POLS 2305-060: Federal Government, Spring 2020  MWF: 12-12:50 P.M., RAS 239

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Office: RAS 223
Office Hours: (M) 1-4 P.M.; (T) 2-4 P.M.; (W) 9-10:30 A.M. & 1:30-3 P.M.; (TH) 2-4 P.M.; or by appointment.

Course Description: This is a survey course on Federal government and the American political system. As part of ASU’s core Curriculum, it is designed to provide students with the basic knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts related to the roles of governmental and non-governmental political institutions.

Student learning objectives (SLOs):
Critical Thinking (CT1): Promote students’ ability to think critically about politics, the roles and authority of government institutions and officials, and the dynamic nature of the American political system. Thinking critically means more than simply memorizing information, it is the ability to gather, analyze, and synthesize information that is factual and relevant to a question, issue, or event.

Communication (CS1 & CS2): Students will develop the ability to express their knowledge and understanding of concepts through effective written and oral communication.

Social Responsibility (SR2 &SR3): Gain an understanding of the contexts that shape and influence the federal government’s actions and decisions on public policy. The study of the American political system allows for a greater appreciation of civic responsibility and ability to engage others in civil discourse.

Personal Responsibility (PR1): Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to understand and evaluate political choices and outcomes.


Blackboard: This course has a Blackboard site where you can obtain a copy of the syllabus and your grades.
Print copies of the congressional research assignment will be provided in class. Anyone who is absent the day course materials are distributed or needs a replacement can pick up a copy during my office hours. Also, I no longer post the lecture slides online.

Lecture outline, assignments, and exams: Depending on the pace of class discussion or unforeseen events (weather related cancellations, illness, etc.), the course outline is subject to change. Exam dates will only be changed in the event the university closes due to weather conditions.

-If you miss class, it is your responsibility to contact me about the material that was discussed and make arrangements to acquire a copy of a classmate’s lecture notes because I no longer provide students with copies of my lecture slides or movies.

-Policies on examinations: Prior to an exam all students will be required to turn off all cell phones and computers, and place all belongings under their seat. Anyone caught cheating will immediately forfeit their exam and receive and automatic “F” for the assignment.

-It is your responsibility to contact me is you miss an exam due to a university-related event or illness to schedule a make-up exam. Make-up exams must be taken within the two weeks following the original exam date. Failure to make-up the exam within this time frame will result in an automatic “F” for that exam.
Excuses: The professor is the sole judge of all excuses. No excuse will be accepted after the fact or for students’ personal convenience. In the case of an emergency or extended absence, notification from the Office of Student Affairs will be required.

Accommodations: Any student who needs accommodations due to a disability, participation in university-related activities, religious observances, family matters, or a difficult life event should contact the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible so they can assist you with making arrangements and notifying your professors. The office is located in the Houston Harte University Center, Room 112, and additional information can be found on ASU’s website.

Title IX: The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of sexual misconduct which includes all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence, and stalking.

Faculty members are required by law and ASU policy to report any allegations we are notified about to the Office of Title IX Compliance. Students are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU’s Office of Title IX Compliance and its Director/Coordinator, Michelle Boone, J.D.

The office is located in the Mayer Administration Building, Room 210. Contact information: 325-942-2022 or michelle.boone@angelo.edu. Reports can also be filed online 24/7 at www.angelo.edu/incident-form.

Anyone wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence may contact the University Health Clinic and Counseling Center at 325-942-2173 or ASU’s Crisis Helpline at 325-942-6345. Additional information is available at www.angelo.edu/title-ix.

Angelo State policies: As outlined in ASU’s student handbook, students are responsible for regular and punctual attendance at all scheduled classes. The university reserves the right to deal with individual cases of non-attendance. The handbook also outlines the university’s Academic Honor Code, the parameters of academic integrity, and students’ responsibilities.

Decisions on Incompletes will be made after consulting with the Office of Student Affairs.

Class Etiquette and Student Conduct: Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone caught plagiarizing or cheating on an assignment will receive an F for that assignment.

-Computers will permitted in class but if it appears that devices are being used for purposes other than taking notes, I reserve the right to prohibit their use by anyone.

-Anyone habitually engaging in disruptive or distracting behavior (sleeping, talking, etc.) will be asked to take a seat in the front row, or closest available, for the rest of the semester.

-Texting in class is prohibited. Anyone caught texting in class will be asked to leave the classroom.

The Department of Political Science and Philosophy is committed to support the learning of all students. As part of maintaining the decorum of the classroom, students are expected to behave appropriately and in a responsible manner. Comments made during class discussion should be well thought out and not based on personal prejudice. Any student who is disruptive or engages in ad hominem attacks will be asked to leave.
Assignments and Exams

Exams: All three exams will consist of two sections; short answer and fill-in-the-blank. Each exam will be worth 100 points. Exams 1 and 2 will cover the material noted in the Course Outline section of the syllabus. The Final Exam is comprehensive and will consist of both new material and terms from the two previous exams. Again, make-ups for Exams 1-2 must be scheduled within two weeks of the originally scheduled exam date.

