

COURSE SYLLABUS  
POLS 2306: Texas Government  
Prof. Tony Bartl, Winter 2021/22  
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(325) 486-6107

*This class is an online, asynchronous, accelerated four week course. The pace of this course will be much quicker than a full semester course, and the weekly reading load will be heavy.*

**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.

Written constitutions are the central legitimating symbols of Texan and American political life. Citizens therefore need to understand how their constitutions frame political controversy and how they influence political and social change. Also, these constitutions were constructed on the basis of certain political principles. Therefore, in addition to the basic structures and institutions of government, we will study important debates over their purposes and principles. Most importantly, we will investigate the meaning of *democracy* and *republican government* and 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 patriotism and the distinctive political culture of Texas.

TEXTS AND READINGS

Required Texts:

1. [Earle Michael Young, \*The Great State of Texas: Fundamental Concepts in Texas Government and Politics\*](#), 2nd Edition, Kendall Hunt Publishing Co., ISBN: 9781792429545 (in the Lessons, this text will be referred to as **Young**)
2. [Alexis de Tocqueville, \*Democracy in America\*, Sanford Kesler, ed.](#), Hackett Publishing. (in the Lessons, this text will be referred to as **DA**)
3. [Lawler and Schaefer, \*American Political Rhetoric\*](#), Rowman and Littlefield, ISBN: 978-1-4422-3219-8 (in the Lessons, this text will be referred to as **APR**)
4. Miscellaneous readings linked within each Lesson.

GRADING

Lesson Journal	60%
Final Essay Exam	40%
Extra Credit: Movie Blog	

**Lessons:** The course schedule is divided into seven Lessons, plus the Final Exam. Please see the Course Schedule. Once the scheduled period for the Lesson is over that Lesson will be closed. Students must keep up with the Schedule. The content of all seven Lessons will be visible to you on the first day of the course. So, it is possible to get a head start. There is no “catching up,” however. Once the scheduled Lesson period is over, it will not be possible to submit any more work for that Lesson.

**Written Work:** The grades in this course are based entirely on written work, and this work is focused entirely on your engagement with the readings assigned in the lessons. Three important points must be kept in mind when setting out to do this work.

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 will be reported to the university administration.
2. Use of **outside sources** is not allowed as a resource for your written work. An outside source is *any* source not assigned in this course. Use of outside sources (such as material found on the internet), instead of the sources assigned by the professor, will result in a zero for the particular Journal entry or Exam question where the outside source has been used.
3. All references to the assigned readings and all quotations must be backed up with **citations**, so the professor can check your claims and probe your arguments. Because only the assigned readings are allowed as sources (and no “research papers” are assigned in this course), the appropriate citation method is a simple one. Whenever you make a claim about, or a reference to, the text, include the appropriate abbreviation along with the page number. Examples include the following: (DA, 43) or (APR, 55) or (Young, 355), if quoting from any of the three major texts assigned. The individual readings linked in the Lesson will usually come without page numbers. Author and title are usually sufficient when citing these. For example, (Thomas Jefferson, “On Citizenship”). Sometimes, however, there is no single, official author, for example: (Texas Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. 3). Citing my Lesson Introductions is also permissible, like this, (Bartl, Lesson One Intro), but it should be used only when none of the other sources would suffice to make the point. Excessive dependence on the Lesson Introductions will indicate that the student has not sufficiently read and struggled with the assigned readings.

**Lesson Journal:** Students will write a Journal entry for each Lesson (7 total), reflecting on the questions, problems, ideas, etc., which are found in the readings assigned for that Lesson. Each entry must be a minimum of 500 words. They are due by the close of each Lesson (see Course Schedule). Entries will be accepted for half credit if submitted within 24 hours past the closing of the Lesson. No entries will be accepted more than 24 hrs late. Detailed instructions on writing and posting are on Blackboard. Please read those Journal Instructions carefully prior to working on this assignment, and consult them throughout the semester whenever you have questions regarding the assignment.

**Final Essay:** A comprehensive essay will be posted on Blackboard during the eighth week of the course and will be due Saturday 1/15/22.

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 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](#). Warning: Extra credit will not make up for missing work; "extra" means "in addition to," not "instead of."

#### COURSE SCHEDULE

<i>12/13-15</i>	Lesson I. Texas Political Culture
<i>12/16-18</i>	Lesson II. The Declaration of Independence and Its Principles
<i>12/19-21</i>	Lesson III. American Federalism and Local Government
<i>12/19-24</i>	Lesson IV. The Democratic-Republic of Texas
<i>1/1-4</i>	Lesson V. Individual Rights, Part I: The American Idea of Rights and Religious Liberty
<i>1/5-8</i>	Lesson VI. Individual Rights, Part II: Freedom of Speech, the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, etc.
<i>1/9-12</i>	Lesson VII. Separation of Powers and the Branches of Texas Government
<i>1/13-15</i>	Final Essay Period
<i>Final Essay Due - 1/15</i>	

## **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](mailto:ADA@angelo.edu). For more information about the application process and requirements, visit the Student Disability Services website at [www.angelo.edu/ADA](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.angelo.edu/incident-form)

Face to Face: Mayer Administration Building, Room 210

Phone: 325-942-2022

Email: [michelle.boone@angelo.edu](mailto: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](http://www.angelo.edu/title-ix).

#### Required Use of Masks/Facial Coverings by Students

As a member of the Texas Tech University System, Angelo State University has adopted the mandatory Facial Covering Policy to ensure a safe and healthy classroom experience. Current research on the COVID-19 virus suggests there is a significant reduction in the potential for transmission of the virus from person to person by wearing a mask/facial covering that covers the nose and mouth areas. Therefore, in compliance with the university policy students in this class are required to wear a mask/facial covering before, during, and after class. Faculty members may also ask you to display your daily screening badge as a prerequisite to enter the classroom. You are also asked to maintain safe distancing practices to the best of your ability. For the safety of everyone, any student not appropriately wearing a mask/facial covering will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. The student will be responsible to make up any missed class content or work. Continued non-compliance with the Texas Tech University System Policy may result in disciplinary action through the Office of Student Conduct.

#### 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.