

July 18, 2013

1. College: **College of Liberal and Applied Arts**
2. Department: **Government**
3. Course status: **existing; does not require modification**
4. Course prefix and number: **PSC 141**
5. Course title: **Introduction to American Government -- Theory**
6. Course catalog description: **Origins and development of American and Texas government systems; federalism; civil liberties and civil rights; interest groups, political parties and elections. Meets the state requirement for American Government. This course meets the legislative requirements for a course on the Constitutions of the United States and Texas.**
7. Number of semester credit hours: **3**
8. Estimated total course enrollment per year: **1600**
9. Course prerequisites and/or required qualifications for enrolling in the class: **None**
10. Course **is/will be** available online.
11. Foundational Component Area: **Government/Political Science**
12. Explain why this course fits into this foundation component area: **The course meets the state legislated mandate for instruction in political science or government including the U.S. and Texas Constitutions under Texas Education Code, Chapter 51, Section 301 (a). This course covers the U.S. and Texas Constitutions; analysis of governmental institutions (for example U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the First Amendment); analysis of political behavior (for example voting behavior, election campaigns); analysis of civic engagement (for example interest group lobbying, voter turnout in elections); and philosophical foundations (for example classical liberalism as an influence on the writing of the U.S. Constitution).**
13. Core Objectives
 - o Critical Thinking - Critical Thinking - Faculty engage students in critical thinking by comparing Texas and U.S. political system foundations; by evaluating political science theories and approaches to political behaviors (such as voting, elections, campaigns, political parties, civil rights, civil liberties, or interest groups); and / or by reviewing data and historical events applied to political behavior. Students practice critical thinking by question and answer discussions to develop critical thinking skills that ask them to compare Texas and U.S. political system foundations; by completing course assignments and examinations that require them to 1) synthesize differing approaches to course topics such as U.S. and / or Texas constitutional development, interest group formation and maintenance, elections and voting behavior; 2) examine historical events associated with the development of political parties, civil liberties and civil rights; and 3) examine data associated with the voter turnout (within the U.S., between states, over time, across various ethnic, age, and other demographic groupings as well as comparing the U.S. to other countries). Generically, assessment of critical thinking occurs through course assignments that ask students to 1) compare Texas and U.S. political system foundations; 2) synthesize or analyze differing approaches to course topics such as U.S. and / or Texas constitutional development, interest group formation and maintenance, elections and voting behavior; 3) examine

historical events associated with the development of political parties, civil liberties and civil rights; and / or 4) examine data associated with the voter turnout (within the U.S., between states, over time, across various ethnic, age, and other demographic groupings as well as comparing the U.S. to other countries). Specific to the Core Curriculum assessment process, students will demonstrate critical thinking skills through a writing assignment that asks students to identify a specific civil liberty such as freedom of speech, right to privacy, or right to bear arms, to attempt to define the liberty, and to then explain points of debate or contention regarding the liberty.

- Communication Skills - Communication Skills - Faculty engage students in oral communication through class discussions, in written communication through course readings, and in visual presentation of course information. Instructors use class time to help students develop skills in construction and interpretation of visual displays of information such as graphs and charts. Students practice communication skills through class discussions that synthesize, analyze, and evaluate key ideas course topics like the writing of the U.S. Constitution, historical foundation of the Texas Constitution (1876), federal v. unitary systems of government, evolution of civil rights and civil liberties, elections/voting behavior, political parties, and interest groups. Generically, assessment of communication skills occurs as students complete assignments (written papers) that require students to communicate their understanding and interpretation of key theories of political science as they apply to 1) political behavior (defined in “Critical Thinking”); 2) the philosophical foundations of the Texas and U.S. political systems; and / or 3) interpretation political science approaches to the history and development of civil rights and liberties. Specific to the Core Curriculum Assessment process, students will demonstrate communication skills through a writing assignment that asks students to write clearly and effectively by identifying a specific civil liberty such as freedom of speech, right to privacy, or right to bear arms, by attempting to define the liberty, and by then discussing points of debate or contention regarding the liberty. Students will also demonstrate communication skills in this assignment by discussing the impact of limitations and expansions of this liberty on specific regional or national communities or groups and the impact of limitations or expansions of this liberty on individuals including themselves.
- Social Responsibility - Social Responsibility - Faculty present information and engage students 1) in discussions of political behavior (defined above under “Critical Thinking”) and civic participation in comparison with other representative democracies and across states within the U.S.; 2) in analysis of political behavior and civic participation by various ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious groupings within the U.S.; and 3) evaluation of civic responsibility related to 1 and 2 just above. Students practice social responsibility through course writing assignments that require students to evaluate differences, theories, and approaches associate with political behavior and civic participation across political systems (for example various states within the U.S. or between the U.S. and other countries) and to examine political behavior and civic participations by various ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious grouping within the U.S. Generically,

assessment of social responsibility occurs as students complete course writing assignments that require students to evaluate and analyze differences, theories, and approaches associate with political behavior and civic participation across political systems (for example across various states within the U.S. or between the U.S. and other countries) and to examine political behavior and civic participations by various ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious grouping within the U.S. Specific to the Core Curriculum assessment process, students will demonstrate social responsibility through a writing assignment that requires students to write about the impact of limitations and expansions of a civil liberty such as freedom of speech, right to bear arms, or right to privacy on various regional or national communities and groups.

- Personal Responsibility - Personal Responsibility - Through class discussions and presentation of information faculty assist students in connecting debates over political behavior (defined above under “Critical Thinking”) with individual actions and choices as a citizen; students evaluate personal responsibility through class discussions and course assignments that require students to connect historical and contemporary debates over participation (voting, civic duty, civil rights like access to facilities, and / or civil liberties like the rights of the accused, etc.) and / or how all of these debates impact citizen choices and actions. Generically, assessment of personal responsibility occurs through course assignments that require students to examine theories (such as pluralist theory, traditional democratic theory, or rational choice theory), approaches (for example classical liberal foundations of the U.S. Constitution), and debates over political behavior (like the evolution and development of civil rights or separationist v. accommodationist debates over the First Amendment) with individual actions and choices of citizens (for example why do some people vote while others do not, what is rational abstention from voting, or public v. private goods issues in interest group behavior). Specific to the Core Curriculum assessment process, students will demonstrate personal responsibility through a writing assignment that requires students to write about the impact of limitations and expansions of a civil liberty such as freedom of speech, right to bear arms, or right to privacy on individuals including themselves.

Contact person for questions about this submission:

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