GOVERNMENT 310L Introduction to U.S. and Texas Government

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Unique No.: 38495

Class meetings: MWF 2:00-3:00 pm, ART 1.102

Instructor: Bartholomew H. Sparrow, Professor

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Office hours: MW: 3:00-4:30 p.m. and by appt.

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PhD Candidate, Dept. of Government Office Hours: W: 12:30-2:00, F 11-12:30

Batts 1.118

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PhD Student, Dept. of Government Office Hours: T 9:30-11, F 12:30-2:00

Batts 1.118

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 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 in the 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 2010 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 on the North American continent and overseas, into the Caribbean and 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

Student are expected to demonstrate the following values in class:

- a respect for their fellow students, instructor, visitors, and teaching assistants
- 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, Bartholomew H. Sparrow, L. Tucker Gibson, and Clay Robinson, *Politics in America*, Texas Edition, Pearson Longman, 2009.
- Required Reading Packet, available at IT Copies at 512 W. MLK. Please note that in the course schedule, packet readings are marked by three asterisks ***

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 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.

2. Class exercises (5) 15%

You have five short assignments in which you have to learn about your congressional representative, U.S. senator, state representative (Texas, elsewhere), and state senator (Texas, elsewhere). You will also have to write a brief report about your out-of-class assignment to visit the Texas State Capitol. Each assignment is worth three percent of your course grade. The assignments will be described in more detail once the class begins. Please note that you may turn the exercises in earlier than the due date. Turn them in to the teaching assistants. Only hard copies are accepted.

3. Quizzes (4) 15%

You are responsible for four quizzes on the assigned readings and lectures (5 percent each, the lowest quiz grade will be dropped). Each quiz will review 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.

4. Class participation 5%

You are evaluated on your participation in the class, on your contributions to the Blackboard (BB) discussion site, and on other indicators of your interest and participation in the course. You are also most welcome to speak to your instructor after class, in office hours, or by appointment. (See general rules below, too.) Exceptional participation may be a tipping factor in the determination of grades.

5. 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 the 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.
- 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+.

- 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 is grounds for failure and more serious academic penalties.

Class Guidelines

With a class of hundreds of 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 2:50 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 2:50 on the button, 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. Although class participation is 5 percent of the grade, serious or serial misconduct may detract more than 5 percent from your grade, per the instructor's judgment.

- Tests must be taken when scheduled. If you have special needs, such as a disability, you have to inform the instructor by the 2^{nd} 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 a person's actual name) and you should be sure to use an appropriate form of address.
- 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. Nonetheless, it is 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 25: <u>Introduction</u>

Course overview; Syllabus

August 27: <u>Power and Democracy in America</u>

Politics in America, Ch. 1 **Diagnostic exercise.1**

August 30: <u>Colonial America and Revolution</u>

The Mayflower Compact (locate online; only one paragraph)

The Declaration of Independence (in Politics in America)
The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union***

Index cards due

September 1 <u>Arguments on the Constitution</u>

John Jay, *Federalist* Nos. 2, 3, and 4, in *The Federalist**** Charles A. Beard, "The Constitution as an Economic Document," and Robert E. Brown, response, in *Enduring*

Debate, pp. 23-33***

September 3 <u>Political Culture</u>

Politics in America, Ch. 2

September 6 LABOR DAY

No Class

September 8 Race and Identity

"Tulia, Texas" video documentary (in class), 1st half

Politics in America, Ch. 15

Quiz.1

September 10 Race and Identity.2

"Tulia, Texas" video documentary (in class), 2nd half Rev. Martin L. King, "Letter from the Birmingham Jail"***

Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"***

September 13 <u>The Constitutions of the United States</u>

U.S. Constitution (in *Politics in America*): read twice

The Northwest Ordinance***

Assignment.1 due

September 15 <u>Federalism</u>

Politics in America, Ch. 4

Federalist 51 (in *Politics in America*)

