Course Syllabus and Policy Requirement Statement

By accessing course lesson materials you are indicating the following:

- You have read, understood, and will comply with the policies and procedures listed in the class syllabus, and that you have acquired the required textbook(s).
- You have read, understood, and will comply with class policies and procedures as specified in the Student Handbook.
- You have read, understood, and will comply with computer and software requirements as specified with Browser Test.
- You have familiarized yourself with how to access course content in Blackboard using the Student Quick Reference Guide or Blackboard Help for Students Course.

Course Description/Overview

The State of Texas has determined that, in order to receive their degrees, many undergraduate students must complete a course in the organizational structure and function of the federal government, as well as learn about the players and forces which impact it. The result is that the majority of students required to take this course are not political science majors and so some of you may be asking "Why?" The "why" is that this course prepares you for life as responsible citizens who understand how the government is designed to work, what can enhance or impede its operation and effectiveness, and how individual citizens have roles and responsibilities within that system that they must actively engage in for the system and the nation to succeed.

POLS 2305 addresses the principles and values which led to the formation of the United States governmental system, the campaign and election process, the players within this system, and how all of these interact and impact each other and the governmental system as a whole. We will study the U.S. Constitution and the structure of the federal government. We will also study the political process including types of elections, political party structure and activities, and the impact of interest groups on the policy making process. Finally, we will study interactions between the federal government and state governments.

This is an introductory course. No prior knowledge of politics is expected. However familiarity with American history and a basic interest in current events related to the federal government will be very helpful.
Required Text:


This is an open source document.

Additional Readings & Resources/Non-Text:

Additional readings may be assigned and if/when they are, they will be made accessible via Blackboard. I may use Power Point presentations during class, but these will NOT be posted to Blackboard.

It is also suggested that throughout the semester, students stay current on federal governmental activities, since a portion of some classes will be dedicated to discussing current events related to course topics. This can be accomplished by accessing online news websites, federal government websites, reading newspapers, and watching national news television stations. Some suggested resources include:

- The White House (whitehouse.gov)
- U. S. Senate (senate.gov)
- U. S. House of Representatives (house.gov)
- U.S. Supreme Court (supremecourt.gov)
- New York Times (print & online)
- Politico (online)
- Washington Post (print & online)
- USA Today (print & online)
- Huffington Post (online)
- National News, i.e. ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, FOX NEWS, MSNBC, etc. (TV and online)

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- Summarize federalism and the relationships between national, state, and local government within that political structure.
- Describe and evaluate the basic theories behind the development of the U.S. Constitution and its role in American political life.
- Explain the differences in the major contemporary political ideologies and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.
- Compare the influence of political parties, interest groups, the media and public opinion in public policy decisions.
- Understand the duties, rights and responsibilities attached to American citizenship
Grading:

Exams:

Five exams will determine your grade for this course. The course is divided into units with an exam related to the material covered in each unit conducted at the end of that unit. Exams will be multiple choice and available via Blackboard. Dates for exams, and the time allotted to complete each one, once a student begins an exam, will be announced in class. Dates for exams are dependent on the rate by which we progress through the material. Each exam is worth 100 points. Failure to complete an exam will result in a score of ZERO for that exam.

A comprehensive final exam will also be offered. Students may complete the final exam to replace one previous lower test score. Students who fail to complete one of the four required exams, must take the comprehensive final exam.

Presentations:

Each student will be required to make a 5 minute presentation in class in the format outlined by the instructor. Dates for presentations will be scheduled throughout the semester and students will choose, by lottery, which date one's presentation will be given. The presentation is worth 100 points. Failure to complete a presentation on the chosen date will result in a score of ZERO for this assignment.

Outside Assignment(s):

Outside assignments require students to complete an activity assigned by the instructor and then write a 2-3 page paper related to that activity. The activity will be outlined in class and posted to Blackboard. Students complete the activity in place of coming to the classroom on a specified day. Completed assignments are submitted via Blackboard in either Word or PDF format. One outside assignment is projected for this course, but the instructor retains the option of increasing the number across the semester. Each outside assignment is worth 100 points. Failure to complete an outside assignment by the due date will result in a score of ZERO for this assignment.

Point Conversions:

Angelo State University employs a letter grade system. Grades in this course are determined on a percentage scale. Percentages in relation to available points for this course are:

A = 90-100% (630-700 points)  
B = 80-89% (560-629 points)  
C = 70-79% (490-559 points)  
D = 60-69% (420-489 points)  
F = 59% and below (419 points or below)

Note: If additional Outside Assignments are added, the percentages in relation to available points will also change proportionally.
**Attendance:**

Attendance will be taken at every class meeting via sign-in sheet. Students who do not sign the sheet will be marked absent. While I may use PowerPoint Presentations in class from time to time, these will not be available via Blackboard. Students who are absent from class will need to work with other students to determine what material was missed.

