Introduction to American Government: Theory and Politics (141)

141: 014- 8-9:15 Rm 374 in Ferguson
Ms. Megan Fleming
Office: 129 in LAN
Office Hours: MW 11-11:50, 2:30-3:30, F 11-11:50, 1-2, and TR 9:30-11
Department of Government

**Course Description:**
This course will introduce students to the constitutional structure of American and Texas government as well as federalism and the role of local governments. Students will also examine the roles of public opinion, organized interests, and political parties in American and Texas politics.

**Course Objectives:**
This course is designed to introduce students to the qualitative and quantitative analysis of U.S. and Texas politics. The course will help students develop the capacity to reflect and act upon political and social issues in order to increase meaningful participation in democratic society. The course assignments also help students develop the reading and listening skills needed to succeed beyond college.

**Required Texts:**
GOVT7
5th - 7th editions
Sidlow and Henschen

**Course requirements:**
There will be four exams in the class. The first three exams are required, if you are satisfied with your course grade after the first three exams then you may choose not to take the final exam. The final exam will be cumulative. These exams will cover both material form the readings and class lectures so it is important to take good notes. If you miss an exam for any reason then you must take the final exam. If you must miss two exams please see me as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made for you to take an early exam. Late exams are not permitted.

Exam 1- 20%
Exam 2- 20%
Exam 3- 20%
Final- 20%

There will also be reading quizzes for every chapter we read. These are not to torture you, but to make sure you are actually reading and understanding the material.

Quizzes - 10%
The class will be divided into small group and will work all semester on a campaign to get a celebrity elected President. This campaign will be presented at the end of the semester.

**Election Project- 10%**

The class will be divided into 2 groups. Depending on what groups you are assigned to you will turn in a 200 word summary of a current event every other Wednesday. **These current events MUST be submitted by D2L email or turned in as a hard copy.**

**Current Events – 14%**

There will occasionally be group work in class, this is so you can discuss and talk about whatever subject we are covering with your peers. If you are absent and miss group work it can NOT be made up.

**Group Work- 6%**

Extra Credit

Before every exam a review will be posted to D2L. These reviews will be worth 2 points to your final grade, and they are completely optional. To receive credit for your review you MUST submit it through D2L email with the title formatted as such “Jane Doe -Review1”. If it is not formatted accordingly you will NOT receive credit. OR you may also turn in a hard copy before the exam to receive credit.

There will also be a 1 point Bonus question on every exam in the form of a short answer. Because there are multiple opportunities for extra credit no other extra credit will be offered.

Attendance:

I have realized that students who do not attend class make lower grades and do not understand the material as well. I highly encourage you to attend class, however there is no attendance policy. There will be a sign in sheet at the beginning of class however, so that when you fail I can say it was because you decided not to attend class. The choice is yours.

Participation:

There is no participation grade, however it has been my experience that the more involved you are in the class discussions the more you understand the material and the better your grades are.

Reading:

As stated in the course requirements there will be a reading quiz every week. Therefore doing reading is highly encouraged. I will not cover everything that you read in the lectures, but everything in the reading is fair game for the exams.

While reading I highly encourage active reading. Take notes and write questions while you read the chapters. Doing this helps your understanding and also makes for great class discussions.

Notes:
There will be no power points in this class, so I encourage you to not only come to class, but also take in depth notes to study by. Before each exam I will hand out a review, but this review will only have key terms and will not be a substitute for poor note taking.

**Classroom Policies:**
- No tape recorders
- No laptops
- Cellphones

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1)**
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

**General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes:**
This course has been selected to be part of Stephen F. Austin State University’s core curriculum. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six objectives for all core courses: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives.

End of syllabus notes:

1. I will not grade ANYTHING sent to my SFA email address that is why it is not in the syllabus.

2. I do not know the exact dates of your exams so don’t ask. When I know you will know, I promise.

3. All Current events are due at Midnight that means 12:00am. At 12:01 it is late and at 12:05 it will not be graded.

4. Current events will not be posted until the entire class has turned it in. This means that Group 1 will have to wait on Group 2.

5. USE THE DANG SYLLABUS BEFORE ASKING SILLY QUESTIONS!
Course Outline:

Section 1
- Constitutions
- Federalism
EXAM 1

Section 2
- Civil Liberties
- Civil Rights
EXAM 2

Section 3
- Interest Groups
- Political Parties
- Politics and the Media
EXAM 3

Section 4
- Public Opinion and Voting
- Campaigns and Elections

FINAL EXAM
May 10 8am-10am

CURRENT EVENT DATES

Group 1- 1/25, 2/8, 2/22, 3/7, 3/28, 4/11, 4/25

Group 2- 2/1, 2/15, 2/29, 3/21, 4/4, 4/18, 5/2