary (in class), 1st half
Assignment 1 due at beginning of class
- September 9 Texas Background
Robert A. Caro, *Path to Power*, pp. 3-25***
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>
"Political Culture"
Film: "Inside Job" video documentary (in class), 2nd half

- September 12 The Constitution of the United States
Politics in America, Ch. 3
 U.S. Constitution (in *Politics in America*, annotated)
- September 14 Federalism
Politics in America, Ch. 4
Federalist 51 (in *Politics in America*)
Quiz.1
- September 16 Race and Identity I
Politics in America, Ch. 15
Film: "Tulia, Texas" video documentary (in class), 1st half
- September 19 Race and Identity II
 Rev. Martin L. King, "Letter from the Birmingham Jail"***
 Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"***
Film: "Tulia, Texas" video documentary (in class), 2nd half
- September 21 Geographic Expansion
 The Northwest Ordinance***
 Bartholomew Sparrow, *The Insular Cases and the Emergence of American Empire*," Introduction, Ch. 1***
- September 23 The Texas Constitution
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>
 "The Constitution"
- September 26 Public Opinion
Politics in America, Ch. 5
- September 28 **First Test**
- September 30 Economics and Personal Liberty
*McCullough v. Maryland****
 Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, Prefaces, Ch. 1***
- October 3 Politics and Personal Liberty
Politics in America, Ch. 14

Political Institutions and Processes

- October 5 The News Media
Politics in America, Ch. 6
- October 7 Political Parties
Politics in America, Ch. 7
 Anthony Downs, "An Economic Theory of Democracy"***
Assignment 2 due at beginning of class
- October 10 Interest Groups I
Federalist 10 (in *Politics in America*)
 Mancur Olson, "The Logic of Collective Action," *Enduring Debates****
- October 12 Interest Groups II
Politics in America, Ch. 9
- October 14 Out of Class Assignment: Texas Capitol
 Tour the Texas State Capitol on your own, according to your own best schedule, whether with classmates or solo
No Class
- October 17 Texas Interests and Parties
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>
 "The Parties"; "Interest Groups"
Guest lecture: David Quin, Program Manager for Public Power Pool and Association Power, LLC
- October 19 Congress I
Politics in America, Ch. 10
Assignment 3 due at beginning of class
- October 21 Congress II
 David Mayhew, "The Electoral Connection"***
 R. L. Hall and Wayman, "Buying Time,"***
 Nelson Polsby, "The Institutionalization of Congress,"***
Quiz 2
- October 24 Texas Legislature
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>
 "Legislative Branch"
Guest Lecture: Mr. Ian Randolph, former Chief of Staff, Sen. Eddie Lucio (D-Sen. Dist. 27)

- October 26 The US Presidency I
Politics in America, Ch. 11
- October 28 The US Presidency II
Richard Neustadt, "The Power to Persuade," in *Enduring Debates****
Stephen Skowronek, "Presidential Leadership in Political Time," M. Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, CQ Press, 8th ed., 2006***
- October 30 The Texas Executive
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>
"Executive Branch"
- November 2 **Test 2**
- November 4 The Bureaucracy
Politics in America, Ch. 12
- November 7 Texas Bureaucracy
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>
"Bureaucracy"
- November 9 U.S. Supreme Court and Judicial Politics
Politics in America, Ch. 13
"Supreme Court Appointees" (in *Politics in America*)
- November 11 The Texas Judiciary
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>
"Justice System"
Assignment 4 due at beginning of class

Public Policy

- November 14 Environmental and Energy Policy
Jennifer Weeks, "Domestic Energy Development," *Issues for Debate*; Marcia Clemmitt, "Climate Change," *Issues for Debate****
Film: "Age of Stupid," 1st half

- November 16 Social Policies
Politics in America, Ch. 17
Film: "Age of Stupid," 2nd half
- November 18 Texas Public Policies
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>
 "Political Economy"
Quiz 3
- November 21 Immigration Policy
 Peter Katel and Patrick Marshall, "Illegal Immigration," in
Issues for Debate 7th Ed. CQ Press, 2007***
 "Stopping Illegal Immigration: Should Border Security
 Come First?" Yes: Mark Krikorian; No: Frank Sharry, in
Taking Sides, 15th ed., G. McKenna and S. Feingold, eds.,
 McGraw-Hill, 2007***
Assignment 5 due at beginning of class
- November 23 & 25: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAYS
No Classes
- November 28 Politics and National Security
Politics in America, Ch.18
- November 30 Course Overview and Test Review
 No reading assignment
- December 2 **Test 3**