

## **GOVERNMENT 310L**

## **Introduction to U.S. and Texas Government**

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Unique No.:	38580
Class meetings:	MWF 1:00-2:00 pm, MEZ 1.306
Instructor:	Bartholomew H. Sparrow, Professor Office: Batts 3.142 Telephone: 232-7202 <a href="mailto:bhs@austin.utexas.edu">bhs@austin.utexas.edu</a>
Office hours:	M: 2:00-5:00 p.m. and by appointment
Teaching Assistants:	JoBeth Surface Shafran PhD Student, Dept. of Government  Kody Cooper PhD Student, Dept. of Government

### **Description**

This course introduces you to the politics and government of the United States (a lot) and the state of Texas (some). It concentrates on the political philosophy and political history of the United States and Texas and takes a critical look at the ideas, institutions, and processes of American government as they have developed up to the present.

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 are political institutions?
- What political processes and major 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 or US resident, fit into state and national government?

### Course Objectives

By the end of the Fall 2012 semester, students in 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 into the Caribbean and the Pacific
- the political economy of the United States
- federalism and the relationship between the U.S. national government and the governments of the separate states
- race and ethnicity
- the major characteristics of the politics and government of Texas
- the U.S. Congress, presidency, bureaucracy, and judiciary
- campaigns, parties, elections, public opinion, and the media
- important U.S. social policies and major U.S. foreign/national security policies

### Educational Values

Students are expected to demonstrate the following values in class:

- respect for their fellow students, teaching assistants, and instructor
- honesty, responsibility, self-motivation, and a solid work ethic
- desire to learn
- engagement with the concepts, institutions, processes, and policies of U.S. and Texas politics and government
- commitment to an on-going assessment of their own learning about American and Texas politics and government

### Group Assignments

Beginning on the third class day, all students will be assigned to a team of 6-7 members, determined by your professor and the TAs. *You will stay in your group for the entire semester.* Group assignments constitute possibly up to 30 percent of your class grade. All team work is done in class; no team work needs to be done outside of class (although you are welcome to). Team activities fall into two categories: “Individual and Team Quizzes” (in boldface on the course schedule below), which may be accompanied by an “Appeal,” if appropriate, and where team members may receive bonus point, and “Group Exercises” (descriptions for each exercise will be posted on the class Blackboard site).

#### Individual and Team Quizzes

**INDIVIDUAL QUIZ.** You will be given a 15-20 question, multiple choice quiz over the assigned reading during the first 20-25 minutes of the class. Answers will be recorded using scantrons. We will provide scantrons, you need to be sure to bring a pencil, or two, on quiz (and test) days.

**TEAM QUIZ.** Following the individual quiz and after we have collected the scantrons, students will take the same quiz *but as a team.* As with the individual

quiz, this is closed book: no texts or notes can be used. We will provide you with scratch-off answer sheets. On the back of your team's answer sheet, write the team number/name and the names of each team member who took the quiz.

APPEALS. If your team believes that your answer to a question was in fact correct but was counted as wrong, you may submit a written appeal to the instructor. This appeal process must occur *immediately following* a team quiz. The instructor or TA *must* be notified that an appeal is being made and receive permission to open books. Only *teams*, not individuals, may write appeals; all team members present must sign. A successful appeal will raise grades on the individual quizzes that reflect the "new" answer. It will *not* affect those that originally had the supposedly "correct" answer. A successful appeal will raise your team's scores only, *even if another team made the same mistake on that same question*. You need to staple your appeal(s) on top of your answer sheet, and hand it/them to the TA, along with the team scratch-off sheet and the individual quizzes at the end of the class.

Appeals must be supported by evidence from the texts or lecture notes. If the appeal is based on what seems to be an ambiguously phrased question, the team must offer better wording in replacement. The decision to grant or refuse an appeal will be made by the instructor and the team will be informed the following class day. The decision is final.

#### Hypothetical Example of a Successful Appeal

*Argument:* Concerning question 15, we feel that A, rather than B, should be the correct answer.

*Evidence:* According to the class text, p. 107, civil liberties are defined as "individual freedoms that place limitations on the power of government," whereas the class lecture of September 17 discussed civil liberties being threatened by all sorts of non-governmental actors, such as employers (or their companies), home owner associations, fraternal organizations, and unions, among others. We therefore conclude that, at the very least, answer A is misleading when it only states that civil liberties are freedoms from government.

