



GOVT 2305.03  
Federal Government

Nathan Crosby

Spring 2023

---

E-mail: [crosbyna@lamarpa.edu](mailto:crosbyna@lamarpa.edu)

Office: EDUC 113

Office Hours: MTWR 12-3:30pm, F 9am-12pm

Web: [Blackboard](#)

Class Room: PAC 134

Class Time: TR 2-3:15pm

---

## 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.

During this course, you will also learn and discuss current events and issues facing the United States as well as the rest of the world, including a variety of controversial topics. In these discussions, you will be able to apply concepts and tools learned throughout the course in order to better understand these events and your opinions on these controversial topics.

## Required Materials

- Kurtz, Glen. 2021. *American Government 3e*. Houston: OpenStax. [Link to Book](#)

## Course Objectives

Successful students:

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.

## Core Objectives

1. Communication skills: Students will demonstrate effective written, oral and visual communication.
2. Critical Thinking Skills: Students will engage in creative and/or innovative thinking, and/or inquiry, analysis, evaluation, synthesis of information, organizing concepts and constructing solutions.
3. Social Responsibility: Students will demonstrate intercultural competency and civic knowledge by engaging effectively in local, regional, national and/or global communities.
4. Personal Responsibility: Students will demonstrate the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

## 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.

### Summary of Work of Fiction

During the semester, you will work on a research paper over a piece of fiction in popular culture and how it can be related to a single topic in government, politics, or broader social sciences, such as *Avatar* (2009) and colonialism. This paper will be discussed more on the first day of class and you will be expected to pick your work of fiction on the third meeting of class. Each piece of fiction can only have one student so be prepared to have multiple options. After selecting your work of fiction you will write a summary of your work of fiction that briefly explains the plot and how it relates to your picked topic. This summary is due by Sunday, January 29th, 2023 by 11:59 pm on Blackboard. This summary of your work of fiction paper is expected to be between 350-450 words long and will encompass 5% of your final grade.

### Annotated Bibliography

During the semester, you will work a research paper over a piece of fiction in popular culture and how it can be related to a single topic in government, politics, or broader social sciences. You will have already selected your topic and completed your summary of your work of fiction and will be expected to have started researching your paper. On Sunday, February 12th, 2023 at 11:59 pm you will be required to submit an annotated bibliography with a minimum of 10 sources on Blackboard. These sources will be cited correctly using either, MLA, APA, or Chicago styles. You will also include a summary of each sources contents with a minimum of 100 words per source. These sources must be found using the Library website. This annotated bibliography is worth 10% of your overall grade.

### Weekly Quizzes

Each week, when new content is learned there will be a quiz over all of the content learned in lecture and directly from the readings. The quizzes should not be completed until after you complete the readings. The lowest two quiz grades will be dropped at the end of the semester. These exams will total 20% of your final grade.

### Research Paper

Throughout the semester, you will be working on a research paper based on the work of fiction and topic that you selected at the start of the semester. This paper will be 2500 words double

spaced and will be due Sunday, April 16th at 11:59 pm. This paper will be graded using the same rubric as your essays for the exams. Structurally, you should use your summary of your work of fiction following your introduction in order to structure your argument for your paper and present at least two opposing sides on the issues, for instance, if your topic was abortion your sides would be pro-life and pro-choice or if your issue was climate change you may frame it as developing nations against developed nations. After presenting both sides arguments, you should pick which side from your research you found to be more correct and argue why. You must include sources, including all of the minimum ten from your annotated bibliography plus additional sources beyond those ten. You must include in-text citations for all of your sources that you include in your bibliography. Direct quotes do not count towards your word count. This paper will be 20% of your final grade.

### **Midterm Exam**

There will be one in-class midterm exam that will encompass 15% of your final grade. This exam will consist of multiple choice questions and one short answer essay. The date of this exam are listed in the schedule, but are subject to change.

### **Final Exam**

There will be a final exam that will total 20% of your final grade. This exam will be similar to the midterm exams, by consisting of multiple choice questions and two short answer essays. One of these essays will be cumulative, but the remainder of the exam will not be cumulative. This exam will be 15% of your final grade.

### **Participation and Attendance**

Finally, attendance and participation are 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% Summary of Work of Fiction
- 10% Annotated Bibliography

- 10% Attendance
- 20% Weekly Quizzes
- 20% Research Paper
- 15% Midterm Exam
- 20% Final Exam

## **Course Policies**

### **During Class**

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, unless previously approved by the instructor.

