

Angelo State University
POLS 2305 – Federal Government
SY 2021 - 2022

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Required Textbooks: American Government in Politics Today: The Essentials, 19th Edition; by Bardes, Shelley, and Schmidt

Technology: The student must have access to a computer with speakers, and a reliable and speedy Internet. The student will retrieve materials and complete assignments on Blackboard every week. Students are permitted to bring laptops/tablets to the classroom for note taking but will lose such privileges if the student is using the laptop/tablet for something other than its intended purpose in the classroom.

Course Description: Political Science 2305 is designed to introduce the student to the American federal system of government. This introductory survey course covers the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution, structure and powers of the national government including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public policy, civil liberties, and civil rights. This course will also analyze how citizens are linked to their governmental institutions and able to communicate with their elected representatives.

Core Objectives

Critical Thinking: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, gathering, and synthesizing information relevant to a question or issue.

Communication: to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through effective written, oral, and visual communication.

Social Responsibility: to include the intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Personal Responsibility: to include the ability to evaluate choices, connect choices, actions and consequences as related to ethical decision-making.

To gain knowledge and understanding of the foundation of the American political system, including the Constitution and the founding principles of liberty and representation, separation of powers, and checks and balances.

To gain knowledge and understanding of the structure, institutions, and operations of the American government.

To gain knowledge and understanding of the policy making process, which is central to understanding American democracy.

To develop an awareness of the broader trends, themes, and patterns in American politics.

To build an appreciation and understanding of the role citizens, and other actors including media, interest groups, political parties, businesses, civil society groups, play in shaping American public policy and strengthening our democracy.

To understand the importance of the United States' role in global affairs by integrating key tenets of American politics such as civil liberties, freedom of press, and executive power.

To encourage participation in public life by recognizing students' self-interest and a broader civil interest.

To use technology and a variety of multimedia tools to enhance our exploration and understanding of the American Political System.

To think fearlessly about complicated questions with complicated answers.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Explain the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution and constitutional democracy in the U.S.
2. Describe the effects that historical, social, political, cultural, and global forces had on the U.S. Constitution.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
4. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of the origins and evolution of the U.S. political system, with a focus on growth of political institutions and the key components of the political system.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of the American federal system and explain the ways in which different political systems divide and share power between their central and state governments.
7. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, political parties, campaigns, and elections in the political system.
8. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens and be able to comment on the role of civic engagement in U.S. politics and political culture.
9. Analyze political issues, demonstrate critical thinking skills, and develop a critical approach to the study of government.

Summary Matrix

The table below details which core requirements are applicable to this course, the activities to develop the skills in the required areas, mastery assessment, and the level of expertise the student must demonstrate.

Core Objective	University SLO	Course SLO	Assignment	Assessment Method
Critical Thinking	CT1: Gather, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information relevant to a question or issue.	Students will develop critical thinking skills and the ability to critically evaluate the American political environment and explain the development of constitutional democracy.	Reflective writing samples based on lectures, class discussion, required class readings, and assigned movies that assess if the student can think critically about American politics and governance.	VALUE Rubric for Critical Thinking
Communication	CS1: Develop, interpret and express ideas through effective written communication.	Students will gain and be able to demonstrate a basic knowledge of the three branches of government and the general principles and characteristics of federalism.	Reflective writing samples based on lectures, class discussion, required class readings, and assigned movies that assess if the student can effectively communicate a basic knowledge of American political governance and federalism using a written artifact.	VALUE Rubric for Written Communication
Social Responsibility	SR2: Demonstrate knowledge of civic responsibility.	Students will gain and be able to demonstrate a basic knowledge of the American political system and demonstrate the importance of participating in the American civic and political life.	Reflective writing samples based on lectures, class discussion, required class readings, and assigned movies that assess if the student can demonstrate specific knowledge of American civic life and political system.	VALUE Rubric for Civic Engagement - local and global

Personal Responsibility	PR1: Demonstrate the ability to evaluate choices, actions and consequences as related to ethical decision-making.	Students will exhibit the skills necessary to understand and evaluate political outcomes and evaluate the responsibility of civic engagement. Students will demonstrate an understanding of different strategies for political participation and knowledge of rights and responsibilities of citizenship.	Reflective writing samples based on lectures, class discussion, required class readings, and assigned movies that assess if the student understands ethical decision making and responsibilities as citizen using a written artifact.	Value Rubric for Ethical Reasoning
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Educational and Critical Thinking Objectives for Students

1. The student should NOT accept any assertion of fact on face value. The student should research credible sources to better comprehend varying points of view.
2. The student must have credible data to support their case. Students learn about and research opposing arguments, but do not debate for one side or the other in class. For example, students should not argue whether stem cell research is good or bad, instead they study the arguments various parties have made about stem cell research.
3. The classroom should be where political agendas are analyzed, not embraced.

Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to attend all classes. Excessive absences will jeopardize final grade for the course and may result in removal from the dual credit course.

