

GOVT 2305.05

Federal Government

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Spring 2020

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Web: [Moodle](#)

Office: Social Sciences M

Class Room: Social Sciences 8

Office Hours: MWF 9am-12pm, 1-3pm,

Class Hours: TR 12:30pm-1:50pm

TR 9am-11am, 2-3pm,

MTWRF 3-5pm by appointment only

Course Description

The goal of this class is to discover how the Federal Government affect our everyday lives. We investigate American politics through the framework of "interests, interactions, and institutions." We learn that how policies or decisions that are made are impacted by the institutions that they are surrounded by and by the behavioral decisions of key actors.

Throughout the course of the semester, we will identify different actors in American politics and investigate why those actors conflict at some times and cooperate at others. Our focus will then turn to political institutions and the origins of these institutions. By the end of the semester, you will understand a variety of political challenges facing the United States today.

Required Materials

- Patterson, Thomas. 2019. *We the People, 12th/13th Edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.

4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.
6. Analyze the election process.
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

Course Structure

The primary method of instruction will be lecture, however participation in discussion is also a required component of this course. The professor reserves the right to include other methods of instruction, such as, videos, group activities, and other similar methods that facilitate the learning process.

Course Requirements

Readings

Daily reading assignments are listed in the syllabus. Students are required to complete all reading assignments PRIOR to attending the class for which they are assigned. Keeping up with the reading assignments will be essential for success in this class and will facilitate lecture and discussion. Although the overall theme between daily reading assignments and lecture will be the same, the exact material may not. There will be reading assignments that are not covered in class and class lectures that are not covered in the readings. Students are responsible for all information covered by readings and lectures on the exams.

Introduction Paper

During the first week of the course, you will be required to complete a short introduction paper. The topic of this paper will be discussed during the first meeting of the course and is due by Sunday, January 26th, 2019 by 11:59 pm on *Moodle*. This introduction paper is expected to be between 500-700 words long and will encompass 5% of your final grade.

Quizzes

Each chapter of the Patterson textbook will include a quiz over the whole chapter after you complete the readings. These quizzes will total 30% of your final grade.

Midterm Exams

There will be two in-class midterm exams that will encompass 15% of your final grade EACH. These exams will consist of multiple choice questions and at least one short answer essay. The dates of these exams are listed in the schedule, but are subject to change.

Final Exam

There will be a final exam that will total 25% of your final grade. This exam will be similar to the midterm exams, by consisting of multiple choice questions and at least two short answer essays. One of these essays will be cumulative, but the remainder of the exam will not be cumulative.

Front Row Extra Credit, Participation, and Attendance

Students sitting in the front row, center section of the class are eligible for extra credit. At the beginning of a period featuring a normal class (thus barring the first meeting and meetings with exams, etc), front row students will sign a sheet of paper passed out by the Instructor. Students coming in tardy after the sheet is signed receive no extra credit. For each day students sit in the front row, they earn about .111 percentage points of extra credit, therefore a student sitting in the front row for every day of normal class will earn 3% in extra credit. The downside of this extra credit is that students seated in this section may be asked discussion and other questions whether they have raised their hands or not and are obliged to answer, and if they are unable to answer they do not receive the bonus points for that day. Front Row seats are first come, first serve, and there is no reserving them. If conflict arises for these seats I will discontinue the extra credit opportunity.

Participation is not a grade in this course, but when it comes to rounding grades up at the end of the semester, participation will be taken into account in this situation. If the Instructor determines that a student has been active then their grades can be rounded up at the end of the semester. This rounding up will only occur within reason meaning about a percentage point. No student should request this change, and will only be done at the Instructors discretion. Requesting this to occur will only reduce the odds of it actually occurring.

Finally, attendance is required for this course and will encompass the final 10% of your overall grade. The university allows instructors to withdraw students after they exceed a set number of absences depending the number of weekly meetings. For this course, the number is 4.

