Introduction to American Government: Structures & Functions

Spring 2016 Online Course
Department: Government
Instructor: Dr. Cindy Pressley
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Office Hours:
- In-Office (on campus): Monday Noon-3pm
- Virtual: Wednesday 4pm-6pm; Thursday 9:30am-11am [I can be contacted by email or instant messaging through the D2L system. I will try to be available by Skype during my office hours as well]
- Office hours can be made by appointment if you cannot make the listed hours. Please contact me by email if you would like to set up a virtual or face to face meeting.

Catalog 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. Meets the state requirement for Texas Government.

Grading Scale: A (1000 points-900 points); B (899 points -800 points); C (799 points -700 points); D (699 points -600 points); F (599 points and below)

Required Materials: [2 Required Books; you are responsible for acquiring the books for class]

- Title: Core Concepts in American Government: What Everyone Should Know
- Edition: 2012
- Authors: Zaino
- ISBN: 9780136040743

- Title: Texas 142 Workbook
- Edited by Baily
- Available at the campus bookstore

Course Requirements:

- 12 Lessons; 360 Points (each lesson is worth 30 points): Each lesson contains a set of readings, one discussion question that you will respond to and will then reply to a fellow student’s response, and one quiz (5 multiple choice questions; 2 true/false questions). The lessons will be available beginning on Monday at 8am and will close on Sunday at 11pm unless otherwise noted in the course calendar.
- Three Exams; 300 Points: (each exam is worth 100 points): Each exam contains 30 multiple choice questions, 10 true/false questions and 3 short answer questions. Each exam is based on the set of material covered during that portion of the semester (so not comprehensive). Exams are available beginning on Monday of the exam week and must be taken by Sunday of the exam week by 11pm (other than exam three which must be completed by Friday, the final day of the semester). Exams are timed (60 minutes) and once
you log on you must take the exam. You will only have one opportunity to take the exam. You cannot log on, view the exam and then take the exam at a later time. Exams can only be taken once.

- Three Writing Assignments; 300 Points (each writing assignment is worth 100 points): 2-3 written pages (double spaced, 12 point times new roman font, 3 required academic references). I will provide you with the topic for each of the writing assignments. I highly suggest that you do not attempt to submit all writing assignments at the beginning of the semester as each assignment correlates with subject matter in the course that you should examine prior to completing the assignment. Additional information on the format for the writing assignments is provided, along with the topics, in the first lesson, Introduction to Course.

- Meeting/Event Assignment; 40 Points: Provide a one-page discussion/summary (double spaced, 12 point times new roman font) of a meeting or event in some way related to political science/government. You must explain how the meeting/event relates to something we have studied in class. For example, you could attend a meeting of your SFA Student Government Association, attend a Nacogdoches City Council meeting, or attend a speaker event on campus related to political science or a government issue. You should be able to find information on dates/locations of events by searching the SFA or city websites. You will provide (1) a written summary of the event which includes an explanation of how the event relates to class, (2) details on the date/time/location of the event, and (3) either a copy of the agenda, a flyer or a photo of yourself at the event. I want you to see how political science/government events take place, not just through course materials, but through a real life event.

**Course Schedule** (Subject to change; Chapters should be read to prepare for the lesson for that week. There may be additional readings found within the lesson especially if no reading is assigned for that week. Some assignments for the week will connect to the readings so be sure to get the books and complete the readings):

