Political Science 141.006: American Government -- Theory
Spring 2016
Department of Government, SFASU
Course Meeting Time: TR 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.
Course Location: Human Services #321
Instructor: Dr. Steven E. Galatas
Office Location: Liberal Arts North (LAN) 134
Office Hours: MTWR 11:00 – 11:50 a.m. and 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.; and by appointment
Office Phone: 468-2003
E-mail: galatasse@sfasu.edu
SI Leader: Jordan Trevino
SI Meeting Times and Location: TR 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. in Lumberjack Landing #139H

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, 2015-2016

General Education / Core Curriculum Education 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
• To describe the basic concepts related to the study of American and Texas political behavior
• To examine the relationship between political behavior and political institutions, especially the interdependence of behavior and institutions
• To think critically about, especially the theoretical foundations of both the U.S. and Texas systems
• To discuss the foundations of the US and Texas Constitutions
• To identify the key schools of thought regarding voting behavior and electoral processes
• To explain the roles and functions of political parties and interest groups in a democratic political system
• To understand citizenship in the American political system more completely
Textbooks:
Two textbooks are required for this class:

Additional readings are listed on the Course Outline below. These readings are available either online or in the two required texts. The professor reserves the right to add other readings at any time during the semester.

Grades:
Grades for the course will be drawn from the following sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam #1</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #2</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam #3</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam #4</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment #1</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment #2</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>500 points</strong></td>
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</table>

Point values will be converted to letter grades using a standard 90% -- 80% -- 70% scale:
A: 450 – 500 points (90% and above)
B: 400 – 449 points (80% and above)
C: 350 – 399 points (70% and above)
D: 300 – 349 points (60% and above)
F: 0 – 299 points (below 60%)

Course grades for the entire class are not curved or adjusted at the end of the semester. Extra credit work is not permitted. To receive a particular letter grade in the class, the student must earn at least the minimum number of points for that grade.

Exams:
You will take four (4) exams during the semester.
• Each exam consists of fifty (50) multiple-choice questions worth two (2) points each. Thus, each of the exams is worth a total of 100 points.
  • Material for the exams comes from classroom discussions as well as the assigned readings from the course textbooks and the assigned Federalist Papers.
  • Class sessions do not cover all material from the assigned readings, but all assigned readings, regardless of whether the material is discussed in class, are incorporated into the exams.
• Make-up exams are given only under the most extreme circumstances (e.g., a serious illness or a death in the family).
  • You must notify your instructor ahead of time if you are going to miss an exam.
  • You provide written documentation to substantiate your absence.
  • Failure to inform your instructor of an absence prior to the exam or failure to provide adequate documentation will result in a score of zero points (0) on the exam.
  • Your professor determines what constitutes adequate documentation to qualify for a make-up.
• During exams, cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off and stored away
• For each exam, you must bring a Scantron form (882-E) and a pencil.
Writing Assignments:
You will select two (2) of the three selections from the Federalist Papers by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison listed on the course syllabus below.

- Option #1 is Federalist #51 and is associated with the general organization of the U.S. Government
- Option #2 is Federalist #84 and is associated with Civil Liberties
- Option #3 is Federalist #10 and is associated with interest groups and political parties

You will compose answers to a series of questions posed by the course instructor. These questions will be distributed in class or on the course’s Desire2Learn website prior to the due date on the course outline below. Answers to the questions will be typed, double spaced using an appropriate font (e.g. Times New Roman 11 or 12 point). You will submit the assignment at the beginning of class on the due date listed on the course syllabus below. Note that regardless of which two of the three assigned Federalist Papers you choose for the writing assignment, you are responsible for reading all three papers for your exams. This writing assignment is worth fifty (50) points.

Participation:
You are expected to come to class prepared to engage in a critical evaluation of the topic of the day. At a minimum, you must complete the assigned readings before the start of class on the day that the reading is scheduled. In addition, you should be prepared to contribute voluntarily to class discussion. Although participation does not make up a portion of the final grade for the course, participation may prove to be a significant factor in determining borderline grades. For example, participation may be used as a criterion for a student whose final grade in the class is a 89.6% (B). A student who participated often in class discussions may receive an A as the final course grade.

Classroom etiquette:
Please demonstrate common courtesy for your fellow students by avoiding the following during class:
- Working on assignments for your other courses.
- Engaging in text messaging, Facebooking, and similar activities.
- Watching movies, television shows, and other media.
- Answering cell phone calls.

Engaging in any or all these activities during class presents a less than professional personal statement on your part. Such behavior is disrespectful to your fellow students. If you engage in any of these activities you will be asked to leave the classroom for the day, and you will be recorded as absent for the day.

