Course Description: 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 Constitution 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.

Constitutions are the central legitimating symbols of American political life. American citizens therefore need to understand how they frames political controversy and how they influence 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 and of federalism in our democracy. We will also discuss the unique political culture of Texas within the broader historical/regional context of the American Southwest.

Texts and Readings

Required Texts:
1. Miscellaneous readings related to Democracy in Texas linked within each Lesson.
2. Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (hereafter, DA)
3. Lawler and Schaefer, American Political Rhetoric (hereafter, APR)

Course Goals

We will be working on 4 Core Objectives: Critical Thinking (CT), Communication Skills (CS), Social Responsibility (SR), and Personal Responsibility (PR). Each of these Core Objectives contains its own Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), with 8 in total. We are going to pursue all of these objectives as we proceed through the course. Your progress towards these objectives will be assessed through your performance on the requirements listed below.

Journal

Each lesson (7 total) will require students to write a Journal entry reflecting on the questions, problems, ideas, etc., which arise from the readings. Each entry must be a minimum of 500 words in length. Detailed instructions are on Blackboard.
FINAL EXAM

There will be a final written exam in this course, consisting of multiple short essays. The exam questions will be posted Dec. 6th, and the exam must be completed and submitted through Turnitin on Blackboard no later than Friday., Dec. 14th, at the end of the day.

EXTRA CREDIT: MOVIE BLOG

I have provided a list of movies, which you may watch and write about for extra credit. You will find a tab with the list and further instructions on Blackboard. Extra credit is considered while final grades are being tabulated. Grades are never “rounded up” automatically in this course, but grades that are close to the next letter grade may be bumped up by completing extra credit.

POLICIES

Honor Code: Cheating, plagiarism, and other violations of the honor code will not be tolerated. Any violation of this policy will result in automatic failure for the course. See ASU’s policies at http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf

GRADING

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<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Extra Credit: Movie Blog</td>
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* The Final Grade for the course may not be more than one letter grade higher than the Final Exam.

Important Dates

Lesson periods: Lessons open each Monday at 12am and close the following Monday at 12am, according to the following schedule:

- Lesson 1 = Week 1
- Lesson 2 = Week 2
- Lesson 3 = Week 3
- Lesson 4 = Week 4
- Lesson 5 = Week 5
- Lesson 6 = Week 6
- Lesson 7 = Week 7
- Final Exam Due on 5/9

Detailed instruction regarding due dates and times are available in the Welcome, the Journal Instructions, and the Movie Blog tabs on Blackboard. Detailed reading lists and lesson introductions are available in the Lesson tabs. Please read all these and carefully follow all instructions.