American & Texas Government: Theory and Politics (PSC 141.004)
Stephen F. Austin State University—Spring 2016
TR 11:00-12:15, BUS116
Instructor: Dr. Alan Baily
Office: LAN 137
Office Hours: MW: 2:00-3:00; TR: 10:00 -11:00 (and by appointment)
Office Phone: (936) 468-2363
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Supplemental Instruction (SI)
Group Leader: Gwen Carmichael
Time: TR @ 4pm
Place: Lumberjack Landing Room 139C

I. Course Description and Objectives

Course 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.” - General Bulletin.

General Education Core Curriculum:
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.

Assessment of these objectives at SFA will be based on student work from all core curriculum courses. This student work will be collected in D2L through LiveText, the assessment management system selected by SFA to collect student work for core assessment. LiveText accounts will be provided to all students enrolled in core courses through the university technology fee. You will be required to register your LiveText account, and you will be notified how to register your account through your SFA e-mail account. If you forward your SFA e-mail to another account and do not receive an e-mail concerning LiveText registration, please be sure to check your junk mail folder and your spam filter for these e-mails. If you have questions about LiveText call Ext. 1267 or e-mail SFALiveText@sfasu.edu.

The below indicates the core objectives addressed by this course, the assignment(s) that will be used to assess the objectives in this course and uploaded to LiveText this semester, and the date the assignment(s) should be uploaded to LiveText. Not every assignment will be collected for assessment every semester. Your instructor will notify you which assignment(s), if any, must be submitted for assessment in LiveText this semester.
General Education Core Curriculum Objectives:
In any given semester, one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for the political science / government Foundational Component Area may be assessed.

- Critical Thinking Skills – creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
- Communication Skills – effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
- Social Responsibility – intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to effectively engage in regional, national, and global communities
- Personal Responsibility – the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making

Program Learning Outcomes:
This course is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for a political science major are addressed in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes:
By the end of the course, you should be able:

- To think critically about the relationship between political behavior and political institutions, especially the interdependence of behavior and institutions
- To think critically about American and Texas politics, especially the theoretical foundations of both systems
- To communicate effectively about the foundations of the US and Texas Constitutions and about political matters in general
- To communicate effectively the roles and functions of voters, political parties, interest groups, and media in a democratic political system
- To understand more thoroughly the personal and social rights and responsibilities associated with American citizenship

II. Texts
The following texts are required in this class; the two required books are available at the university bookstore:

3. Any Major Daily Newspaper (and keep up with Texas politics, too!)
III. Assignments and Grades

Your grade in this course will be based on:

1. **Four examinations**: three section exams, each worth 20% of your final grade; and a comprehensive final exam, worth 20% of your semester grade [80%]
2. **Quizzes, Review Assignments and Writing Assessment**: worth 20% of your grade altogether [10% based on quizzes; review assignments and state-mandated assessment are worth 2.5% a piece]. Most quiz grades will be assessed in-class; take-home review assignments are posted on D2L. The state mandated assessment project is described below.

*Final grade distribution is as follows:*

- A=90-99, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=65-69, F=64 and below

IV. Writing Assignment

**Constitutional Principles Writing Assignment:**
This assignment requires you to select a key constitutional principle such as a civil liberty (e.g. the right to privacy, right to bear arms, or freedom of speech); a civil right (e.g. the right to vote or due process), or a constitutional power (ex. Congress' power to tax and spend for the general welfare or regulate interstate commerce). You will develop a well-written essay on the constitutional principle that you select. Your assignment must include a graphic representation of some aspect of the material that you are discussing, for example a chart or graph of data that helps to demonstrate your understanding of the constitutional principle. The assignment will directly assess your mastery of all four Core Curriculum Objectives assigned to this course: critical thinking, communication skills, social responsibility, and personal responsibility. To this end, your assignment, including the graphic representation, must address each of the following:

Mastery of critical thinking is demonstrated by:
- Clear and concise conceptualization of the constitutional principle (for example an attempt to define free speech)
- Correctly identifying points of contention or debate over the constitutional principle (e.g. what is hate speech, when may speech be limited, the “Clear and Present Danger” test, etc.) and collection of relevant sources.
- Evaluation of relevant arguments and construction of a logical conclusion

Mastery of communication is demonstrated by:
- Organization and clarity in writing
- Content and accuracy of the information
- Correct use of grammar and syntax
- Use of appropriate sources for your assignment
- Extent to which visual aids (such as charts, graphs, etc.) support your ideas
- Extent to which visual aids are seamlessly integrated into your assignment
Mastery of social responsibility is demonstrated by:

- Clearly and precisely discussing the impact of one’s own culture or subculture associated with the key constitutional principle (e.g. why was you perceive to be “hate speech” may be freedom of expression for another).
- Identifying the role of civic responsibility and the complexity of civic responsibility as they relate to the key constitutional principle (e.g. what is the responsibility of gun owners who exercise their second amendment rights to the larger community)
- Discussing how individuals in regional or national communities affect the constitutional principle you selected (e.g. how do understandings of the right to bear arms differ from the American South versus the urban centers of the Northeast versus the Pacific Northwest; and how do individuals in these communities shape understandings of constitutional principle you selected).