Grading Policy

Grading Scale is as follows:

A = 100-90

B = 89-80

C = 79-70

D = 69-60

F = 59 and below

Any curve will only ever make it easier to obtain a certain letter grade, and not lower the students final grade. The grade will count the assessments using the following proportions:

- 5% Introduction Paper
- 30% Quizzes

- 30% Midterm Exams (15%, 15%)
- 25% Final Exam
- 10% Attendance

Course Policies

During Class

I understand that the electronic recording of notes will be important for class and so computers will be allowed in class. Please refrain from using computers for anything but activities related to the class. Phones are prohibited as they are rarely useful for anything in the course. Eating and drinking are allowed in class but please refrain from it affecting the course. Try not to eat your lunch in class as the classes are typically active.

Attendance Policy

Texarkana College's absentee policy allows instructors to withdraw a student from a course due to excessive absences. If a student leaves and returns during class or leaves the class before the class is over, they **may** be considered absent. Three tardies constitute one absence.

Faculty members **are not** obligated to provide opportunities for students to make-up missed assignments and tests as a result of a student's absence from class.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the class every day. A roll sheet will be passed out to all students to sign. If a student is caught signing for another student, they will be treated as if they did not attend the lecture meeting as well as the student they attempted to sign for. If a student is late or missed class, it is their responsibility to notify me. A student is allowed a maximum of 4 absences (which constitutes 2 classes per week. Any more than 4 absences could result in the student being dropped from the course by the professor.

A student should not stop attending a class without formally withdrawing from the course by the institution's published Last Day for Students to Drop. If a student stops attending after the published Last Day for Students to Drop, the student may receive a grade of "F" in the class. The professor will submit the last date of attendance for students receiving a grade of "F" or "W".

Withdrawal from a course(s) **may** affect a student's current or future financial aid eligibility. Students should consult the Financial Aid Office to learn both short and long term consequences of a withdrawal.

Make-up Exams and Missed Assignments

Missed exams will be excused and made-up after the fact in case of illness or personal emergency *only with proper documentation*. Please contact the instructor as soon as possible if an emergency arises that prevents you from taking the exam. Exams missed due to university sponsored events

or religious holidays may also be excused, provided that the student informs me of the absence *at least two weeks in advance*. Vacation (e.g. leaving early for fall, spring or semester break) and social engagements will *not* be excused. Absolutely *no* excuse will be accepted for late assignments or missed exams, unless they are formally approved by the university. There will be no exceptions to this policy. Additionally, the documentation must explicitly state that the student was unable to attend class on the date in question.

Students must provide proper documentation and make-up the missed assignment (or exam) within two weeks of the originally scheduled date. Failure to do so will result in a zero. Make-up exams may differ significantly in both structure and content from the original exam.

Academic Integrity and Honesty

Scholastic dishonesty, involving but not limited to cheating on a test, plagiarism, collusion, or falsification of records will make the student liable for disciplinary action after being investigated by the Dean of Students. Proven violations of this nature will result in the student being dropped from the class with an "F". This policy applies campus wide, including TC Testing Center, as well as off-campus classroom or lab sites, including dual credit campuses. This information can be found in the Student Handbook at <https://texarkanacollege.edu>. Don't cheat. Don't be that guy. Yes, you. You know exactly what I'm talking about.

Classroom Conduct

Activities that are disruptive to class will not be tolerated. Arriving late for class, reading newspapers, speaking while others are speaking, packing prior to the end of class, and cell phones are all highly disruptive. Cell phones, ipods, and other similar devices must be turned off during class. Laptops may be used for note-taking only; use of laptops for purposes other than note-taking will result in the banning of laptops from the classroom.

In addition, students are encouraged to discuss and express opinions on the many issues, some controversial, that are covered in class. Although differing opinions are encouraged, I will not tolerate any attacks of a personal nature or statements that single out students based on their race, gender, religion, age, ethnicity, nationality, or sexual orientation. Any student engaging in disruptive or disrespectful activities will be asked to leave the classroom.

Religious Observances

Texas House Bill 256 regarding religious observances requires that faculty and the university make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Students are advised to notify the course instructor well in advance of the conflict and must make-up the missed assignment within two weeks of the original due date.

Disability Act Statement

Texarkana College complies with all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and makes reasonable accommodations upon request. Please contact Larry Andrews at 903.823.3283, or go

by the Recruitment, Advisement, and Retention Department located in the Administration building for personal assistance.