Prompt and regular class attendance is considered necessary for satisfactory work. The instructor keeps an accurate, complete, and clearly comprehensive record of attendance.

- **5** non-school related absences will result in dropping one full letter grade.
- **7** non-school related absences will result in dropping another full letter grade.
- **9** non-school related absences will result in being dismissed from the dual credit course.

*An absence is excused if a doctor's note (on letterhead) is turned in. Students must turn in a copy to both the attendance office and the instructor.

After an Absence: Absent students must report to the instructor during morning tutorial the first day back to school following an absence, to receive information regarding missed day(s), and to complete missing assignments and assessments.

Method of Evaluation

In-Class and Online Assignments	20%
In-Class and Online Quizzes	20%
In-Class and Online Tests	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%

In-Class and Online Assignments: Students engage in a variety of assignments to help master the material. **Online assignments are due by 11:59 pm on the due date.**

In-Class and Online Quizzes: Questions are drawn from the readings, lecture notes, assigned videos, assignments, discussions, and other resources provided. **Online quizzes are due by 11:59 pm on the due date.**

In-Class and Online Tests: Questions are drawn from the readings, lecture notes, assigned videos, assignments, discussions, quizzes, and other resources provided. **Online tests are due by 11:59 pm on the due date.**

Exam 1: This exam will be administered in the classroom and must be completed during the class period. The exam will consist of multiple-choice questions, fill in the blanks, and essays. The questions will be drawn from the readings, lecture notes, assigned videos, assignments, discussions, previous quizzes, previous tests, and other resources provided.

Exam 2: This exam will be administered in the classroom and must be completed during the class period. The exam will consist of multiple-choice questions, fill in the blanks, and essays. The questions will be drawn from readings, lecture notes, assigned videos, assignments, discussions, previous quizzes, previous tests, Exam 1, and other resources provided.

Grading Scale: A = 90 or above; B = 80 – 89; C = 70 – 79; D = 60 – 69; F = 59 or below

Taking Assessments after an Absence: Absent students must report to the instructor during morning tutorial the first day back to school following an absence, to complete missing assessment(s). This does **NOT** include assessments on Blackboard. Assessments on Blackboard must be completed on time; otherwise the student will receive a zero for that assessment.

NO late work accepted (w/the exception of legitimate absences; see “After an Absence” on the previous page).

NO re-testing on ANY assessments.

NO extra credit work available.

Accommodations for Disability: Students who qualify for specific accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) should contact the Student Disability Services Office.

Religious Observances: A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make the intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. More information is available in University Operating Policy 10.19.

Student Conduct: Students are expected to take responsibility in helping to maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. In order to assure that all students have the opportunity to gain from the time spent in class, students are prohibited from using cell phones, reading material not related to the class, sleeping, or engaging in any other form of distraction or hindrance to the instructor or fellow students. Any act, or attempted act, perpetrated against another person or persons including, but not limited to: disruptive and/or obstructive conduct; harmful, threatening, or endangering conduct; hazing; discriminatory harassment; retaliatory discrimination or harassment; complicity or knowingly present – can result in dismissal from the course. Review the Student Handbook for more details, including other possible consequences.

Academic Honesty: Students are responsible for understanding and complying with Angelo State University Code of Student Conduct and policies found in the Student Handbook. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, violations of published professional ethics/standards, and any act or attempted act designed to give unfair academic advantage to oneself or another student. Falsified work will be reported and can result in a failing grade, dismissal from the dual credit course, or other consequences listed in the Student Handbook.

Online Course Netiquette: Professional netiquette should be used when communicating with students and faculty online, including discussions and emails. Students should be timely in their online communication and should ensure to post discussion responses and replies on time. Students should not discuss confidential information in discussion responses and replies. The absence of face-to-face interaction increases the likelihood of misinterpretation. Avoid using offensive language, excessive exclamation points, all caps, humor and sarcasm, acronyms, emojis, and slang. Recognize and value the experiences, abilities, and knowledge each person brings to class. If you disagree with ideas, state opposing arguments in a diplomatic and respectful manner. Be concise, use appropriate formatting, proofread and spell check your message.

Course Schedule:

Chapter 1: The Democratic Republic

Chapter 2: The Constitution (to include Federalism)

Chapter 11: The Congress

Chapter 12: The President (to include the Federal Bureaucracy)

Chapter 14: The Courts

Chapter 4: Civil Liberties

Chapter 5: Civil Rights

Chapter 7: Interest Groups

Chapter 8: Political Parties

Chapter 9: Campaigns and Elections (to include The Media)

Public and Foreign Policy (parts taken from chapter 15 and 16)

*Exam 1 – October (fall semester) and March (spring semester)

*Exam 2 – December (fall semester) and May (spring semester)

Changes to the Syllabus:

The schedule and procedures in this syllabus are subject to change if deemed appropriate by the instructor.