Mastery of personal responsibility is demonstrated by:

- Evaluating your personal beliefs regarding the constitutional principle and how those beliefs affect others (e.g. what is your personal position on “hate speech” and why do you hold that perspective)
- Explaining how the context of your life and the lives of others influence your position on the constitutional principle (e.g. how would your perspective on freedom of religion vary if you lived in an Evangelical Christian majority area or a Muslim majority community within the U.S.)
- Evaluating the perspectives of other viewpoints associated with the constitutional principle (e.g. how do you view those who disagree with your position on the right to bear arms)
- Do your conclusions about your own personal beliefs point toward a full consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of alternative viewpoints or of the application of the constitutional principle to a new setting (e.g. How does fourth amendment search and seizure apply to cell phone conversations held in public while walking across campus)

V. Attendance and Classroom Decorum:

Attendance is required; roll will be taken upon occasion. Students who miss more than three class meetings may face a 5% reduction for each additional missed meeting. Absences shall be excused for documented emergencies or official university events (also documented) only.

Mutual respect and consideration are indispensable to the success of any group endeavor. In view of this, I demand the highest standard of conduct in our class. To promote respect for yourself and your fellow students, please silence and put out of sight all cell-phones, blackberries, pagers ipods and other mobile electronic communication or entertainment devices. Please do not pass notes or exchange whispers, either. If you choose to make a call (or a text) during class-time, kindly exit the classroom to do so, and do not return (you will be counted absent for the day) unless you have an exceptionally good excuse (e.g. a documented emergency, death in the family, etc).

Email Policy:
I will make every effort to respond in a timely manner to all emails addressed to bailyai@sfasu.edu. Please avoid using other email addresses (e.g. D2L email).

I will not reply to the following:

1. Emails composed in anything other than standard written English (it’s not an IM);
2. Emails asking questions the answers for which are available in the syllabus, catalog or course schedule;
3. Emails requesting an excused absence or make-up assignment. Please discuss these matters with me in person;
4. Emails requesting a recap or summary of what was covered in a class the student missed.

Acceptable Student Behavior:

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

VI. Academic Integrity: 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
VII. Spring 2016 Calendar

This calendar is tentative; as the course instructor I reserve the right to change it. Reading assignments must be completed by the beginning of class on the day listed. Written assignments are due at the beginning of class. No late work will be accepted without a documented excuse.

T  1/19  Welcome and Introduction; Review Syllabus
R  1/21  View Gordon Wood Lecture [D2L link]
T  1/26  Read American Government pp.1-21
R  1/28  Read *Federalist* #10 and #51 (appendix to American Government)
T  2/2   *PSC 141 Workbook* chapter 1
R  2/4   American Government pp. 22-33
T  2/9   American Government pp. 33-55
R  2/11  *PSC 141 Workbook*, chapter 2
T  2/16  Examination One (Concepts, Political Culture, Founding, Constitutionalism)
R  2/18  American Government pp. 56-76
T  2/23  American Government pp. 76-83
R  2/25  American Government pp. 84-93
T  3/1   American Government pp. 94-108
R  3/3   American Government pp. 108-130
T  3/8   *PSC 141 Workbook*, chapter 3
R  3/10  *PSC 141 Workbook*, chapter 5 [Midsemester]
T  3/15  SPRING BREAK
R  3/17  SPRING BREAK
R  3/24  EASTER HOLIDAY
T  3/29  *PSC 141 Workbook*, chapter 5
R  3/31  Examination Two (Federalism, Civil Rights, Public Opinion & Media)
T  4/5   Movie: *By the People*
R  4/7   American Government pp. 330-353
T  4/12  *PSC 141 Workbook*, chapter 4
R  4/14  *PSC 141 Workbook*, chapter 6
T  4/19  American Government pp. 354-369
Final Examination: Tuesday, May 10th from 10:30 to 12:30

VIII. 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.

IX. 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/.