WHAT THIS COURSE IS

THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS, speaking through their State Constitution, have determined that all citizens, in order to properly perform the duties of citizenship, need to be familiar with the Constitution of the United States and those of the several states (especially of the State of Texas). To fulfill this need, Texas Law requires that six semester hours dedicated to that purpose be completed by all students attending institutions of higher learning receiving state funds. Here at Angelo State University, this requirement is met by taking POLS 2305 and 2306.

The United States Constitution is the central legitimating symbol of American political life. American citizens therefore need to understand how it frames political controversy and how it influences political and social change. To that end, we will study important debates concerning American democracy and the meaning of liberty and equality from the Founding until the present day. We will examine the important function of citizenship in democracy and of federalism in American democracy.

TEXTS AND READINGS

2. Additional material will be linked in Blackboard Announcements about the Course/Weekly Schedule.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING

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QUIZZES

There will be online multiple choice quizzes every week drawn from the assigned readings in the AGP textbook. Questions are randomly drawn from a much larger question bank, so no student will get the same quiz. But if you are not prepared, there is no way to look up all the answers in that amount of time. Each quiz will be available at
the beginning of the week and will remain open until Thursday of the same week at noon.

TESTS

There will be three written Tests in class.

FINAL EXAM

There is one in-class Bluebook final exam, consisting of two parts. Part I will be short answer identifications. Part II will be an essay.

PARTICIPATION

Participation in class discussions is a necessary part of the learning in this class. It is both expected and rewarded. The good student will be present and attentive and prepared to answer questions about the assigned readings, to ask questions of his or her own, and to volunteer helpful observations about the material. Students may respectfully disagree with one another but are expected to behave with proper courtesy and regard for others’ comments. Frequent class discussion will foster a better classroom environment than one in which the instructor simply lectures every day. Only students with excellent participation will see their grades rounded up when close to the next letter grade.

As both a part of this participation and an aid it, I highly recommend taking notes while you read, outlining the chapters, defining key terms, and writing down any questions you have about what you have read.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at each class meeting is expected and rewarded. Attendance is defined as “being present when attendance is taken at the beginning of each class and remaining until class is dismissed.” Students who are not present when attendance is taken or who leave class without permission prior to dismissal will be considered absent. Please do not come to class late, as this is both discourteous and disruptive. The same is true of leaving one’s seat during class. This should be done only in emergencies. If an emergency is expected, the instructor should be informed prior to class and the student should sit in a seat nearest the exit. Special circumstances which affect attendance will always be considered if the instructor is informed ahead of time.

More than 10 absences will result in automatic failure for the course. While the instructor keeps records of student attendance, students are responsible for keeping track of their own attendance, for their own purposes. Students who are failing or very near to failing due to attendance, prior to the last day to drop the class, will be notified. No other inquiries regarding attendance will be answered by the instructor.
POLICIES

Electronic Devices: Use of electronic devices such as **cell phones**, tablets, and laptops is **strictly prohibited**. These devices should not be seen or heard by anyone, including (especially) yourself. All cell phones must be stowed away **before entering** the classroom. Flagrant violators of this rule will be asked to leave and counted absent.

Students with Disabilities: If you have particular learning needs that are documented with the university’s Student Life Office, please contact me so arrangements for testing can be made in advance. See [http://www.angelo.edu/content/files/14216-op-1015-providing-accommodations-for-students-with](http://www.angelo.edu/content/files/14216-op-1015-providing-accommodations-for-students-with). If not yet documented, please contact them at: Rm 112 University Center, (325) 942-2126, Student.Life@angelo.edu

Honor Code: Cheating, plagiarism, and other violations of the honor code will not be tolerated. See ASU’s policies at [http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf](http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf)

**Extra Credit**

You may complete up to 2 extra credit Movie Journals. These should be posted on Blackboard under “Movie Journal.” They should be about 500 words and should analyze the movie in relation to the dominant themes of the course. **These should not be summaries of the movie.** No more than 1 journal may be posted in a single week. And I will not accept any more entries once Finals Week has begun. The following is a list of acceptable movies.

- Shane
- The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance
- Amistad
- Sergeant Rutledge
- Gran Torino
- Lone Star (1996)
- A Man for All Seasons
- Inherit the Wind
- The Best Man (1964)
- Idiocracy
- Lincoln
- Brazil
- Advise and Consent
- Wag the Dog
- The Grapes of Wrath
- American Sniper
- 13 Hours
Course Outline (detailed weekly schedules will be posted on Blackboard)

I. Introduction, Political Ideology, Public Opinion, and the Party System
   1. AGP, 212-223, 259-270

II. Elections and Campaigns
   1. AGP, 288-316
   2. How the Electoral College Works
   4. Citizens United v. FEC

III. Freedom and Democracy
   1. AGP, Ch. 1
   2. Declaration of Independence (also found in AGP, p. 560-562)
   3. Five Founders on Slavery
   4. Thomas Jefferson, Draft of the Declaration (paragraph on slavery)

IV. The Constitution
   1. AGP, Ch. 2
   2. Federalist #10
      Optional: Analysis of Federalist #10

Test #1 - Friday 2/8

V. Federalism (and Abraham Lincoln)
   1. Myron Magnet, “The Last Founding Father”
   2. AGP, Ch. 3

VI. Citizenship and Civic Culture
   1. AGP, Ch. 4
   2. George Washington, Farewell Address

VII. Civil Liberties
   1. AGP, Ch. 5
   2. Northwest Ordinance (esp. Article 3)

VIII. Civil Rights
   1. AGP, Ch. 6
   2. Alexander Stephens, Cornerstone Address
   3. Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address

Test #2 - Friday 3/8

Spring Break
IX. Media
1. AGP, Ch. 11
2. George Anastaplo on “The Abolition of Television”

X. Congress
1. Hamilton and Madison, “On Congress” (Blackboard)
2. AGP, Ch. 12

XI. Presidency
1. Hamilton, “On the Presidency” (Blackboard)
2. AGP, Ch. 13

XII. Judiciary
1. AGP, Ch. 15
2. Lincoln, First Inaugural (Blackboard)

Test #3 - Monday 4/15

XIII. Social Policy and the Welfare State
1. AGP, Ch. 16
2. Kurt Vonnegut, “Harrison Bergeron”
3. Charles Murray, “Narrowing the New Class Divide”

XIV. Foreign Policy and National Security
1. AGP, Ch. 18
2. Barack Obama, Second Inaugural Address
3. Donald J. Trump, Speech before the United Nations

Movie - TBA

Final Exam - Monday, 5/6 at 8:00am-10:00am in the classroom