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, abilities, appearance, or sexual orientation. Any student engaging in disruptive or disrespectful activities will be asked to leave the classroom, if it continues after the first warning and removal, you will no longer be welcome in attending this course.

Eating and smoking are not allowed in class. This includes the use of e-cigarettes or other forms of vaping.

Only students enrolled in the course are allowed in the classroom, except by special instructor permission.

### **Outside of Class**

#### **Emailing the Instructor or Classmates**

When emailing or contacting anyone involved with this course, especially the instructor, allow for 48 hours before resubmitting an email or request. You should not expect an email over the weekend, even if an assignment is due. The instructor or your classmate may check their email over the weekend, but is not obliged to respond to your email at that time. If you have questions, it is best to get those emails in prior to the weekend.

#### **Online Decorum**

All members of this class are expected to provide the same level of respect to their classmates in person as well as online in the discussion forums. Failure to respect your classmates or instructor can be treated with any penalty similar to those outlined for in class behavior.

## Grading Timetable

The instructor will, to the best of their abilities, have all graded assignments back to students within 2 weeks of the due date. If there are unforeseen circumstances, the instructor will inform the class of the delay in receiving their work back prior to the two week deadline. Please refrain from emailing the instructor about grades during that two week window. Once grades are posted, the instructor will inform the class either by email or by an announcement in class.

## Attendance Policy

Lamar State College - Port Arthur's absentee policy allows instructors deciding attendance policies as it fits with the overall view of the department and college. Therefore, you are expected to follow the attendance policy as provide Here. If a student leaves and returns during class or leaves the class before the class is over, they **may** be considered absent.

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. Unless, COVID precautions require the instructor to take attendance verbally. 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's final grade being lowered a letter grade for every additional unexcused absence.

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.

## Computer Requirement Policy:

Students are required to have a computer with Internet access for classes. The computer must be an actual computer – smart phones, iPads, Androids, Chromebooks, etc., are not acceptable substitutes because they lack software compatibility necessary to complete all assignments and tests. Financial costs for the necessary equipment and internet access are the responsibility of the student.

**Computer systems requirements:**

- Webcam, microphone, and speakers or headphones
- Windows 10 or a recent version of Mac OS (minimum Sierra). Windows 10 S mode is not supported (Contact professor to upgrade from S to regular Windows 10)
- Hardware capable of running Microsoft Teams (free download) and supports multi-media playback
- Support for Chrome or Microsoft Edge – Note: Firefox, Safari, or other browsers may not work on all LSCPA applications
- Able to run Microsoft Office which will be provided free to TC students
- Adobe Reader or another PDF viewer
- Antivirus software such as Windows Defender or another 3rd party anti-virus solution

Students should regularly backup content to prevent loss of coursework due to hardware failure. Backup copies of documents and other coursework may be placed on OneDrive cloud storage. OneDrive is included free of charge for all LSCPA students.

**Alternative Operations during Campus Closure**

In the event of an emergency or announced campus closure due to a natural disaster or pandemic, Lamar State College - Port Arthur may need to move to altered operations and course delivery methods. During this time, Lamar State College - Port Arthur may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include, but are not limited to: online learning management system **Blackboard**, online conferencing through TEAMS, email messaging, and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor [Lamar State College - Port Arthur's website](#) for instructions about continuing courses remotely, instructor email notifications on the method of delivery and course-specific communication, and LSCPA email notifications for important general information.

**COVID-19 Online/Virtual Environment Instructional Commitment**

The ongoing COVID-19 situation will require that some course materials and instruction are provided through an online and/or virtual format. Even if all or a portion of a class was originally scheduled to meet face to face, social distancing guidelines associated with COVID-19 will limit the number of students who are able to attend face to face classes in person simultaneously. Further, circumstances associated with COVID-19 could cause the college to be forced to shift completely to an online and/or virtual delivery at any time during the semester. **While LSCPA faculty members are committed to providing students the option of face to face instruction if possible, students should be prepared to continue their classes in an online and/or virtual environment if necessary.** Lamar State College - Port Arthur is committed to maintaining engaging, high quality instruction regardless of the delivery format.

The Lamar State College - Port Arthur [Student Code of Conduct COVID 19 Policy](#) no longer requires students who have been exposed to COVID-19 or diagnosed with COVID 19 to report their condition on the COVID-19 Notification Form (available via a link on the Student Code of Conduct COVID-19 webpage). However, you are required to inform the instructor of all positive COVID tests from yourself or your immediate family that you come in close contact with so that the instructor and student can discuss alternative forms of instruction until those individuals test negative. For more information please refer to the [COVID-19](#) link on the LSCPA website.