At the end of the semester, each student's attendance level will be used for giving consideration for a "bump" in grade if that student falls one point below a higher grade level. Students with no more than 2 absences across the semester will be given positive consideration for receiving the higher grade. Students with more than 2 absences will not be considered for a higher grade. There is no deduction of points for multiple absences.

**Student absence for religious holidays:**

A student who intends to observe a religious holiday should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.

**Office Hours/Communication:**

As an Adjunct Professor, I do not have an "official" office or "office hours" at ASU, but I am always open to meeting with a student when the need arises. If you need to meet with me in person, contact me by email me ahead of time at dbloomquist@angelo.edu to arrange a specific meeting time & place.

If you have any questions or concerns outside of class, always feel free to email me at dbloomquist@angelo.edu. I will check my email periodically in the afternoons/evenings on weekdays, and occasionally on the weekends. Please allow one to two days for a response. When emailing me, be sure to include POLS 2305 in the subject line. At the end of the email please include your first and last name.

**Recording Devices, Computers, iPods, Tablets and the Indispensable Cell Phone:**

The use of recording devices is not allowed in class (except in cases of ADA accommodation).

The use of tablets, iPods or similar entertainment devices is not allowed in class.

The use of computers solely for note taking purposes is allowed in class.

And while I am as big a fan as anyone of hearing Luis Fonzi's "Despacito" or The Chainsmokers "Closer" as a ringtone, the fact is that cell phones are a distraction. As a courtesy to me and your classmates, please turn off your phone before entering class. If you don’t, the rule is this: If your phone rings in class, I get to answer it and talk to whomever is on the line. I don’t care if it’s your mother, your brother, your doctor, your lawyer, your significant other or that "special someone" you met at the party last night, as I'm experienced and comfortable talking with strangers. **So if you choose to leave your phone on, know you have been forewarned, and you do so at your own peril.**
Professionalism:

In this course we will be discussing political issues that may garner as many different reactions as there are students in the class. As we live during a dynamic and volatile period in political history, I encourage full student participation and expect some disagreement - specifically participation and disagreement related to the reading and topics for the class. However, it is also imperative that during all class work, you must treat your peers and your instructor with civility and respect, no matter the similarities and/or differences in the opinions you may encounter.

Projected Course Outline & Reading List

Below is a projected daily class schedule with the required readings for each class. **This is only a projected schedule and is subject to change at the professor's discretion.** Additional topics, not listed here, will be included in lectures which do not have corresponding reading assignments from the text. This additional material will be included on exams.

UNIT I: PRINCIPLES OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Tuesday, August 29th - Introductions

Thursday, August 31st - Why Government? Why Politics? - Chapter 1

Tuesday, September 5th - The U.S. Constitution - Chapter 2

Thursday, September 7th - Federalism - Chapter 6

Tuesday, September 12th -

Thursday, September 14th - Exam #1

UNIT II: STRUCTURE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Tuesday, September 19th - The Legislative Branch - Chapter 3

Thursday, September 21st - The Executive Branch - Chapter 4

Tuesday, September 26th - Presentations

Thursday, September 28th - The Judicial Branch - Chapter 5

Tuesday, October 3rd -

Thursday, October 5th - Exam #2
UNIT III: POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Tuesday, October 10th - The Role of the Media - Chapter 7
Thursday, October 12th - Presentations
Tuesday, October 17th - Public Opinion - Chapter 8
Thursday, October 19th - Political Ideology - Chapter 9
Tuesday, October 24th - Outside Assignment
Thursday, October 26th - Presentations
Tuesday, October 31st -
Thursday, November 2nd - Exam #3

UNIT IV: PUBLIC POLICY, CIVIL LIBERTIES & CIVIL RIGHTS

Tuesday, November 7th - Public Policy - Chapter 13
Thursday, November 9th - Civil Liberties & Civil Rights, Chapter 18
Tuesday, November 14th - Exam #4

UNIT V: THE POLITICAL PROCESS

Thursday, November 16th - Political Participation - Chapter 10
Tuesday, November 21st - Political Parties - Chapter 11
Thursday, November 23rd - Thanksgiving - No Class
Tuesday, November 28th - Presentations
Thursday, November 30th - Interest Groups - Chapter 12
Tuesday, December 5th -
Thursday, December 7th - Exam #5

FINALS WEEK

Tuesday, December 12th - Finals Week - Review
Thursday, December 14th - Finals Week - Final Exam
University Policies

Academic Integrity:

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with the university Academic Honor Code and the ASU Student Handbook.

Accommodations for Disability:

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation.

Student Affairs is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability, and it is the student’s responsibility to initiate such a request by emailing studentservices@angelo.edu, or by contacting:

Office of Student Affairs
University Center, Suite 112
325-942-2047 Office
325-942-2211 FAX