Attendance:
You are expected to attend class. A strong correlation exists between your attendance and your performance in the course. Thus, attendance is required for this course. Moreover, regular attendance makes a clear and distinct statement about your personal responsibility; habits developed during your time at SFA carry over to the post-university world of employment.

- During each class session, a sign-in sheet will be passed around.
  - You are expected to sign for yourself only.
  - If you sign the attendance sheet for another student, you will have ten (10) points reduced from your final grade total for the course for each infraction of this policy.
- You may miss class up to six (6) times without penalty.
  - After the ninth absence, five (5) points will be deducted for each additional absence.
  - No distinctions exist for “excused” and “unexcused” absences; all absences are treated the same.
  - You DO NOT need to inform the instructor of why you missed a specific class session.
- Class begins promptly at the time scheduled.
  - You are expected to be present for the entire class period.
  - Late arrivals and early departures are not tolerated.
  - If tardiness or early departures become a problem, the instructor will take remedial action.
Academic Integrity:

The following is taken from SFASU’s Policy Manual (2016), section on “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](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp).

All cases of academic dishonesty will be handled according to University policies and procedures in the SFASU Policy Manual and other sources of policy. The consequences for academic dishonesty may range from a score of zero (0) on the assignment to an “F” for the course. For details, students should refer to the SFA Policy Manual (2014) or the University’s General Bulletin, 2015 – 2016 section entitled “Academic Integrity” and other sources of University policy.

Withheld Grades:

The following is taken from SFASU’s Policy Manual (2016), “Semester Grades Policy”

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 semesters, 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. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

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). 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 iCare program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.
# COURSE READINGS AND OUTLINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/19</td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/21</td>
<td>Background: Definitions and Concepts</td>
<td>Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/26</td>
<td>US Constitution</td>
<td>Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>01/28</strong></td>
<td>US Constitution</td>
<td><em>Federalist #51</em>; <strong>Writing Assign. Option #1 Due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>02/02</td>
<td>TX Constitution / Federalism</td>
<td>Collier, <em>et al.</em>, Chpt. 1-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>02/04</td>
<td>Federalism</td>
<td>Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>02/09</td>
<td>Federalism</td>
<td>Review Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>02/11</strong></td>
<td>Exams #1</td>
<td><strong>Writing Assign. Option #1 Due</strong></td>
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<td>02/16</td>
<td>Civil Liberties</td>
<td>Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 4</td>
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<td>02/18</td>
<td>Civil Liberties</td>
<td>Review Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>02/23</td>
<td>Civil Liberties</td>
<td>Review Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>02/25</strong></td>
<td>Civil Liberties/Ideology</td>
<td><strong>Writing Assign. Option #2 Due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>03/01</td>
<td>Ideology and Political Culture</td>
<td>Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 6 (pp. 180-91; 199-209)</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/03</td>
<td>Ideology and Political Culture</td>
<td>Review above reading</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>03/08</strong></td>
<td>Exams #2</td>
<td><strong>Writing Assign. Option #2 Due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>03/10</td>
<td>Public Opinion</td>
<td>Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 6 (pp. 191-199)</td>
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<td>03/22</td>
<td>Public Opinion</td>
<td>Review above reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/29</td>
<td>Civil Rights</td>
<td>Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/31</td>
<td>Civil Rights</td>
<td>Collier, <em>et al.</em>, Chpt. 9 (pp. 273-282)</td>
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<td>04/05</td>
<td>Civil Rights</td>
<td>Review Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/07</td>
<td>Civil Rights</td>
<td>Review Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>04/12</strong></td>
<td>Exams #3</td>
<td><strong>Writing Assign. Option #3 Due</strong></td>
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<td>04/14</td>
<td>Organized Interests</td>
<td>Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 10</td>
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<td>04/19</td>
<td>Organized Interests/Political Parties</td>
<td>Collier, <em>et al</em>. Chpt. 11; <strong>Federalist #10</strong>* <strong>Writing Assign. Option #3 Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04/21</strong></td>
<td>Political Parties</td>
<td>Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 8; Collier <em>et al.</em>, Chpt 10 <strong>Writing Assign. Option #3 Due</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td>04/26</td>
<td>Elections: Introduction</td>
<td>Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/28</td>
<td>Elections: Primaries</td>
<td>Collier <em>et al.</em>, Chpt 9 (268-273; 282-313)</td>
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<tr>
<td>05/03</td>
<td>Elections: Turnout</td>
<td>Review Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>05/05</td>
<td>Elections: Vote Choice</td>
<td>Review Edwards and Wattenberg, Chpt. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>05/12</strong></td>
<td>Exam #4 at 8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>+ Assignment questions will be made available during the semester.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Available online at [http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fed_84.html](http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fed_84.html).