Introduction to American and Texas Government

Government 310L
The University of Texas at Austin
Unique Number 38375
Fall 2010

Professor Jason P. Casellas, Ph.D.
MWF 2:00-2:50 p.m.
Room: CAL 100
Office Hours**:** MW 3:00-4:30 p.m.

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Room: Batts 1.118 Office Hours: M 9:30-11:00 a.m. and Thurs. 11:00-12:30 p.m.

Prerequisite: Twelve semester hours of college coursework and a passing score on the reading section of the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) test (or an appropriate assessment test).

Course Description:
This course will examine the foundations, principles, institutions, and processes of American government. Through the examination of the Constitution, federalism, and the American creed, we will gain an appreciation for the political institutions that have sustained the United States for more than two hundred years. We will examine in detail the characteristics of the three major branches of government, and how separation of powers has worked and works in today's polity. We will then discuss the various extra-governmental institutions, which have an influence on governmental decisions, such as interest groups, political parties, and the media. Finally, we will explore American elections, political participation, and public opinion in order to better understand the processes which give American politics its very life. The course will conclude with a discussion of domestic and foreign policy, with reference to current political events.

Required Text

Morris P. Fiorina, Paul E. Peterson, Bertram Johnson and William G. Mayer (2008). *America's New Democracy*, *The Alternate Edition* (6th Edition.) New York: Pearson Longman Publishers
(E-version of this textbook available for sale at a discount):
http://www.coursesmart.com/9780205662968?__instructor=1030374

University of Texas at Austin Online Project
Texas Government Website
http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/

Recommended

Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay. *The Federalist Papers* ed. George W. Carey and James McClellan, The Gideon Edition.

**Other readings will be journal articles, or selected chapters from other books. These will be marked with an * below in the appropriate week. They can provide useful additional insight that the textbook does not cover. They can be found via ERes (Electronic Reserves System) at http://reserves.lib.utexas.edu/eres/default.aspx. The password for the course is "congress."

Newspapers and Online Sources
Students should read a major newspaper, such as the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal* daily in order to monitor American politics. We will discuss current events in class as they relate to the course material.

Course Grading

Grades will be computed as follows:

Exam I (October 1)	30%
Exam II (November 5)	30%
Exam III (December 3)	30%
Random Attendance Checks	5%
Midterm Election Exercise	5%
Total	**100%**

The following scale will be used to calculate final grades:

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

Exams
The exams will test your knowledge of the readings, lectures, and classroom discussions. Exams will combine multiple-choice questions, identifications, and short essays. Make up exams will not be granted unless there is a verified illness or family emergency.

Attendance Policy: If you are habitually late and/or absent, your grade will suffer as 5% of the final grade is composed of random attendance checks.

Excused Absences can be granted for an illness certified by a doctor, for family emergencies approved by the Dean, or for official university events with documentation

(i.e., a letter from the coach). In the case of planned events, advance notice of at least one week must be given. DO NOT miss class and then arrive the next time with a letter documenting the reason for the absence.

Academic Integrity
Students are expected to follow the University Honor Code. Namely, cheating or plagiarism will NOT be tolerated. Any instances will be reported to the Dean. For more information, please consult http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/.

Cancelled Classes
At times, classes may be cancelled. The class will be informed of these dates by email and/or blackboard and will be held responsible for any readings or assignments.

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, 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.

Special Needs
If you need special assistance due to a disability, please notify me before the need arises. Information is available from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259. http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/

Course Changes
I reserve the right to change the contents of this syllabus as the needs of the course develop.

Copyright notice from the Professor: I have taken steps to ensure that all course material, including this syllabus and the lectures associated with this class, are protected by copyright law as my own original expression. Students are authorized to take notes in class and thus create their own "derivative work" from my lectures, but this authorization extends only to your personal use. Reproduction, distribution, or publication (on-line or otherwise) of transcribed or taped versions of my lecture are not permitted without my express written consent.