  - o Reading: Zaino Chapter Three
  - o Reading: Zaino Chapters Four and Five
  - o Reading: Zaino Chapter Six
- Week 5 (Mon. Feb. 15-Sun. Feb. 21): Exam One; Writing Assignment One: Federal Government Due Sunday Feb. 21
  - o Reading: Zaino Chapter Eleven
  - o Reading: To be assigned
- Week 8 (Mon. March 7-Sun. March 13): Lesson Seven: Miscellaneous Domestic Policy
  - o Reading: To be assigned
  - o Reading: Zaino Chapter Twelve
- Week 10 (Mon. March 28-Sun. April 3): Exam Two; Writing Assignment Two: Public Policy Due Sunday April 3
- Week 11 (Mon. April 4-Sun. April 10): Lesson Nine: Texas Legislature
  - o Reading: TX 142 Workbook Chapter One
- **Week 12 (Mon. April 11-Sun. April 17):** Lesson Ten: Texas Governor & Texas Bureaucracy  
  - Reading: TX 142 Workbook Chapters Two and Three
- **Week 13 (Mon. April 18-Sun. April 24):** Lesson Eleven: Texas Judiciary & Texas Law  
  - Reading: TX 142 Workbook Chapters Four and Five
- **Week 14 (Mon. April 25-Sun. May 1):** Lesson Twelve: Texas Local Government & Texas Policy; Writing Assignment Three: Texas Government/Policy Due Sunday May 1  
  - Reading: TX 142 Workbook Chapters Six and Seven
- **Week 15 (Mon. May 2-Sun. May 8):** Meeting/Event Assignment due Sunday May 8th by 11pm
- **Final Exam Week:** Mon. May 9-Fri. May 13; Exam Three **Friday May 13th by 5pm**

**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 Objectives:**
- To examine the major structural and functional concepts underlying American and Texas government.
- To be able to identify and discuss important trends in American and Texas public policies.
- To gain the ability to critically analyze issues facing American and Texas government.

**Academic Integrity:** An individual’s integrity is a reflection not only on themselves, but on the reputation of their profession as well. The standards you hold in your academic career will weigh heavily on those you retain throughout life. Your professional reputation is of the utmost importance in maintaining a positive career path. Thus, your academic integrity will be held to the highest possible standard while in this classroom. Zero tolerance will be given for academic irregularities. If I catch you violating this policy, you will be reported. If another student accuses you and there is no other evidence, you will be required to resubmit a new assignment or take a new exam. If you choose not to, you will be reported. According to the university: “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

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/”. If modifications or accommodations are needed due to disability, please make an appointment with me as early as possible so arrangements can be made.

Technical Support:

- For D2L technical support, contact student support at d2l@sfasu.edu or 936-468-1919. If you call after regular business hours or on a weekend, please leave a voicemail.
- For general computer support (not related to D2L), contact the Technical Support Center (TSC) at 936-468-HELP (4357) or at helpdesk@sfasu.edu.
- To learn more about using D2L, visit SFA ONLINE at http://sfaonline.sfasu.edu, where you'll find written instructions and video tutorials.

Classroom Policies:

- This is an online course, so you will be required to engage in self-study and self-reminders as to when assignments are due and what is required of you. We will maintain regular contact throughout the semester through D2L email. A due date timeline is posted in the course documents section of the course, and I will post announcements on the News tab when necessary.
- Late assignments are not accepted. Make-up exams will only be allowed under exceptional circumstances. Having another exam or paper due that day is not an exceptional circumstance. Grades are non-negotiable.
- The open exchange of ideas will be respected by all students. Respectful discussion is required. While you are allowed to express your opinions during the discussions remember that other students may have different opinions and have the right to have and express those opinions. Personal attacks are not allowed as they do not promote civilized debate (one of the main purposes of the required discussions).
- “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.”

- **Excused Absences:** In order to have your absences excused, you must provide either notification from your coach/faculty club advisor or have a notice sent from the judicial office. **Absence Notifications:** “Students missing classes for legitimate reasons other than University-sponsored trips may contact the Judicial Office and request an absence notification be sent to their instructors. These notifications are not excuses. They are provided as a courtesy to the student and the student's instructor(s) and are not an evaluation of the information received by this office. Students requesting an absence notification should be prepared to give the Judicial Office their name, ID number, date(s) of the absence, reason for the absence, and a contact phone number. Students should also be prepared to offer documentation of the absence to their instructors. As per University policy Class Attendance and Excused Absence A-10, an instructor may determine the nature of satisfactory documentation.” Contact information for the judicial office is: 315 Rusk Building, 936-468-2703

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