If you have an accommodation letter from their office indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodations, please present it to me so we can discuss the accommodations that you might need for this class. *It is best to request these changes at the beginning if not before the start of class so there is ample time to make the accommodations.*

Course Schedule

The schedule is tentative and subject to change.

Week 01, 01/20 - 01/24: Introduction and Political Culture

- Tuesday - Introduction and Chapter 1 Patterson
- Thursday - Chapter 1 Patterson and Chapter 2 Patterson
- Chapter 1 Quiz Due Sunday at 11:59pm

Week 02, 01/27 - 01/31: Constitutional Democracy

- Tuesday - Chapter 2 Patterson and Chapter 3 Patterson
- Thursday - Chapter 3 Patterson
- Chapter 2 and 3 Quizzes Due Sunday at 11:59pm

Week 03, 02/03 - 02/07: Federalism

- Tuesday - Chapter 4 Patterson
- Thursday - Chapter 4 Patterson and Chapter 5 Patterson
- Chapter 4 Quiz Due Sunday at 11:59pm

Week 04, 02/10 - 02/14: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

- Tuesday - Chapter 5 Patterson
- Thursday - Chapter 6 Patterson
- Chapter 5 Quiz Due Sunday at 11:59pm

Week 05, 02/17 - 02/21: Public Opinion

- Tuesday - Chapter 6 Patterson and Chapter 7 Patterson
- Thursday - Chapter 7 Patterson
- Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 Quizzes Due Sunday at 11:59pm

Week 06, 02/24 - 02/28: MIDTERM 1 and Political Parties

- Tuesday - **MIDTERM 1**
- Thursday - Chapter 8 Patterson
- Chapter 8 Quiz Due Sunday at 11:59pm

Week 07, 03/02 - 03/06: Campaigns and Interest Groups

- Tuesday - Chapter 8 Patterson and Chapter 9 Patterson
- Thursday - Chapter 9 Patterson
- Chapter 9 Quiz Due Sunday at 11:59pm

Week 08, 03/09 - 03/13: The News Media

- Tuesday - Chapter 9 Patterson and Chapter 10 Patterson
- Thursday - Chapter 10 Patterson
- Chapter 10 Quiz Due Sunday at 11:59pm

Week 09, 03/16 - 03/20: SPRING BREAK

- Tuesday - NO CLASS
- Thursday - NO CLASS
- No Quiz Due this week

Week 10, 03/23 - 03/27: Congress

- Tuesday - Chapter 11 Patterson
- Thursday - Chapter 11 Patterson and Chapter 12 Patterson
- Chapter 11 Quiz Due Sunday at 11:59pm

Week 11, 03/30 - 04/03: The Presidency and The Bureaucracy

- Tuesday - Chapter 12 Patterson
- Thursday - Chapter 13 Patterson
- Chapter 12 Quiz Due Sunday at 11:59pm

Week 12, 04/06 - 04/10: The Judiciary

- Tuesday - Chapter 13 Patterson and Chapter 14 Patterson
- Thursday - Chapter 14 Patterson
- Chapter 13 and Chapter 14 Quizzes Due Sunday at 11:59pm

Week 13, 04/13 - 04/17: MIDTERM 2

- Tuesday - Exam Review
- Thursday - **MIDTERM 2**
- No Quiz Due This Week!

Week 14, 04/20 - 04/24: Economic and Environmental Policy

- Tuesday - Chapter 15 Patterson
- Thursday - Chapter 15 Patterson and Chapter 16 Patterson
- Chapter 15 Quiz Due Sunday at 11:59pm

Week 15, 04/27 - 05/01: Income, Welfare, Education Policy

- Tuesday - Chapter 16 Patterson
- Thursday - Chapter 17 Patterson
- Chapter 16 Quiz Due Sunday at 11:59pm

Week 16, 05/04 - 05/08: Foreign Policy

- Tuesday - Chapter 17 Patterson
- Thursday - FINAL REVIEW
- Chapter 17 Quiz Due Sunday at 11:59pm

Week 17, 05/11 - 05/15: FINAL EXAM

FINAL EXAM, THURSDAY, MAY 14th, 11am-1:30pm