September 17 <u>Texas Background</u>

Politics in America, Ch. 19

Robert A. Caro, Path to Power, pp. 3-25***

September 20 <u>The Texas Constitution</u>

Politics in America, Ch. 20

September 22 First Test

September 24 <u>Geographic Expansion</u>

Bartholomew Sparrow, The Insular Cases and the Emergence

of American Empire," Introduction, Ch. 1, 3***

September 27 <u>Overseas Expansion</u>

Downes v. Bidwell***
Platt Amendment***

September 29 <u>Politics and Liberty</u>

Politics in America, Ch. 14

Quiz.2

October 1 Public Opinion

Politics in America, Ch. 5

October 4 <u>Economics and Liberty</u>

Politics in America, Ch. 16

"Free Speech for Sale," video, 1st half

Assignment.2 due

October 6 Economics and Liberty.2

McCullough v. Maryland***

"Is Free Trade Fair Trade?" Yes: Douglas A. Irwin; No: David Morris, in *Taking Sides*, 15th ed., G. McKenna and S.

Feingold, eds., McGraw-Hill, 2007***
"Free Speech for Sale," video, 2nd half

October 8 Out of Class Assignment: Texas Capitol

Politics in America, Ch. 25

No Class: Students tour the Texas State Capitol on their

own time, according to their own best schedule

Political Institutions and Processes

October 11 <u>Interest Groups</u>

Federalist 10 (in Politics in America)

Mancur Olson, "The Logic of Collective Action," Enduring

Debate***

Politics in America, Ch. 9

October 13 Political Parties

Politics in America, Ch. 7

Anthony Downs, "An Economic Theory of Democracy," Classic Readings***

Classic Readings***
Assignment.3 due

October 15 <u>Texas Interests and Parties</u>

Politics in America, Ch. 21

October 18 <u>The News Media</u>

Politics in America, Ch. 6

October 20 <u>Congress</u>

Politics in America, Ch. 10

Quiz.3

October 22 <u>Texas Legislature</u>

Politics in America, Ch. 22

Guest Lectures: Mr. Ian Randolph; Mr. David Quinn

October 25 Congress.2

David Mayhew, "Electoral Connection" in *Classic Readings**** R. L. Hall and Wayman, "Buying Time," *Classic Readings**** Nelson Polsby, "The Institutionalization of Congress,"

Classic Readings***

October 27 The U.S. Presidency

Politics in America, Ch. 11

October 29 The Presidency.2

Stephen Skowronek, "Presidential Leadership in Political Time," M. Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*,

CQ Press, 8th ed., 2006***

Richard Neustadt, "The Power to Persuade," Enduring

Debate***

Scott James, "The Evolution of the Presidency: Between the

Promise and the Fear," *The Executive Branch*, Joel D. Aberbach and Mark A. Peterson, eds., Oxford, 2005***

November 1 The Texas Executive

Politics in America, Ch. 23

November 3 Test 2

November 5 The Bureaucracy

Politics in America, Ch. 12

Daniel Carpenter, "The Evolution of National Bureaucracy in the United States," *The Executive Branch*, Joel D. Aberbach

and Mark A. Peterson, eds., Oxford, 2005***

November 8 <u>U.S. Supreme Court and Judicial Politics</u>

Politics in America, Ch. 13

"Supreme Court Appointees" (in *Politics in America*)

November 10 <u>The Texas Judiciary</u>

Politics in America, Ch. 24

Assignment.4 Due

November 12 Election Review: 2010 Midterms

Readings tba

November 15 <u>Social Policies</u>

Politics in America, Ch. 17

Quiz.4

November 17 Environmental and Energy Policy

Jennifer Weeks, "Domestic Energy Development," *Issues for Debate*; Marcia Clemmitt, "Climate Change," *Issues for*

Debate***

"Age of Stupid," 1st half

November 19 Immigration Policy

"Age of Stupid," 2nd half

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**

November 22 <u>Politics and National Security</u>

Politics in America, Ch.18

November 24 & 26: Thanksgiving Holidays

No Classes

November 29 "Must The United States Exercise World Leadership," Yes:

Robert J. Lieber; No: Niall Ferguson, in *Taking Sides*, 15th ed., G. McKenna and S. Feingold, eds., McGraw-Hill, 2007***

Diagnostic exercise, part II

December 1 <u>Course Overview and Test Review</u>

No reading assignment

December 3 Test 3