Course Schedule

Date	Subject	Readings
August 25	Introduction	**This document**
August 27	Democracy	**Chapter 1** **The Declaration of Independence (7/4/1776)**
August 30	Constitution and the Founding	**Chapter 2 and "The Constitution" TX Politics Website**
September 1	Constitution and the Founding	**Federalist Papers 10** **US Constitution (in textbook)**
September 3	Informed Participation	**Short Film: Recalling Rocco**
September 8	Federalism and Texas	**Chapter 3**
September 10	Federalism	**Federalist Papers #51** ***Knott, Stephen. "What the Anti-Federalists Can Teach Us."**
September 13	American Creed	**Chapter 4, "Political Culture" TX Politics Website** ***Putnam, Robert, "The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America"**
September 15	Legislative	**Chapter 12 and "Legislative Branch" TX Politics**
September 17	Legislative Branch/Texas Legislature	***Mayhew, David R., *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (excerpt)** **Happy Constitution Day!**
September 20	Executive	**Chapter 13, "Executive Branch" TX Politics**
September 22	Executive	**Federalist Papers #70**
September 24	Executive Branch	**Lincoln, Abraham, *First Inaugural Address* (http://libertyonline.hypermall.com/Lincoln/lincoln-1.html**
September 27	Judicial Branch	**Chapter 15 and "Justice System" TX Politics**

September 29	Judicial Branch	***Lincoln, Abraham, "The Authority of the Supreme Court"** ***George, Robert P. "Lincoln on Judicial Despotism"**
October 1	➔➔➔➔	**<u>Exam One</u>**
October 4	Interest Groups	**Chapter 7 and "Interest Groups" TX Politics**
October 6	Interest Groups	***Wright, John, "The Evolution of Interest Groups"**
October 8	Bureaucracy	**Chapter 14 and "Bureaucracy" TX Politics** ***Wilson, James Q. *Bureaucracy*: *What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (excerpt**

October 11	Media	**Chapter 9**
October 13	Texas Politics	**Last Man Standing**
October 15	Media	***Groseclose, Tim and J. Milyo, "A Measure of Media Bias."** **Read introduction, skim data, and read conclusion. Look at tables.** **http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/groseclose/Media.Bias.8.htm**
October 18	Parties	**Chapter 8 and "Political Parties" TX Politics**
October 20	Parties	***Aldrich, John H. *Why Parties?* (excerpt**
October 22	Third Parties	***Rapoport, Ronald and W. J. Stone, *Three's a Crowd: The Dynamic of Third Parties*, excerpts**
October 25	Electing the President	**Chapter 10**
October 27	Elections	**"Voting, Campaigns and Elections" TX Politics website**
October 29	Elections	**Chapter 11**
November 1 and 3	Midterm Elections	**Discussion of Results of National Elections** **Consult realclearpolitics.com for latest polls, nonbiased analyses from Charlie Cook and Stu Rothenberg.**

November 5 ➔➔➔➔➔➔➔➔➔➔		**Exam Two**
November 8	**Public Opinion**	**Chapter 5**
November 10	Public Opinion	***McClosky and Zaller, "The Foundations of the American Ethos: Capitalism and Democracy." (excerpt)**
November 12	Participation	**Chapter 6**
November 15	Participation	***Green, Donald and Gerber, Alan. "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment" *APSR***
November 17	Civil Liberties	**Chapter 16**
November 19	Texas Politics	**Last Man Standing (continued)**
November 22	Civil Liberties	***Griswold v. Connecticut (1965)*** ***http://www.thisnation.com/library/griswold.html*** ***Planned Parenthood of SEPA v. Casey (1992)*** ***http://www.oyez.org/oyez/resource/case/306/print***
November 29	Civil Rights	***Chapter 17***
December 1	Civil Rights	**Lincoln, Abraham, "The Emancipation Proclamation" (http://libertyonline.hypermall.com/Lincoln/emancipate.html) King Jr., Rev. Martin Luther, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (http://www.almaz.com/nobel/peace/MLK-jail.html)**

December 3	➔➔➔➔	**Exam Three**