

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 142**
5. Course title: **Introduction to American Government: Structure and Functions**
6. Course catalog description: **Legislative, executive, and judicial functions in American and Texas governments; public policy areas such as finance, social services, and foreign policy; Texas local and county governments.**
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 constitutional arrangements of the U.S. executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government; the foundational arrangements of the Texas executive, legislative, and judicial branches; the analysis of governmental institutions (such as the U.S. Congress, U.S. Executive Branch, U.S. national court system, Texas Legislature, Texas state court system, and Texas Executive); analysis of political behavior (for example incumbency in legislatures, decision-making of court judges, impact of election and appointment systems on court judges); analysis of civic engagement (for example, voter attitudes toward incumbency; impact of national economic policy, social policy, or foreign and defense policy, as well as state education, health care, local government, and fiscal policy on individuals and / or groups of citizens and / or regional, state, or global communities).**
13. Core Objectives
  - o Critical Thinking - Critical Thinking - Faculty engage students in critical thinking by comparing institutional arrangements of the U.S. and Texas political systems (for example appointment v. election of court judges); by reviewing data associated and historical events related to political behavior and governmental institutions (for example rates of incumbency in the Texas Legislature and U.S. Congress); and by reviewing key national economic, social, or foreign / defense policy as well as various states policies regarding local government, health policy, education policy, etc. Students practice critical thinking by A) analyzing institutional design (for example structure of the Texas executive v. U.S. executive) and / or policies that affect individual behavior (for example elite v. mass); B) evaluating and synthesizing political theories of institutional design; and / or C) evaluating approaches to contemporary state and national policy issues. Assessment of critical thinking generically occurs through course assignments that ask students to express and interpret ideas associated with A) the analysis of institutional design (for example structure of county v. city government in Texas) and / or policies that affect individual behavior (for

example social welfare policy or role and impact of the death penalty on crime); B) the evaluation and synthesis of political theories of institutional design (for example bicameralism and its impact on legislative process or distributive theory of congressional committees); C) evaluating approaches to contemporary state and national policy issues (for example unilateralism v. multilateralism in U.S. foreign / defense policy or possible solutions to the national debt and budget deficit problems). Specifically for the Core Curriculum assessment process, a writing assignment will require students to critically think about the national debt and budget deficit.

- Communication Skills - Communication Skills - Faculty engage students in oral communication through class discussion, 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. Student practice communication skills through class discussion that requires development, interpretation, and expression of ideas associated with A) institutional design of democratic political institutions including legislative, judicial and executive branches of government (national and state); and / or B) evaluating approaches to contemporary state and national policy issues. Assessment of communication occurs generically through course assignments that ask students to express and interpret ideas associated with A) the analysis of institutional design (for example structure of county v. city government in Texas) and / or policies that affect individual behavior (for example social welfare policy or role and impact of the death penalty on crime); B) the evaluation and synthesis of political theories of institutional design (for example bicameralism and its impact on legislative process or distributive theory of congressional committees); and / or C) evaluating approaches to contemporary state and national policy issues (for example unilateralism v. multilateralism in U.S. foreign / defense policy or possible solutions to the national debt and budget deficit problems). Specifically for the Core Curriculum assessment process, students will demonstrate communication skills through a writing assignment that requires students to write clearly and effectively about possible solutions to the national debt and budget deficit, advantages and disadvantages to a specific solution, and the impact of the proposed solution on various regional and national communities, as well as on individuals including themselves.
- Social Responsibility - Social Responsibility - Faculty present information and engage students in the impact of policy choices and individual issues positions on various state, regional, national, and global communities. For example, faculty have students assess the strengths and weaknesses of an interventionist U.S. foreign policy or have students discuss the impact of Social Security reform on society as a whole. Students practice social responsibility by examining the impact of policy choices and individual issue positions on various state, regional, national, and global communities (for example students examine various approaches to selecting judges on the nature of justice at the state or local level or students interpret the impact of incumbency on legislation, theories of representation, etc.); students practice social responsibility by examining civic

responsibility associated with key state and national policy issues (for example assessing the impact of various solutions to the national debt and budget deficit on various segments of society). Assessment of social responsibility occurs generically through course assignments that assist students in developing the ability to understand social responsibility by asking students to examine policy choices and individual issue positions various regional, national, and global communities (for example the advantages and disadvantages of various types of taxation as they impact regional and national groups). Specifically for the Core Curriculum assessment process, students will demonstrate social responsibility through a writing assignment that requires students to write clearly and effectively about the impact of a proposed solution on various regional and national communities.

- Personal Responsibility - Personal Responsibility - Faculty engage students through class discussions and lectures that require students to understand, connect, and evaluate the consequences of individual choices associated with specific solutions to public policy options and institutional design. For example, faculty might A) lead students in a discussion of the impact of Social Security reform on their grandparents or B) examine the impact of incumbency on the behavior of individual legislators or voters or C) examine the advantages and disadvantages of various local elections systems on Texas for individual voters). Students practice personal responsibility through course assignments and discussions that students to evaluate various theories, approaches, and debates over institutional design (for example the advantages and / or disadvantages of various local election systems used in Texas for individual voters) or national or state public policy options (the impact of various solutions to the national debt and budget deficit on individuals). Assessment of personal responsibility occurs generically through course assignments that ask students to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages to individuals of various institutional designs (the advantages and / or disadvantages of various local election systems used in Texas for individual voters) or national and /or state policy options (the impact of various solutions to the national debt and budget deficit on individuals). Specifically for the Core Curriculum assessment process, students will demonstrate personal responsibility through a writing assignment that requires students to write clearly and effectively about the impact of a proposed solution on individuals including themselves.

Contact person for questions about this submission:

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