Political Science 2305
Federal Government

COURSE INFO:

This course will focus on a range of inputs in the American political system. The purpose of this class is not to only reiterate the fundamental setup of our government, but to also shine a light on its imperfections and strengths. The American system of government continues to evolve, grow and change. Such growth and change has spurred various responses from the American people such as revolution, civil disobedience, and moments of chaos.

In addition to lecture, this class will be discussion and participation based. In other words, there will be a strong correlation between those who attend and do not attend class regularly and grade success. Attendance/Participation will be 10% of your final grade. Therefore, even someone who scores A’s in all areas won’t be guaranteed an A when the final grade is factored in. The university experience should challenge you and help you hone your critical thinking, argumentative, and research skills. Occasionally, students may be required to work in groups, speak in front of the class, and write well-informed research papers.

The core objectives, learning outcomes, assignments/general activities, and assessments are identified below.

CORE OBJECTIVES:

- Critical Thinking: gather, analyze, evaluate and synthesize information relevant to a question or issue.

- Communication: develop, interpret and express ideas through effective written communication.

- Social Responsibility: demonstrate knowledge of civic responsibility.

- Personal Responsibility: demonstrate the ability to evaluate choices, actions and consequences as related to ethical decision-making.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Student will explain the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution and constitutional democracy.

2. Student will describe the effects that historical, social, political, cultural, and global forces had on the U.S. Constitution.
3. Student will demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.

4. Student will demonstrate knowledge of the origins and evolution of the U.S. political system, with a focus on growth of political institutions, federalism, and the key components of the U.S. political system.

5. Student will understand the American federal system and explain the ways in which different political systems divide and share power between their central and state governments.

6. Student will evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.

7. Student will describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens and be able to comment on the role of civic engagement in U.S. politics and culture.

8. Student will analyze political issues, demonstrate critical thinking skills, and develop a critical approach to the study of government.

REQUIRED TEXT:


*In addition to your text book, slides, and handouts, I will provide additional online resources that may cover state or federal matters. It would also benefit you to download a U.S. Constitution App to your smartphones or purchase a “pocket constitution” from the bookstore.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:

Exams – There will be a total of 3 exams. The 3rd exam is the Final Exam and taken during final exam week. Exams are cumulatively worth 50% of your grade. All exams will be written, however you will be given three essay topics to choose from. Essays should be a minimum of 4 pages and no more than 5 pages.

Research Paper - Students will be required to write a 7 page paper in Modern Language Association (MLA) format regarding an instructor approved topic that relates to the subject of political science. A work cited and cover page are required and do not count toward your 7 pages. Also, students will be required to give a brief, yet informative presentation on their papers. This is worth 20% of your grade.

Attendance/Participation/Projects – Attendance is mandatory and it is up to my discretion on what may be excusable. After two unexcused absences I will begin deducting a letter grade from your participation grade. It may also be asked that students prepare a speech or presentation with a group or solo in front of the class. Participation is worth 10% of your grade.

Quizzes – There will be quizzes usually on a weekly basis either through blackboard, handout, or email. Make-up quizzes will not be allowed under any circumstance. Quizzes will be worth 20% of your grade and in some cases may mean the difference between passing and failing.
Grading Scale: A - 90% B - 80% C - 70% D - 60% F - Less than 60%

Schedule:

Week 1: Intro, Citizenship
Week 2: The Constitution
Week 3: Constitution cont., Federalism
Week 4: Civil Liberties, Civil Rights
Week 5: Congress
Week 6: Congress Cont., Exam 1
Week 7: Judiciary, Presidency and Bureaucracy
Week 8: Political Parties, Campaigns, and Political Participation
Week 9: The Media
Week 10: Exam 2, Public Opinion
Week 11: Domestic and Foreign Policy
Week 12: Music and Politics
Week 13: State and City Government
Week 14: Presentations
Week 15: Final Exam Prep and Review
Week 16: Final Exam Week

*Please note that this schedule is subject to change at any time. You are responsible for any course work missed. Please find a classmate for missed notes.

Office Hours: Rassman 218 by appointment only on Tuesday and Thursday 12:00pm -1:00pm. Email anytime at salas.bob@gmail.com.

HONOR CODE:

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions in the Student Handbook.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students who may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 in the University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to any accommodations being
implemented. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so that appropriate arrangement can be made.

CLASSROOM DECORUM:

A proper learning environment is one in which all points of view, all questions asked, all questions answered, and various discussion are treated and met with tolerance and respect. Any behavior that disrupts the classroom learning environment such as late arrivals, early departures, unapproved electronic devices are unacceptable and will be subject to appropriate sanction. Please turn off all cell phones and electronic devices upon entering the classroom. Additionally, cell phones should not be out during lecture times. Laptops are permitted with instructor permission. Recording of lecture is prohibited unless given permission by instructor.