POLS 1333: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT I
FALL 2012

Instructor: Nara, Suguman
Office Hours: M: 7.20-9.20 pm
T: 3.20-4.20 pm; 8.20-9.20 pm
W: 7.20-9.20 pm
R: 3.20-4.20 pm; 8.20-9.20 pm
F: 3.00-5.00 pm

Class Meets at: PY 200
Time: MW 6.00pm-7.20pm/TR 2.00pm-3.20pm
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Course Description
This is the first of two parts of the introductory course to the study of American Government. The best way to describe this course is a “salad bowl” course in American politics where all areas of the study of American politics will be covered separately but without losing the connection between them. What does the nation owe you? What do you owe her? Do you have a say in what government does? This course examines a wide range of U.S. public policy issues with direct impact upon you as a political science student, citizen, consumer, and individual. Specific topics and cases will be examined to stimulate a greater understanding of the complexity involved in the art and science of politics. This course will also briefly compare American government with governments of other countries. In examining both historic and current policy arenas, some basic questions will be employed:

- Role of democracy. Are there limits? How are we different from other governments? What about Texas?
- The influence of history on the federal and state governments.
- The impact of federalism. Are other countries different? What about Texas?
- We have freedom of choice in elections. Then how come many of us are unhappy with elected representatives?
- Who is leading whom? What is leading whom? Who is leading what? – Media, political parties, interest groups, public opinion, and elections.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of this course, students are required to have a grasp of the above. At the end of the course students are required to be able to identify key concepts and terms in American government. Further, the student should exhibit an ability to apply these in explaining development within the field. In addition, students are also required to understand and analyze political events and trends. Hopefully, what has been learned may give you a better understanding of what happens in your everyday life, for example, when you pay taxes, when you elect representatives, the questions posed by political scientists, etc. The reading assignments should prepare you for higher level courses in political
science and government. The writing assignment/term paper is designed to improve both your scholarly writing skills as well as research skills.

**Required Texts**


**Supplementary Texts**

There are no supplementary texts for this class. This will be substituted with weekly reading materials which will be announced in class or sent to you via email. The instructor will recommend books, articles, and other reading materials (e.g. court cases) in the course of the semester.

**Some Important Expectations**

Each member of the class will show due respect for one another. Ideas may be challenged, but individual attacks are unacceptable. **I will not tolerate rude and/or abusive language in class. A student who makes fun of the instructor directly or indirectly, for example, in the form of a slang or a jargon will be dealt with seriously.** I will also not tolerate any other unacceptable behavior in class, for example, the habit of talking to others when the instructor is talking, or while another student is engaged in a discussion with the instructor. Whistling while class is in session is another example of distracting behavior. It is impossible to list all disturbing behavior so it is naturally expected of you, as members of institutions of higher learning to understand what constitutes appropriate behavior or otherwise. In keeping with the theme of respect, all students must adhere to the code of academic conduct in order to maintain appropriate and acceptable conduct when class is in session (Please read the Student Handbook).

In addition, students are also required to understand the seriousness of plagiarism in the academic world. Failure to do so, as evidenced by plagiarism or other honor violations will result in a failing grade or more serious consequences.

**Note:** No person will be discriminated based on age, race, religion, national origin, sex, or disability. (Any student with a disability certified by the University disability office should notify the instructor immediately for proper arrangements to be made).
**Course Evaluation**

Exam 1 30%  
Exam 2 30% Please refer to “Important 2010 Exam Rules” in my official homepage.

Attendance, Participation, and Quizzes  
20% You are allowed one absence. For every additional absence, 3 percentage points will be deducted from the overall attendance points. Attendance will be taken at random. If you are late, it is your responsibility to find out what announcements you missed. Although I sometimes repeat important announcements, it is solely your responsibility to find out missed information. The instructor is not responsible for repeating announcements already made in class, nor respond to emails about missed announcements.

Term Paper/Other expectations  
10% An assignment connected to literature review and bibliography for the writing of a scholarly paper. The objective is not to ensure ability to write an entire paper but the ability to understand search techniques, correct style of scholarly writing, avoiding plagiarism, etc. Papers must adhere strictly to requirements—Page numbering, Paper length, Introduction and Conclusion, Scholarly style, stapled (not clips), and not late. Failure to follow this can result in either reduced paper grade or fail (Will be discussed in greater detail in class). Please refer to “2010 Term Paper Rules” in my official homepage.

Online Tests:  
10%
Note: The instructor reserves the right to deduct points from the overall/total points for students who are regularly late for class. The instructor reserves the right to deduct points from the overall/total points for students who violate any part of the “Some Important Expectations” section above. The instructor reserves the right to deduct points from the overall/total points for students who fail to answer questions on reading assignments. There may or may not be prior warning about losing points.

Make-ups
Make-up exams will only be given if you miss an examination due to official reasons, for example, a medical emergency. It will be on a case-by-case basis. Official proof is required.

Course Overview

This serves as a general outline of the course topics and flow. You should expect some modifications. There may be a guest lecture in the middle of the semester. Another guest lecture may be somewhere around the end of the semester.

Week 1: Chapter 1: Introduction. What is politics? Government and its functions
Week 2: Ideologies: Democracy, Communism, Socialism, and Libertarianism. Where are we in the continuum?
Week 3: Chapter 11: The Legislature: The different legislative systems of the world. Comparison with the American system.
Week 4: Chapter 12: The Executive: The different executive systems of the world. Comparison with the American system.
Week 5: Political Culture
Week 6: Guest Lecture
Week 7: Chapter 2: The U.S. Constitution.
Week 8: The U.S. Constitution as compared to the Texas Constitution. What are the main differences and similarities. Chapter 8: Political Parties in the United States.
Week 9: Political Parties in the United States (cont’d). Parties in Texas
Week 10: Chapters 6, 9, and 10: Public Opinion, Elections, and the Media
Week 11: Public Opinion, Elections, and the Media (cont’d)
Week 12: Chapter 7: Interest Groups

Week 14: Judiciary (cont’d).

Week 15: Chapter 5: Federalism. Overview/Term Paper/Test 2 Review Last day of class for all: Friday, December 7, 2012

Week 16: Final Examination