Stephen F. Austin State University
American Government 141.009
F377 Spring 2016 TR 11:00 – 12:15

Professor: Dr. Julie Harrelson-Stephens
Office: 135 Liberal Arts North, Department of Government
Phone: 468-2380
Email: harrelsoj@sfasu.edu
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 9:00-11:00, Tuesday 3:30 -4:30, Thursday 12:15-1:15, and by appointment

SI leader: Brynn Lindsey
SI for this class is 6:00 in Lumberjack Landing 139D every Monday and Wednesday.

Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you. -Pericles (430 B.C.)

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.

Purpose: This course is the first of two required political science courses designed to be an introduction to American Politics. The focus of this first course is the inputs into the political process, and to some extent the political process itself. Although many of you are not majoring in political science, all of you will be affected by the political process. Hopefully by the end of this course you will not only be more informed about the political process, but also more interested and involved in it.


Grading: Course grades of 90 – 100 will be scored an A; 80-89 is a B; 70-79 is a C; 60-69 is a D; below 60 is an F.

If you think that an error has been made in calculating your grade, it is your responsibility to provide me with all of your work. To that end, it would be prudent to save anything that is handed back to you until you get your final grade report.

Course Requirements: There will be three exams given during the semester as well as a cumulative final. You must complete three exams, each worth 32%. If you complete all four exams I will drop the lowest grade. Tests will cover material from the lecture and the reading. In addition, supplemental reading material may be periodically assigned during the semester. The final 4% of your course grade will come from the Constitutional Principles writing assignment (at the end of this syllabus).
There are **No Make-up exams** allowed. In the event that you get sick or oversleep and miss an exam, I drop one test grade. If you miss two exams, you get a ZERO on the second test. If you know you will miss an exam due to an excused absence (i.e. athletic trip, medical issue with documentation) you must make arrangements with me at least two days prior to the scheduled exam date to take the exam **early**.

**Attendance:**
It has been my experience that poor attendance will result in a poor grade in the class. Thus, you are strongly encouraged to attend regularly. Please be on time to class and plan to stay, as entering a class late or leaving early is always disruptive and will result in you being counted absent.

**Participation:**
Participation in class discussions is strongly encouraged. As students, you will get the most out of this class if you engage in the discussions. I ask that you respect the diverse backgrounds and views of your fellow students, and employ common courtesies during class.

**Other policies:**
In addition, any cell phones, beepers or other electronic devices that ring/beep/click/ect. or any talking or behaviour that disrupts other students or your instructor will result in a **five point grade reduction on your next exam**.

Anyone having problems in this course is strongly encouraged to contact the instructor as early as possible. I will be happy to meet you and help you in any way possible. I may be able to help you study more effectively or recommend other assistance. Remember, **I want you to do well in this class!**

The Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 restricts release of certain student information, such as grades. In accordance with the law, I will not be able to give grades out over the phone or e-mail. Please – **DO NOT ASK**. I will be happy to discuss your grades with you in person, during office hours or by appointment.

Class information, including changes of dates, review sheets, or other information will be posted on the class **D2L** site.

This syllabus should be seen as a rough guide for the coming semester. I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus throughout the semester.
Program Learning Outcomes:
This is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for this major are addressed in this course.

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.

Student Learning Outcomes:
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
- Examine the relationship between political culture and policy
- Describe the basic features of the U.S. and the Texas constitutions
- Understand the inputs into the political process (participation, parties, interest groups) and how these inputs theoretically and practically effect the political system
- Understand the concept and importance of federalism for the American political system

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/.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Schedule</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>I. Introduction; Political Culture</strong></td>
<td>KTR Chapter 1; LSP Chapter 1; The Declaration of Independence.</td>
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<td><strong>II. The U.S. Constitution</strong></td>
<td>KTR Chapter 2; The U.S. Constitution.</td>
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**Exam 1: Thursday February 18th**

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<th>Course Schedule</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>III. The Texas Constitution</strong></td>
<td>LSP Chapter 2</td>
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<td><strong>IV. Federalism</strong></td>
<td>KTR Chapter 3</td>
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<td><strong>V. Public Opinion</strong></td>
<td>KTR Chapter 10</td>
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**Exam 2: Tuesday March 29th**

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<th>Course Schedule</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VI. Political Parties and Interest Groups</strong></td>
<td>KTR Chapter 11</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VII. Parties and Interest Groups in Texas</strong></td>
<td>LSP Chapter 10 &amp; Chapter 11</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VIII. Voting, Campaigns and Elections</strong></td>
<td>KTR Chapter 12; LSP Chapter 9</td>
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**Exam 3: Thursday April 21st**

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<tr>
<th>Course Schedule</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<td><strong>IX. Civil Rights</strong></td>
<td>KTR Chapter 5, the 13th, 14th, 15th, 19th, 24th, and 26th Amendments</td>
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<td><strong>X. Civil Liberties</strong></td>
<td>KTR Chapter 4, the Bill of Rights</td>
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Tuesday May 10th 10:30-12:30: Cumulative Final Exam in the regular classroom.