SYLLABUS
Angelo State University
Political Science 2306
Schedule: M, W, F
Instructor – Jared Graves  jared.graves@milesisd.net or jgraves6@angelo.edu

Course/Core Objectives:
1. to gain factual knowledge of the historical, social, political, cultural, and global forces that impact American politics and institutions.
2. to gain understanding of the origins and evolution of U.S. and Texas political systems, with a focus on the growth of political institutions, fundamental principles, and the key components of the U.S. and Texas political systems.
3. to gain understanding of the ways in which political systems divide and share power between the central and local governments.
4. to learn to evaluate and analyze the means of political participation and the manner of influencing government.
5. to help students to learn and develop critical thinking skills and develop a critical approach to the study of government.

Class Format
A combination format of lecture and discussion has been adopted for teaching this course. Students are strongly encouraged to be prepared for class and to actively participate in class through comments, questions, and responses to questions. You are expected to do the required readings and urged to consult other sources of information for in-depth coverage of political events (newspapers, magazines, and/or major news network). It is strongly recommended that you consult on a regular basis a national newspaper or Internet source of political information.

Expectations of Students
Students are expected to read the course materials scheduled in the syllabus with care. It is important that there is no misunderstanding concerning the readings; consequently, if you have any questions regarding the assignments please do not hesitate to ask. All of the readings listed below are considered required. Class discussions and lectures will add to, rather than merely review, the reading materials; it is important that you come to class equipped with a prior reading of the assigned materials. Assessment of the learning outcomes will be based on the administration of four examinations and written assignments based on the adoption of the grading criteria specified below.

Grading
The evaluation of your class performance will be based on a total of five examinations and extra credit work announced in class. The results of the exams will be used to compute your grade and each exam will contribute a specified percentage (indicated below) of your total grade. The exams will be objective and a combination of multiple-choice, identification, and/or short essay. If you have a valid reason for missing an
exam (verified illness, accident, or unavoidable absence) you may make-up an exam. If possible, you should notify me before the exam, if not, within 24 hours after the exam date. The design of the make-up exam is left solely up to the instructor; make-up exams may be comprehensive and entirely essay or a combination of multiple-choice and identification; they will be scheduled during the last week before finals. Please note that you will be allowed to take only one make-up exam for the semester.

The Grading Scale
A=90-100 B=80-89 C=70-79 D=58-69 F=57 and below

Academic Honesty
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, which is contained in both print and web versions of the ASU Student Handbook. See the Current Student page on the ASU homepage (URL address:http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/) and click on Academic Honor Code. Acts of academic dishonesty and misconduct as referenced in Angelo State University’s Student Handbook will be referred to the Dean of Students.

Special Needs
In accordance with OP 10.15 of ASU’s Operating Policies and Procedures, persons with disabilities which may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 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 arrangements can be made.

Unprofessional Behavior
A certain classroom decorum based upon mutual respect toward others contributes towards a productive environment. Please note that arriving late without a good reason or making distracting noise in the classroom, i.e., whispering or eating, is unprofessional and a sign of disrespect. Please be sure to turn off cell phones, pagers or other electronic devices with audible signals, and also refrain from bringing food and beverages. Laptops are permitted only for note taking purposes.

Reading Materials


[http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu](http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu)
This website is created to support the state-mandated university requirement of providing instruction in the workings of Texas government.

Course Schedule
[Note: The course syllabus is a general plan for the semester. The schedule is a tentative and may be updated or changed throughout the semester as necessary.]

Aug 24 Introduction
What are the rules of the game for this course? What will be the basis for evaluating student performance? Questions pertaining to management of the course will be answered by discussing the course syllabus.

Aug 24 – Sept 4: One Republic – Two Americas?
How does a community of individuals create a set of rules and structures for the distribution of goods and services, and for the maintenance of the community? The answer is that individuals create government. What type of government can individuals create? Who really rules in America? What is meant by a "liberal" and "conservative" political ideology?
A. The basic terminology for the study of politics
B. The importance of government
C. Models of government
D. Key features of democracy
E. Political spectrum in the U.S.
F. Readings: Schmidt, et al., Chapter 1

Sept 8 – Sept 11: Texas Culture and Diversity
What makes for a political community at the state level? What is the history of Texas politics and what shapes it? What is meant by political culture? What constitutes the various cultural regions of Texas?
A. The Texas political community
B. Historical periods in Texas politics
C. Texas political culture
D. Readings: Maxwell, et al., Chapter 1