BONUS POINTS. Members of the team scoring highest on the quiz will each have a bonus of 2 points added to their individual quiz scores. So, if a student makes a 13 on the individual quiz and his/her team scores highest in the class, his/her grade will be changed to 15. Members of the second highest scoring teams will receive 1 additional point each. If teams tie, all members of all the tying teams get equal bonus points.

PROBLEM: You were absent the day of the quiz. Only one quiz may be made up during the term, and then only if you provide the TA *written notice* of your expected absence at least two calendar days *before* the scheduled quiz. You

are then responsible for arranging with the TA to make up the quiz. No team bonus points may be claimed. Any additional missed quiz will be graded "F."

### Team Exercises

The team assignments have four parts: first is a set of readings or other task that each member does on her/his own; second is discussing the assignment with team members in class; third is writing up a half-page (turned in at the end of class, with names of those in attendance signing on); fourth is you or one of your team members (rotated throughout the semester) briefly telling the class what your answer was, *two or three sentences only, because of the class size*. The order in which the team representatives present will be determined randomly.

### **Assessment and Grades**

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

Tests (2) 50%

The midterm is worth 20 percent of your grade, the final is worth 30 percent of your grade.

Quizzes (5) 27%

You are responsible for five quizzes on the assigned readings and lectures (the first quiz is 3 points, the other four are 6 points each).

Team Assignments 20%

The four team assignments are worth 5 points each, and will be graded on evidence, logic, and clarity.

Team Peer Evaluations 2%

Class Participation 1%

In-class participation, such as questions, contributions to the class Blackboard (BB) discussion site, and other indicators of engagement add to one percentage point, and may also constitute a tipping factor for borderline grades or grades close to the next grade up.

Extra Credit 3% maximum

You may earn additional points by doing a survey for my colleagues in the Government Department (1 pt.), and/or by writing *one* 1,000 wd. movie review (2 pts.) of "Inside Job," "Hernandez v. Texas," "The Times of Harvey Milk," "Free Speech for Sale," "The Age of Stupid," or other movie/documentary. *If a movie you wish to see and review is not on this list,*

*please check with your professor; failure to get permission to review a different movie will result in no extra credit being granted.*

**Rules** With a class of almost 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 of 1:50 pm – so you can make your next appointment.

- **Attendance is expected.** Much of the materials on the tests 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.
- **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. Likewise, at the end of class, as we approach 1:50 pm, please wait until class is dismissed before packing up and leaving. This allows me to finish making a point or enables other student to finish hearing what's being said before class gets disrupted. I shall attempt to end class promptly, even if not always at 1:50 exactly, so that you can get to where you need to go.
- **Laptop computers, iPhones, iPads, and other electronic devices may be not used once class begins.** (Pretend you are in an airplane!)
- **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 determining your final 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.
- **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.
- **Tests must be taken when scheduled.** If you have special needs, such as a disability, you have to inform the instructor by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of classes.
- You 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 shall 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,” “Dr. Sparrow,” etc., and not “hey prof.” :)
- By UT Austin policy, you must notify me at least 14 days before the date of observance of a religious holy day if you choose to miss class. Should you 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.
- I know that a typical part of being at UT is, unfortunately, large classes – especially introductory courses – but it's still possible to make your education more personal experience. Your team and classmates are one resource. So are your professor and graduate student teaching assistants.

Their office hours are *your* time; take advantage of them. Talk to your professor in office hours or before or after class, meet with one or both of your TAs, and by all means get to know your classmates.

### Texts

Christine Barbour and Gerald C. Wright, *Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship in American Politics*. Brief 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2011).

Asterisked chapters and articles will be posted on BB, which you can download.

### Course Schedule

Aug. 29	<u>Introduction</u> Course overview; review of the syllabus
Aug. 31	<u>American Government and Political Science: How to Study and How to Study a Discipline</u> <i>Keeping the Republic</i> Ch. 1
Sept. 3	<u>Labor Day Holiday</u>
Sept. 5	<b>Quiz and Group Quiz 1: Concepts, Definitions, and the Syllabus</b> (3 points)
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<u>Foundations: Concepts and Background, Part 1</u>	
Sept. 7	<u>Colonial America and Revolution</u> The Mayflower Compact (find online; one paragraph long) <i>The Declaration of Independence</i> (in <i>Keeping the Republic</i> )
Sept. 10	<u>The Constitution: Its Reach, Its Limits</u> <i>Keeping the Republic</i> Ch. 2 <i>The Constitution of the United States</i> (in <i>Keeping the Republic</i> )
Sept. 12	<b>Quiz and Group Quiz 2: The Founding and Its Legacy</b>
Sept. 14	<u>Federalism</u> <i>Keeping the Republic</i> , Ch. 3 <i>Federalist 51</i> (in <i>Politics in America</i> )

