

American Government
GOV 310L (38515)
The University of Texas at Austin
Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 11:00AM-Noon
University Teaching Center 2.102A

Spring 2012

Professor

Dr. Samuel Workman
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Office Hours: Wednesday 8:00-10:00 AM, Noon-1:00 PM

Teaching Assistants

TA	Office Hours	Location	Email
JoBeth Shafran	Monday & Wednesday 12:30-2PM	Batts 1.118	jsurfaceshfran@gmail.com
Daniel O'Toole	Friday 12:30-3:30PM	Batts 1.118	danielfotoole@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 *The American Political System 1st Ed.* (Paperback FULL EDITION) by Ken Kollman. 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 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 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).* Formal attendance does not make up a portion of your grade. 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

Kollman, Ken. 2012. *The American Political System*. 1st 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	January 17
Last Day of Official Add/Drop Period	January 20
Spring Break	March 12-17
Last Day to Drop with Dean's Approval	April 2
Academic Advising Dates	April 11-13, 16-20
Last Day of Class	May 4

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
Wednesday, January 18	Introduction & Course Overview	
Friday, January 20	The Fundamental Tensions of American Government	Kollman, Chapter 1
Monday, January 23	Structure of the American System of Government	Kollman, Chapter 2
Wednesday, January 25	First Chance for Bonus Points	
Friday, January 27	Civil Rights & Civil Liberties	Kollman, Chapter 4
Monday, January 30	Special Topics in American Politics (Bonus Points)	
Wednesday, February 1	Special Topics in American Politics (Bonus Points)	
Friday, February 3	The Rule of Law	
Monday, February 6	Political Power in the American System	
Wednesday, February 8	First Examination	Bring a Bluebook & #2 pencil
Friday, February 10	Federalism & Separation of Powers	Kollman, Chapter 3
Monday, February 13	Introduction to American Political Institutions	
Wednesday, February 15	Congress the Institution	Kollman, Chapter 5
Friday, February 17	Congressional Policymaking & Organization	
Monday, February 20	Members of Congress	
Wednesday, February 22	The Presidency	Kollman, Chapter 6
Friday, February 24	Presidential Power	
Monday, February 27	The Administrative Presidency & Management Styles	
Wednesday, February 29	Second Examination	Bring a Bluebook & #2 pencil
Friday, March 2	Interbranch Politics–The U.S. Budget	
Monday, March 5	The U.S. Federal Bureaucracy	Kollman, Chapter 7
Wednesday, March 7	The Administrative State & Policy Subsystems	
Friday, March 9	Bureaucratic Policymaking	
Mon-Sat, March 12-17	Spring Break	
Monday, March 19	Policy Implementation & Street-Level Bureaucrats	
Wednesday, March 21	The Federal Judiciary	Kollman, Chapter 8
Friday, March 23	Judicial Policymaking	
Monday, March 26	Organized Interests in American Politics	Kollman, Chapter 11
Wednesday, March 28	Theories of Advocacy &	
Friday, March 30	The Media in American Politics	Kollman, Chapter 14
Monday, April 2	Theories of Media Influence	
Wednesday, April 4	Third Examination	Bring a Bluebook & #2 pencil
Friday, April 6	American Political Parties	Kollman, Chapter 12
Monday, April 9	Public Opinion in American Politics	Kollman, Chapter 9
Wednesday, April 11	Elections & Voting	Kollman, Chapter 10 & 13
Friday, April 13	The Policy Process	
Monday, April 16	Theories of the Policy Process	
Wednesday, April 18	Evaluating Policy Implementation	
Friday, April 20	Politics of Bureaucratic Reform	
Monday, April 23	Economic Policy	
Wednesday, April 25	The Policy of Public Risks	
Friday, April 27	Politics of Bureaucratic Reform	
Monday, April 30	Social Policy	
Wednesday, May 2	Fourth Examination	Bring a Bluebook & #2 pencil
Friday, May 4	Makeup Examination	Bring a Bluebook & #2 pencil