### **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. If you can not take the exam at the time it's listed, contact the professor **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** to reschedule when you can take it. You must have an actual excuse not just a desire to take it at a different time. 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.

Missed Quizzes and Discussions will not be accepted a late unless there is severe illness or personal emergency that takes the whole week that the assignment is open. The student's two lowest quiz grades will be drop at the end of the semester, therefore do not request for quizzes to be reopened because of personal failures in submitting it on time.

### **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 LSCPA 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://lamarpa.edu>. Don't cheat. Don't be that guy. Yes, you. You know exactly what I'm talking about.

You will also be required to complete an Plagiarism Contract that was provided to you with this syllabus. It must be signed and returned to the instructor if you wish to have **ANY** of your assignments graded.



## 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

Lamar State College - Port Arthur complies with all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and makes reasonable accommodations upon request. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Special Populations Coordinator, Room 231, in the Madison Monroe Building. The phone number is (409) 984-6241.

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 1, 01/16 - 01/20:

- Tuesday - Introduction and Syllabus Day
- Thursday - Chapter 1 Kurtz
- Assignments Due - Quiz 1

### Week 2, 01/23 - 01/27:

- Tuesday - Research Paper Draft Day
- Thursday - Chapter 2 Kurtz
- Assignments Due - Work of Fiction Summary and Quiz 2

### Week 3, 01/30 - 02/03:

- Tuesday - American Exceptionalism Discussion
- Thursday - Chapter 3 Kurtz
- Assignments Due - Quiz 3

**Week 4, 02/06 - 02/10:**

- Tuesday - Chapter 4 Kurtz
- Thursday - Chapter 5 Kurtz
- Assignments Due - Annotated Bibliography and Quiz 4

**Week 5, 02/13 - 02/17:**

- Tuesday - Chapter 6 Kurtz
- Thursday - Chapter 7 Kurtz
- Assignments Due - Quiz 5

**Week 6, 02/20 - 02/24:**

- Tuesday - Midterm Review and Race in America Discussion
- Thursday - **MIDTERM MULTIPLE CHOICE IN CLASS**
- Assignments Due - Midterm Exam

**Week 7, 02/27 - 03/03:**

- Tuesday - Chapter 8 Kurtz
- Thursday - Chapter 9 Kurtz
- Assignments Due - Quiz 6

**Week 8, 03/06 - 03/10:**

- Tuesday - Party Systems Discussion
- Thursday - Chapter 10 Kurtz
- Assignments Due - Quiz 7

**Week 9, 03/13 - 03/17:**

- Tuesday - Spring Break
- Thursday - Spring Break
- Assignments Due - No Assignments Due

**Week 10, 03/20 - 03/24:**

- Tuesday - Chapter 11 Kurtz
- Thursday - Electoral College Discussion
- Assignments Due - Quiz 9

**Week 11, 03/27 - 03/31:**

- Tuesday - Chapter 12 Kurtz
- Thursday - Gender in America Discussion
- Assignments Due - Quiz 9

**Week 12, 04/03 - 04/07:**

- Tuesday - Chapter 13 Kurtz
- Thursday - In Class Activity
- Assignments Due - Quiz 10

**Week 13, 04/10 - 04/14:**

- Tuesday - No Class (Faculty Development)
- Thursday - No Class (Faculty Development)
- Assignments Due - Research Paper

**Week 14, 04/17 - 04/21:**

- Tuesday - Chapter 14 Kurtz
- Thursday - Chapter 15 Kurtz
- Assignments Due - Quiz 11

**Week 15, 04/24 - 04/28:**

- Tuesday - Chapter 16 Kurtz
- Thursday - Chapter 16 Kurtz
- Assignments Due - Final Exam Essay Opens

**Week 16, 05/01 - 05/05:**

- Tuesday - Chapter 17 Kurtz
- Thursday - Chapter 17 Kurtz and Final Exam Review
- Assignments Due - Final Exam Essay due FRIDAY MAY 5th at 11:59pm!

**Week 17, 05/08 - 05/12:**

- Tuesday - Final Exam Multiple Choice
- Thursday - Semester is Over!
- Assignments Due - Final Exam Multiple Choice

**FINAL EXAM ESSAYS: 5/5/23 at 11:59pm**  
**FINAL EXAM MULTIPLE CHOICE: 5/9/23 at 2pm**