

COURSE SYLLABUS
POLS 2306: Texas Government
Prof. Tony Bartl, Spring 2022
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(325) 486-6107

Office: RAS 215

Office Hours: TR 8-9:30am; 10:45am-12:30pm, and by appointment

Classroom: RAS 112

Meeting Time: TR 9:30-10:45pm

A general diffusion of knowledge [is] essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people . . .

- Texas Constitution, Art. VII

Every college and university receiving state support or state aid from public funds shall give a course of instruction in government or political science which includes consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas.

- Texas Education Code, Sec. 51.301

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 the Texas State Constitution. 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 Texan and American political life. They create and give shape to the institutions that govern us. Texan and American citizens therefore need to understand how these constitutions frame political controversy and how they influence political and social change. To that end, we will study important debates concerning what it means to be self-governing citizens of a political order dedicated to principles of *liberty* and *equality*. We will examine the important function of *citizenship* and of *federalism* in our democracy. We will also discuss the distinctive political culture of Texas.

TEXTS AND READINGS

1. Miscellaneous readings linked from Blackboard or the internet. These readings must be printed out and brought to class on the day they are assigned. It is highly recommended that you purchase a three ring binder and put the printed readings in there for proper organization.
2. [Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Sanford Kesler, ed.,](#) Hackett Publishing (hereafter referred to as **DA**). Students must have a paperback copy of

this text and bring it with them to class.

3. [Earle Michael Young, *The Great State of Texas: Fundamental Concepts in Texas Government and Politics*](#), 2nd Edition, Kendall Hunt Publishing (hereafter referred to as **Young**). This textbook is only available in ebook form. Its purpose is to provide background information and serve as a resource for basic facts regarding TX Govt. It does not need to be brought to class.

Recommended: [Lawler and Schaefer, *American Political Rhetoric*](#), Rowman and Littlefield, ISBN: 978-1-4422-3219-8 (hereafter, this text will be referred to as **APR**). Having a paperback copy of this text and bringing it with you to class will reduce the number of items which will need to be printed (see #1 above).

GRADING

Quizzes	30%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	30%
Participation	10%
Extra Credit: Movie Blog	

ATTENDANCE

This course works best when students come to class ready to participate. There is a minimum attendance ratio of 75% necessary for passing this course. Therefore, students who miss more than 7 class sessions will automatically fail. “Attendance” is defined as being in class on time, prepared, and undistracted by electronic devices. “Being prepared” is defined as bringing the reading material to class, along with a notebook and writing utensil for taking notes, quizzes, etc. Attendance will be taken during the daily quiz. This includes those cases where students need to attend remotely. Students not present while attendance is being taken will be counted absent.

PARTICIPATION

This class is based on discussion of the readings in class. Students will be graded on their participation in these class discussions. Pop reading quizzes will also be used to measure how well students come prepared to class. Quiz questions will be put up on the screen and students will write the answers in their notebooks. These will be given during the first 3-5 minutes of class. They cannot be made up for any reason.

QUIZZES

At the beginning of the course, there will be five quizzes covering the material from the previous week. Beginning on 1/18, and continuing for the next four weeks in row, these quizzes will be given at the beginning of class each Tuesday. The quizzes will require you

to concisely explain in writing certain key ideas or passages from the previous week's readings.

MIDTERM EXAM

The midterm exam will consist of written short answers and an essay. It will be given in the classroom on Thursday, 3/10, at the normal class time.

FINAL EXAM

The final exam will contain written short answers and an essay. It will be given on Thursday, 5/12 at 8am, in the classroom. Students must bring blue books to write their answers in.

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 movie list and detailed instructions on Blackboard. Extra credit is considered while final grades are being tabulated. It is not worth any standard amount of points, but in close cases may cause a student's final grade to be bumped up to the next letter. Any effects of extra credit on one's grade will not be visible in Blackboard at any time but will only become apparent in the final course grade in [Rampart](#).