Research Assignment: This assignment is designed to familiarize students with official, online sources for information about congressional lawmaking. A worksheet and a review of the instructions will be provided in class. The worksheet will not be available on Blackboard. Anyone who is absent the day the worksheet is distributed or needs an additional copy must see me after class or during my office hours. This assignment is worth 100 points and is due at the beginning of class on Friday, March 6th. Emailed submissions will not be accepted. Late assignments will have 10 points deducted for each day past the due date.

To benefit everyone, questions about this assignment must be asked before or during class.

In-Class Budgeting Exercise: Students must attend class on the day of this exercise to receive credit. Only university-related absences, verified by a faculty advisor, will be accepted. Prior to this exercise students will be assigned to one of three groups that represent a branch of government. This assignment is worth 75 points. Please note that the designated date may be subject to change, if necessary.

Pop Quizzes: 7-10 pop quizzes based on the assigned reading will be given throughout the semester. Quizzes can only be taken in-class. Make-ups will only be permitted for absences related to participation in a sanctioned university event and notification by a faculty advisor. Pop quizzes are worth 25 points each. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Supplemental Instruction or Tutoring (40 points): Each student is required to attend one Supplemental Instruction (SI) OR one tutoring session for Political Science-Government for no less than 30 minutes. You must sign-in and sign-out of the session, either electronically or sign-in sheet provided by the SI or Tutor. The program’s staff advisor will provide me with monthly reports of student attendance.

- No credit will be awarded to students who attend a session for less than 30 minutes or who are not on record as having attended.

- The schedule for both of these services is available on ASU’s website. For anyone unable to attend either an SI or Tutoring session due to scheduling conflicts can make an appointment with me to review the course material.

Extra Credit Opportunities:

1) A movie will be shown at the end of the semester. Only students who attend every class in which the movie is shown and discussed will have 10 points of extra credit added to their final grade.

2) Students who attend one additional Political Science-Government SI or Tutoring session, beyond the one that is required, will earn 15 extra credit points. The same criteria applies. This extra credit opportunity can only be used once.

Final grades will follow Angelo State University’s Grading Scale: A: 100-90%; B: 89-80%; C: 79-70%; D: 69-60%; F: 59% or below.
Course Outline: It is your responsibility to read the assigned material, including the examples and case studies in each chapter, prior to class. You are also expected to bring your textbook to each class for reference.

Part I: Foundations of the American Political System

Week 1: January 13th, 15th, & 17th
   (M) First day of class, review of the syllabus
   (W-F) Chapter 1, Power & Citizenship in American Politics
         Chapter 2, Politics of the American Founding

Week 2: January 20th, 22nd, & 24th
   (M) No Class-University is closed for MLK, Jr. Day
   (W-F) Chapter 3, Federalism

Week 3: January 27th, 29th, & 31st, Chapter 4, Fundamental American Liberties

Week 4: February 3rd, 5th, & 7th, Chapter 5, The Struggle for Equal Rights

Week 5: February 10th, 12th, & 14th
   (M) Lecture wrap-up and review
   (W) Exam 1 (covers Chapters 1-5)
   (F) Library day, No Class (Use this time to become familiar with the research assignment website, Congress.gov. I will be in my office and available to answer any questions.)

Part II: Government Institutions

Week 6: February 17th, 19th, & 21st, Chapter 6, Congress; Review of the research assignment

Week 7: February 24th, 26th, & 28th, Chapter 7, The Presidency

Week 8: March 2nd, 4th, & 6th, Chapter 8, The Bureaucracy
         -Fri., March 6th, Congress.gov Research Assignment worksheet is due at the beginning of class.

Spring Break: March 9th-13th, No class, the University is closed.

Week 9: March 16th, 18th, & 20th, Chapter 9, The American Legal System and the Courts

Week 10: March 23rd, 25th, & 27th (Note: Thursday, March 26th, Last day to drop classes.)
         (M-W) Lecture wrap-up and review
         (F) Exam 2 (covers Chapters 6-9)

Part III: Policy, Elections, Public Opinion, and the Linking Institutions

Week 11: March 30th, April 1st & 3rd, Chapter 14, Domestic and Foreign Policy

Week 12: April 6th, 8th, & 10th
         (M) Finish Chapter 14; In-Class Budgeting Exercise group assignments
         (W-F) In-class Budgeting Exercise

Week 13: April 13th, 15th, & 17th
         (M) Chapter 10, Public Opinion
         (W-F) Chapter 12, Voting, Campaigns, and Elections

Week 14: April 20th, 22nd, & 24th
         (M-W) Chapter 13, Media, Power, and Political Communication
         (F) Lecture wrap-up

Week 15: April 27th, 29th, & May 1st, Movie and Final Exam Review

Week 16: Final Exam (covers Chapters 10-14 AND terms from Exams 1 & 2)
         (M) May 4th: POLS 2305-060, 1-3 P.M. (RAS 239)
         (W) May 6th, POLS 2305-050, 10:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M. (RAS 239)