- Sept. 17                    Civil Liberties  
*Keeping the Republic*, Ch. 4
- Sept. 19                    Race and African Americans  
Rev. Martin L. King, "Letter from the Birmingham Jail"\*\*\*  
Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"\*\*\*  
**Film:** "Tulia, Texas" video documentary (in class), 1<sup>st</sup> half
- Sept. 21                    Equal Rights  
*Keeping the Republic*, Ch. 5  
**Film:** "Tulia, Texas" video documentary (in class), 2<sup>nd</sup> half
- Sept. 24                    **Team Exercise A: What Is the Chief Lesson of "Tulia, Texas"? Revisiting the Reverend King and Malcolm X**
- Sept. 26                    Geographic Expansion  
The Northwest Ordinance\*\*\*  
Bartholomew Sparrow, *The Insular Cases and the Emergence of American Empire*," Introduction, Ch. 1\*\*\*
- Sept. 28                    The Texas Constitution  
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>  
"The Constitution"
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- Political Institutions: Part I, Formal Institutions
- Oct. 1                      Institutions: Formal and Informal Structures  
No Assigned Reading (read ahead!)
- Oct. 3                      **Quiz and Group Quiz 3: The Formal Institutions**
- Oct. 5                      Congress  
*Keeping the Republic*, Ch. 6
- Oct. 8                      Texas Legislature  
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>  
"Legislative Branch"
- Oct. 10                    The US Presidency  
*Keeping the Republic*, Ch. 7  
**Peer Group Evaluation** (in class)

- Oct. 12            Out of Class Assignment: Texas Capitol: No Class  
Tour the Texas State Capitol, four blocks south of campus (you may do so by yourself, with friends or classmates, or with one of the Capitol's tours, in which case call ahead)
- Oct. 15            **Group Exercise B: What Does the Capitol's Architecture Say about Power, Government, and/or the State of Texas?**
- Oct. 17            The Texas Executive  
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>  
"Executive Branch"
- Oct. 19            The Bureaucracy  
*Keeping the Republic*, Ch. 8
- Oct. 22            U.S. Supreme Court and Judicial Politics  
*Keeping the Republic*, Ch. 9
- Oct. 24            The Texas Judiciary  
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>  
"Justice System"
- Oct. 26            MIDTERM EXAM
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- Political Institutions: Part II, Informal Institutions
- Oct. 29            The Washington Power Game  
No Assigned Reading (read ahead!)
- Oct. 31            **Quiz and Group Quiz 4: Informal Institutions**
- Nov. 5            Voting, Campaigns, and Elections  
*Keeping the Republic*, Ch. 12
- Nov. 7            Interest Groups  
*Federalist 10* (in *Keeping the Republic*)  
Mancur Olson, "The Logic of Collective Action"\*\*\*
- Nov. 9            Public Opinion  
*Keeping the Republic*, Ch. 10
- Nov. 12            Political Parties

*Keeping the Republic*, Ch. 11

- Nov. 14      Texas Interests and Parties  
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>  
 “The Parties”; “Interest Groups”
- Nov. 16      **Group Exercise C: Don’t We Want Parties that Are Clearly  
 Opposed to Each Other, Ones That Are Choices and Not  
 Echoes?** APSA: “Report of the Committee on Political  
 Parties Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System”;  
 Ladd, “Of Political Parties Great and Strong: A Dissent”\*\*\*
- Nov. 19      The Media  
*Keeping the Republic*, Ch. 13
- Nov. 21, 23      Thanksgiving Holiday
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- Public and Foreign Policy
- Nov. 26      **Quiz and Group Quiz 5: Domestic and Foreign Issues**
- Nov. 28      The US Government’s Outputs  
*Keeping the Republic*, Ch. 14  
 Extra credit movie review due, *if you chose to write one*
- Nov. 30      Texas Public Policies  
<http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>  
 “Political Economy”
- Dec. 3      **Group Exercise D: Keep or Privatize Social Security?**  
 Niskanen, “Whither Social Security?” Transition It, Then  
 Retire It”; Chait, “Security Risk: The Plot to Kill Social  
 Security”\*\*\*
- Dec. 5      Course Summary and Overview  
 Course Evaluation, in class
- Dec. 7      FINAL EXAM