Written Work: Some important points must be kept in mind when setting out to do this written work in this course.

1. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. This course has a zero tolerance policy regarding plagiarism. Plagiarism is when you take someone else's words or ideas and present them as your own. Even if you change most or all of the words around, it is still plagiarism if you begin by copying some portion of another person's work. Students are responsible for understanding what plagiarism is and for avoiding it. Any and all instances of plagiarism or cheating will result in automatic failure for the course and may lead to academic integrity charges with the university.
2. Internet searches and other "outside sources" are not allowed as a resource for your written work. An outside source is any source not assigned in this course. Assignments using outside sources will be given zero credit.
3. All written work must follow standard rules of written English. Work that fails to use proper sentences, paragraphs, or basic punctuation will not be read or counted.

COURSE POLICIES

Electronic Devices: Electronic devices are distracting and not conducive to the atmosphere we are trying to build in this class. Use of electronic devices such as cell phones, tablets, and laptops is strictly forbidden. If you possess such devices and carry

them with you to class, please keep them put away while in the classroom. Students who need to use their phones before class begins will please step out into the hallway to do so. Students who take out their phones during class will be asked to leave and counted absent.

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>

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

<i>Week I</i>	<i>1/18</i> Introduction. The Purpose of Education. The Purpose of this Course. Read through Syllabus prior to the first class and bring questions with you to class. Make sure also to read the short excerpt from Horace Mann and Martin Luther King, Jr. <i>1/20</i> The Rule of Law and the Question of Lawabidingness
<i>Week II</i>	Political Culture and History
<i>Weeks III</i>	The Declaration of Independence and Its Principles
<i>Week IV</i>	Slavery, Secession, and Race
<i>Weeks V</i>	Texas within the American Federal System
<i>Week VI</i>	State and Local Government
<i>Week VII</i>	The Democratic-Republic of Texas
<i>Week VIII</i>	The American Idea of Rights (3/8) and Midterm Exam (3/10)
<i>Week IX</i>	Religious Liberty in Texas
<i>Week X</i>	Freedom of Speech and Press
<i>Week XI</i>	The Right to Keep and Bear Arms, etc.
<i>Weeks XII</i>	Separation of Powers and the Legislative Power
<i>Week XIII</i>	Executive Power in Texas
<i>Week XIV</i>	Judicial Power and Unenumerated Rights
<i>Week XV</i>	Catch-up or Movie, tbd

Final Exam - 5/12 at 8am

University Policies

All students are required to follow the policies and procedures presented in these documents:

Angelo State University Student Handbook

Angelo State University Catalog

Religious Holidays:

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. See ASU Operating Policy 10.19 Student Absence for Observance of Religious Holy Day for more information. It is policy that incomplete grades be reserved for student illness or personal misfortune. Please contact faculty if you have serious illness or a personal misfortune that would keep you from completing course work. Documentation may be required. See ASU Operating Policy 10.11 Grading Procedures for more information.

Student Disability Services:

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 Disability Services is located in the Office of Student Affairs, and is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability. It is the student's responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting an employee of the Office of Student Affairs, in the Houston Harte University Center, Room 112, or contacting the department via email at ADA@angelo.edu. For more information about the application process and requirements, visit the Student Disability Services website at www.angelo.edu/ADA. The employee charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing accommodation requests is: Ms. Dallas Swafford

Director of Student Disability Services 325-942-2047 dallas.swafford@angelo.edu Houston Harte University Center 112

Title IX

Angelo State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. In accordance with Title VII, Title IX, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE), and other federal and state laws, the University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. The term includes sexual harassment, nonconsensual sexual contact, nonconsensual sexual intercourse, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence or dating violence), sexual violence, and any other misconduct based on sex.