Sept 14– Sept 18: The Constitution
Imagine being faced with the task of laying the constitutional foundations for a brand-new nation. Where would you turn for philosophical guidance? How would you resolve differences in viewpoints regarding structures and powers of government? What are some important events in the formation of the new U.S. government?
A. Beginnings
1. Articles of Confederation
2. Declaration of Independence
3. Revolutionary War
B. Drafting a constitution
C. Battle for ratification
D. Constitutional change
Sept 21– Sept 25: *The Texas Constitution in Perspective*
How did Texans deal with the tasks of creating a viable government? What does the history of Texas constitutionalism reflect? What are the component parts of the Texas constitution? Do Texans need a new constitution?
A. Role of constitutions in government
B. Texas constitutional history
C. The constitution of Texas
D. Texas constitutional change
E. Readings: Maxwell, et al., Chapter 3

Sept 28 – Oct 2: *Federalism*
What is a federalist system of government? Why did the framers create a federal form of government? What are the different forms of relations between the central government and regional governments? How does federalism function today?
A. Three political system models
B. Constitutional basis of American federalism
C. Case law
   1. *McCulloch v. Maryland*
   2. *Gibbons v. Ogden*
D. The evolution of federalism in the U.S.
E. Politics of federalism
F. Readings: Schmidt, et al., Chapter 3

Oct 9 – Oct 14: *Local Government*
One reason for the federalist system was the framer’s desire to provide the states with a large dose of political autonomy and sovereignty. States are granted exclusive sovereignty with regards to establishing local governments. Local governments are the most pervasive forms of government in Texas. What are the most common forms of local government in Texas?
A. Municipal/city government
B. County government
C. Special district governments
D. Readings: Maxwell, et al., Chapter 14

Oct 19 – Oct 23: *Public Opinion and Political Socialization*
A democratic government is based on the consent of the governed. Consent is linked to the effectiveness of government and the wishes of individuals in society. Public opinion plays an important role in judging the effectiveness of government and measuring public consent. What is meant by public opinion and explain its use by policy-makers and interest groups? Explain how public opinion is formed in the United States. What is the link between public opinion and voting behavior?
A. Define public opinion
B. Importance of political socialization
C. Measuring public opinion
D. Political preferences and voting behavior
E. Public opinion and government
F. Readings: Schmidt, et al., Chapter 6

Oct 26 – Oct 30: Interest Groups
Society is a vast interlocking network of groups, encompassing economic, social, religious, ideological and political categories. Interest groups are important social structures which link the American people to government and provide for the transmission of peoples' preferences to government. Why do interest groups form? What strategies do interest groups adopt for influencing the policymaking process?
A. Define interest groups
B. Types of interest groups
C. Functions of interest groups
D. Tactics of interest groups
E. Regulating interest groups
F. Readings: Schmidt, et al., Chapter 7

Nov 2 – Nov 6: Political Parties
Linkage institutions include also political parties. The growth of political parties is associated with the development of a democratic political system. Political parties create a relationship between society and government and allow for input into the political system. How well do political parties perform their jobs? Do democratic governments need political parties?
A. Distinguish between an interest group and a political party
B. Development of political parties in the U.S.
C. The faces of a political party
   1. The party in the electorate
   2. The party as an organization
   3. The party in government
D. Third parties in the United States
E. Readings: Schmidt, et al., Chapter 8

Nov 9 – Nov 13: Texas Interest Groups & Political Parties
Interest groups and political parties exist not only at the national level but also at the state level. They provide a vital link between personal values & aspirations and policy makers. Interest groups and political parties offer alternative avenues for public participation. What distinguishes interest groups and political parties in Texas?
A. Interest groups in Texas
B. Most powerful interest groups in Texas
C. Political parties in Texas
D. Texas party machinery – temporary and permanent organizations
E. Readings: Maxwell, et al., Chapters 5 & 6

Nov 16 – Nov 20: Voting and Elections
At the heart of the democratic political system is the election of freely chosen representatives by the majority of the people. For democracy to work there must be meaningful campaigns among candidates and meaningful participation among the voters. Who participates in elections today?

A. Political participation in the U.S.
B. Different types of elections
C. Understanding the electoral college
D. Readings: Schmidt, et al., Chapter 9

**Nov 23 – Nov 27: Campaigning for Office**

Competitive elections lie at the heart of a democratic political system. What comprises modern campaigns today? Politics and money go hand in hand. What concerns are raised today by changes in funding and getting-out the votes campaigns? Do these changes threaten democracy?

A. Understanding the modern campaign today
B. Presidential election process & the strategy of winning
   1. The nomination game
   2. The electoral college
C. The role of money in politics
D. Campaign finance reform
E. Readings: Schmidt, et al., Chapter 10

Dec TBA: *Final Exam: 8:00-10:00 am (Section 020)*