Course 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.

Requirements of the Course

First, you are expected to come to class. Second, you are expected to read the assigned material before class. Third, you are expected to discuss the assigned readings in class. By “discuss” I mean to engage in active, in-depth, conversations with your classmates and me over the assigned readings. Finally, you are expected to stay informed on current political events by reading the paper, watching the news, browsing political websites, etc. It is sometimes easier to understand political concepts and theories when you can relate them to current political activities. Therefore, we will discuss current events in class as well.

Please feel free to voice your opinions (as long as you do not intentionally insult your fellow classmates). Opinions generate class discussions and class discussions generate knowledge and understanding. This class does not have to be boring but participation is needed to keep it from being so. Therefore, how boring this class is depends on you.

Grading Policy

Grades for this course will come from two sources: four exams (23% each), current events (8%).

Examinations: Examinations will consist of 30 multiple choice questions worth two (2) points each and two short answer questions worth 20 points each. The exams will only cover the material in each segment. You will need to bring a Scantron answer sheet (Form #882-E) and a sharpened #2 pencil for each exam. Exams will cover reading, lecture, and movie material. You are responsible for each of these. Tentative exam dates are noted below.

A week before your exams I will post 20 study questions on D2L. Several of these questions will be on your exam. Also, several questions from the Texas Workbook will be on each of your exams. You should use the study questions and Texas Workbook questions as study material to prepare for your exams.
Make-up exams will be given only in the case of documented illness, documented emergencies, or University related absences. Make-up exams may be more difficult than scheduled exams (e.g., essay). If you miss an exam, it is your responsibility to inform me as to the nature of your absence. If the absence is excused, we will schedule a time to take the make-up exam. No exams will be given early.

**Current Events:** As stated previously, you are expected to stay informed on current political events. Each Monday you will turn in a website print out of a current political event related to whatever topic we are covering in class for that week. For example: if we are discussing Congress, find an article discussing current congressional activities, print it out, and turn it in. Use reputable websites as your sources – The New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN, Fox News Channel, MSNBC, etc., for example. These will be simple completion grades. Meaning, as long as you turn it in on time, the story is current, and related to the subject we are discussing, you will receive a 100 for the week. Be prepared to discuss your article as well.

**Attendance:** Attendance will not be taken.

**Required Books**


Note: Outside readings will be assigned throughout the semester.

**Policy on Academic Dishonesty**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in many 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)
General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes

In any given semester, one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for political science/government Foundational Component Area may be assessed in this course.

• 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. No specific program learning outcomes for a political science major are addressed in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able

• To describe the basic themes and concepts related to the study of American and Texas political institutions
• To examine the relationship between political behavior and political institutions, especially the interdependence of behavior and institutions
• To think critical thinking about American and Texas politics, especially the institutional framework of the system
• To discuss the salient features of political institutions as understood by political scientists
• To understand citizenship in the American political system more completely

Additional Points

• Be on time! If you arrive late for class, quietly take a seat at the back of the room.
• Be polite! Do not talk over your classmates or me.
• Turn off your cell phones, iPods, etc. If your cell phone goes off in class, you will be required to perform an embarrassing task in front of the class (hint: learn the words and motions to “I’m a Little Teapot”). If you are texting, your cell phone is on and chances are you are not paying attention in class. Therefore, texting is a punishable offense. If caught, you will be required to sing something in front of the class.
• During tests, please place all items at the front or sides of the classroom.
• During tests no electronic devices will be permitted at your desk except a watch.
• During tests please turn your baseball caps so they are facing backward.
• I reserve the right to eject any student who violates these or other rules.
**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy:** 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/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**SI Leader:** I am happy to announce that Abby Cole will be returning as my SI Leader this semester. Please take advantage of this resource. Students who attend SI tend to make a letter-grade higher than those who don’t. SI will meet Thursdays at 7PM in Lumberjack Landing, room 139D.
| Week 1 | Introduction |
| Week 2 | U.S. Congress (KTR, Chapter 6) |
| Week 3 | U.S. Congress (KTR, Chapter 6) |
| Week 4 | Texas Legislature (TWB, Chapter 1) |

**TEST 1**  **Wednesday, February 10**

| Week 5 | President (KTR, Chapter 7) |
| Week 6 | President (KTR, Chapter 7) |
| Week 7 | Federal Bureaucracy (KTR, Chapter 8) |
| Week 8 | Texas Governor & Bureaucracy (TWB, Chapters 2 & 3) |

**TEST 2**  **Wednesday, March 9**

| Week 9 | Spring Break!! |
| Week 10 | Federal Courts (KTR, Chapter 9) |
| Week 11 | Federal Courts (KTR, Chapter 9) |
| Week 12 | Texas Courts (TWB, Chapters 4 & 5) |

**TEST 3**  **Wednesday, April 6**

| Week 13 | Domestic Policy (KTR, Chapter 14) |
| Week 14 | Foreign Policy (KTR, Chapter 14) |
| Week 15 | Local Government (TWB, Chapter 6) |
| Week 16 | Texas Policy (TWB, Chapter 7) |
| Week 17 | **FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, May 11, 1:00-2:15** |