You are encouraged to report any incidents involving sexual misconduct to the Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator, Michelle Miller, J.D. You may submit reports in the following manner:

Online: www.angelo.edu/incident-form

Face to Face: Mayer Administration Building, Room 210

Phone: 325-942-2022

Email: michelle.boone@angelo.edu

Note, as a faculty member at Angelo State, I am a mandatory reporter and must report incidents involving sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator. Should you wish to speak to someone in confidence about an issue, you may contact the University Counseling Center (325-942-2371), the 24-Hour Crisis Helpline (325-486-6345), or the University Health Clinic (325-942-2171).

For more information about resources related to sexual misconduct, Title IX, or Angelo State's policy please visit: www.angelo.edu/title-ix.

Copyright Policy

Students officially enrolled in this course should make only one printed copy of the given articles and/or chapters. You are expressly prohibited from distributing or reproducing any portion of course readings in printed or electronic form without written permission from the copyright holders or publishers.

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.

The Purpose of Education Martin Luther King Jr. Morehouse College 1947

It seems to me that education has a two-fold function to perform in the life of man and in society: the one is utility and the other is culture. Education must enable a man to become more efficient, to achieve with increasing facility the legitimate goals of his life.

Education must also train one for quick, resolute and effective thinking. To think incisively and to think for one's self is very difficult. We are prone to let our mental life become invaded by legions of half-truths, prejudices, and propaganda. At this point, I often wonder whether or not education is fulfilling its purpose. A great majority of the so-called educated people do not think logically and scientifically. Even the press, the classroom, the platform, and the pulpit in many instances do not give us objective and unbiased truths. To save man from the morass of propaganda, in my opinion, is one of the chief aims of education. Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from the fiction.

The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason, but with no morals. . . .

We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal

of true education. The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate. The broad education will, therefore, transmit to one not only the accumulated knowledge of the race but also the accumulated experience of social living.

“Go Forth and Teach”

Horace Mann

Boston

1842

Horace Mann was known as the “Father of the Common Schools” because he led in establishing elementary public schools in the United States. In 1836 he became the first Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, and in 1839 he founded the first State Normal School in the U.S. to improve the quality of educating public school teachers.

If the majority of a self-governing people are sober-minded, enlightened, studious of right, capable of comparing and balancing opposite interpretations of a fundamental law, or opposite views of a particular system of policy; then all appeals addressed to them in messages, speeches, pamphlets, and from the thousand-tongued newspaper press, will be calm, dispassionate, adapted at once to elucidate the subject under consideration and to instruct and elevate the mind of the arbiters.¹ But, on the other hand, if the people are ignorant, fickle, averse to or incapable of patient inquiry, prone to hasty decisions from plausible appearances, or reckless from prejudice or passion, then the demagogues² who address, will adapt themselves to the dupes³ who hear, just as certainly as the hunter adapts his lure to the animal he would ensnare; and flattery,⁴ imposture, falsehood, the vindication and eulogy⁵ of fellow partisans⁶ however wicked, and the defamation⁷ of opponents however virtuous, will be the instruments by which a warfare, destructive in the end alike to victors and vanquished, will be waged. Let the spirit and tone of our congressional and legislative speechmakers, and the language of the political press throughout the country, decide the question, which of the above described classes they consider themselves as addressing. . . .

¹ “Arbiters” are those who have the power to decide a disputed question. In democratic elections, this means the people or, more precisely, the voters.

² A demagogue is “a political agitator who appeals to the passions and prejudice of the mob in order to obtain power or further his own interests” (definition taken from the Oxford English Dictionary).

³ A dupe is “one who allow himself to be deceived or deluded; one who is misled by false representations or notions” (O.E.D.).

⁴ A flatterer “employs false praise to obtain favor or otherwise serve his own purposes (O.E.D.).

⁵ Praise.

⁶ A “partisan” is a member of one’s own party or, more generally, one who is loyal to one side in a dispute.

⁷ To “defame” is to attack someone’s reputation, especially through rumors or reports.