COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Description
This is an undergraduate course on the American and Texas system of governments. This course is meant to introduce the student to how the American and Texas Governments work. In this course we will cover such topics as American and Texas political culture, the American and Texas Constitutions, the system of federalism, and the media, elections, political parties, public opinion, and interest groups for both the United States and Texas.

Required Text

The text is offered in ebook format here: http://nortonebooks.com
You must purchase the ebook as you would a regular textbook, but the ebook offers some extra benefits (such as a text search) that a hard copy does not. Keep in mind however, that you will be asked to bring your textbook to class on several occasions, so if you choose to purchase the ebook, you’ll need to print off the chapters and bring them to class with you.

Course Website:
I maintain a course website that will keep you up to date on what is happening in your course. You can get to the website by visiting this link:

http://faculty.mwsu.edu/politicalscience/jeremy.duff/teaching.asp

Then click on the link that goes to your course.

Office Hours:
By appointment (send me an e-mail to schedule an appointment)

Student Responsibilities

Attendance: Class attendance is strongly encouraged. It has been my experience that those who do not attend class tend to have a difficult time with the course and generally receive lower grades. I will not regularly take attendance, however, throughout the course of the semester I may feel it necessary to take attendance in order to provide extra points on exams for those who are putting forth the effort to come to class. Students are expected to act like responsible adults in class.
Readings: The readings serve as a point of departure for lectures and discussions. Therefore, it is imperative that each student completes the assigned reading before a topic is taken up in class. Remember, the readings are a point of departure from class lectures. You will be held accountable not only for my discussion in lecture, but also for anything in the textbooks that may not be covered in lecture or discussion.

Participation: Students should feel free to raise questions concerning the readings, the instructor's discussion, and the comments of other students. Participation enhances course quality.

Quizzes: There will be periodic “pop” quizzes given in class covering lecture and textbook material. These quizzes will be graded and will count towards your quiz grade for the course. This should encourage class attendance and also help make sure students are keeping up with the reading. If you are not present for a quiz and do not have a University approved excuse, you will be given a grade of ZERO on that quiz.

Projects: Throughout the course of the semester students will spend time working in-class and outside of class on small individual or group projects. Information about these projects will be given at the time you are to begin working on them. For now, view the class schedule below to see the titles of these projects and when you will be working on them. I may also add projects to the ones listed as we go along. These projects will be due AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS on specific dates and LATE PROJECTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Required Examinations: There will be three required examinations. The scheduled examination dates (tentative-these may change) are as follows:
- Exam 1: July 10, 2012
- Exam 2: July 19, 2012
- Final Exam: August 2, 2012

Please note that for whatever reason you arrive late for an exam, you will not be able to take the exam once one student has “legitimately” taken the exam and left the exam room. I reserve the right to change any of the above dates as I feel necessary. This means that in some cases exams may be pushed back to later dates or moved forward to earlier dates. Hence the reason they are called “tentative” exam dates.

Basic Policies

Make-up Policy -- Examinations. If a student has a University-approved excuse AND if the instructor is notified IN WRITING, PRIOR to the examination, arrangements for a make-up will be made. If a student fails to notify the instructor, the student will receive a zero for the exam.
Exam, Quizzes, and Grading. I WILL ONLY discuss a grade with you in my office. I WILL NOT discuss a grade with you before or after class in the classroom, in the hallway, outside by my car, via e-mail or over the phone. I want you to take time to look over your exam thoroughly, outside of the classroom before you make an argument for a different grade. Any discussion of exam grades should take place within my office hours or by appointment in my office if you are not able to attend the scheduled office hours. If you feel that you and another student provided similar or equal answers to an exam question and you received a lower grade on that question, then both students must come to the assigned office hours with their exams in order for me to evaluate the answers equally and fairly. Keep in mind that in some cases I may lower the grade of the other student and not raise yours after reviewing both answers, if I feel that the situation deems it necessary. Finally, if I cannot read your handwriting or understand an answer because of poor sentence structure, etc. the answer will be counted wrong. College students, without a University documented disability, should be able to write legibly and in complete, coherent sentences.

Taking Exams Early. Only under extraordinary circumstances will a student be allowed to take an exam, including the final, early. Only university approved excuses, death in the family, illness, etc. will be considered for taking an exam early. You must request to take an exam early IN WRITING.

Wikipedia. At no time will a student be allowed to use Wikipedia as a source for any project or paper in my class. If it is determined that Wikipedia was used as a source for a project or paper, the student will be given a grade of ZERO automatically.

Classroom Behavior

Cellphones, pagers, and so on. Cell phones, pagers, etc. should be turned off when entering the classroom, unless prior arrangements have been made with me concerning a family emergency. If your cell phone goes off during an exam or quiz, IT WILL BE CONFISCATED and returned to you when you hand in the exam or quiz.

AT NO TIME WILL YOU BE ALLOWED TO LOOK AT YOUR CELLPHONE/PAGER DURING AN EXAM OR QUIZ. IF YOU ARE OBSERVED LOOKING AT YOUR CELLPHONE/PAGER ONCE AN EXAM OR QUIZ HAS BEEN HANDED TO YOU, YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE A GRADE OF ZERO FOR THAT EXAM OR QUIZ.

General Behavior. There should be no talking while I am lecturing or while another student is answering a question or sharing their opinion on the subject matter of the class. If this occurs, students will be warned and if the disruptive behavior continues you will be removed from the class.
**Lateness.** If you miss a quiz because you arrive to class late, you will receive a grade of zero on that quiz.

**Grading.** The three exams will count 75% (25% apiece) toward your final grade. The quiz grades will be averaged. The average will make up 10% of your grade. Finally, the in-class and homework projects will make up the last 15% of your grade.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cut Off</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-79%</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-69%</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
<td>F</td>
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**Class Schedule (Tentative)**
Reading will consist of chapters in the required text.

**July**

2: Introduction and overview of course  
   American Political Culture  
   Chapter 1

3: The Founding and the Constitution  
   Chapter 2  
   What Would You Change and How Project Introduced

4: No Class (Holiday)

5: Federalism  
   Chapter 3

6: American Public Opinion  
   Chapter 6

9: Public Opinion Survey Project Introduced  
   What Would You Change and How Project Due

10: **Exam 1**

11: The Media  
   Chapter 7
12: Political Participation and Voting
   Chapter 8

16: American Political Parties
   Chapter 9
   Public Opinion Survey Project Due

17: American Campaigns and Elections
   Chapter 10

18: Interest Groups in American Politics
   Chapter 11

19: Exam II

23: Texas Political Culture
   Chapter 19
   What Am I Having a Hard Time Learning Project Introduced

24: The Texas Constitution
   Chapter 20

25: Texas Political Parties and Elections
   Chapter 21

26: Interest Groups in Texas Politics
   Chapter 22
   What Am I Having a Hard Time Learning Project Due

30: Going Over What Am I Having a Hard Time Learning Results

31: Texas Local Politics
   Chapter 26

August

1: Catch-up and Review Day

2: Final Exam