Syllabus for POLS 1433 (Honors)
American Government II
Spring 2012

Course: POLS 1433 American Government II (Honors)

Class: T & R 11:00–12:30, PY 103

Lecturer: Steve Garrison, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: M & W 8-11:00, 1:30-2:30 and T & R 9:30-11:00
and by appointment

American Government II POLS 1433: This course introduces students to the political system of the United States and the state of Texas. In this course we will study the institutions of American government including the three branches of government at the Federal and state level; governmental bureaucracy and foreign policy.


In addition to text books there are a series of readings for our discussions that I have placed in blackboard/webct so that you can easily access them. To access blackboard go to:
http://distance.mwsu.edu/webct.asp
and login using your webworld username and password.

Expectations, Examinations, and Grading: Students are expected to attend class. Lectures will not reproduce the texts. During lectures, students are expected to behave in an adult fashion: i.e. no note passing, punching, kissing, kicking or other juvenile behavior. Disrespectful behavior towards other students or the teacher will not be tolerated and will result in your removal from
the class. Also, please turn cellular phones off during class. Most importantly, there are absolutely no firearms in the classroom. There will be a midterm examination and a final exam. The format of each is short answer questions and identification of key terms. The highest grading scale will be 90 (A), 80 (B), 70 (C), and 60 (D). If for any reason you should have to miss a test, quiz, or assignment you must inform the instructor prior to the time of the test and proper documentation is required for any makeup test or quiz. The privilege of additional work will not be granted.

Since this is an honors course students will also complete a research project. This project is designed to allow students to pursue a political issue relating to their area of study or interest. Additional requirements and details will be presented at the beginning of the course, including due dates for the topic and certain sections of the paper. In addition to the exams students will be graded on periodic quizzes which are designed to prepare students for the examinations. Throughout the semester we will devote several class periods to discussion of some contemporary political events. In order to engage in thoughtful discussions it is imperative that students begin paying attention to some reliable news source, such as National Public Radio, Newshour with Jim Lehrer (PBS), CNN, FOXNEWS, MSNBC, The New York Times, USA Today, Dallas Morning News, Austin American Statesman or any variety of Internet news sources. Separate discussion readings will be posted in WEBCT to guide these discussions. Students are expected to participate in classroom discussion and will be graded on their participation.

**Grading:**

- Midterm Examination: 25%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Research Project: 30%
- Quizzes: 10%
- Classroom Participation: 10%

**Disability Policy:** Any student in this course who has a disability that may preclude demonstrating fully his or her abilities should contact me as soon as possible. We will discuss the accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and to facilitate education.

**Plagiarism:** I take plagiarism very seriously and will check your work. By enrolling in this course, the student expressly grants MSU a “limited right” in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The “limited right” shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student’s work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, for educational purposes. The University’s *minimum penalty* for cheating or plagiarism is *a failure of assignment*. Cheating or plagiarism can lead to expulsion from the university. If you have questions about original work, please consult the Student Handbook Code of Student Conduct section 10.
Calendar  The following course schedule represents the schedule of readings and topics for the
course. The reading assignments are located under the date and topic. Student’s should read the
assigned readings prior to class. The instructor reserves the right to change the schedule.

Note: the following key applies to the reading schedule.
GP = Greenberg and Page. The Struggle for Democracy.
KH = Keith and Hagg. Texas Politics and Government: Roots and Reform

Course Schedule

January 17: Introduction

  ● Syllabus

Section I: Institutions of American Government

January 19 and January 24: U.S. Presidency

  ● GP Chapter 12

January 26 and January 31: Texas Governor

  ● KH Chapter 5

February 2: Discussion I

  ● Discussion I Readings (WebCT).
February 7, 9, and 14: U.S Congress

- GP Chapter 11.

February 16 and 21: Texas Legislature

- KH Chapter 4.

February 23: Discussion II

- Discussion II Readings (WebCT).

February 28 and March 1: Federal Judiciary

- GP Chapter 14.

March 6: Discussion III

- Discussion III Readings (WebCT).

March 8: Midterm Exam

- Study Guide I

March 13 and 15

- Spring Break No class.

March 20 and 22: Texas Judiciary

- KH Chapter 6.
Section II: Societal Influences on American Politics

March 27, 29 and April 3: Foreign Policy and National Defense
  • GP Chapter 19.

April 5: Easter Break
  • No Class.

April 10: Discussion IV
  • Discussion IV Readings (WebCT).

April 12: Paper Peer workshop
  • Disseminate rough draft of paper to group prior to class
  • Read and comment on group members papers in class.

April 17 and 19: Civil Liberties
  • GP Chapter 15

April 24: Discussion V
  • Discussion V Readings (WebCT).

April 26 and May 1: Civil Rights
  • GP Chapter 16
May 3: Discussion VI

- Discussion VI Readings (WebCT).
- Final papers due

Final Exam

May 8, Tuesday (1:00-3:00): Final Exam

- Study Guide II.