



**Course Syllabus: American Government I**  
**POLS1333 Section 202**  
**Spring 2022 MWF 12-12:50 pm**  
**PY200**

**Contact Information**

Instructor: Dr. Michael D. Baggs  
Office: O-206  
Office hours: MWF 10-12pm  
Office phone: (940) 397-4579  
E-mail: [michael.baggs@d2lmail.msutexas.edu](mailto:michael.baggs@d2lmail.msutexas.edu)

**Course Description**

This is an introductory course to the American political system with a brief survey of the political dynamics of the state of Texas. This course will examine the role of democracy in government; the historical influences on the federal and state constitutions; the structure of these constitutions; the impact of federalism; and how elections, political parties, public opinion, the media, and interest groups influence the political environment.

***Texas Core Objectives:*** This course will support the development of the following state mandated core learning objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Social Responsibility, and Personal Responsibility.

***Course Modality Statement:*** This course has been planned as a **face-to-face course** for Spring 2022. The class will meet in its regularly scheduled room all of the scheduled days.

In D2L the syllabus, course procedures, course schedule, attendance, and the gradebook will be posted along with any other pertinent information. The student should regularly check D2L and their D2L associated email for important course information.

**Textbook & Instructional Materials**

Benjamin Ginsberg, Benjamin, Margaret Weir, Theodore Lowi and Caroline Tolbert. 2019. *We the People*. 13th Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Sons.  
Ebook: ISBN: 978-0-393-53878-6

Champagne, Anthony, and Edward Harpham. 2019. *Governing Texas: An Introduction to Texas Politics* 5th Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Sons.  
Ebook: ISBN: 978-0-393-53974-5

The student can purchase the ebook either through the bookstore or by following the link and instructions in D2L.

### **Student Handbook**

Refer to: [Student Handbook-2020-2021](#)

### **Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures**

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

### **Grading**

Course Grade: There will be 3 exams (exam 1, exam 2 and a final), InQuizitive chapter exercises, 2 in-class assignments, and student attendance. For the point distribution, see Table 1. Note: The instructor will only discuss a student's grades during office hours in the office. Grades will not be discussed via email, phone, or in any other location where confidentiality cannot be assured. All grades will be recorded in D2L.

**Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment**

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Points</b>
InQuizitive	10
Exercise 1&2	10
Exam 1	25
Exam 2	25
Final Exam	20
Attendance	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2: Total points for final grade.**

Grade	Points
A	90-100
B	80 to 89
C	70 to 79
D	60 to 69
F	Less than 60

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. Although in general students are graded on intellectual effort and performance rather than attendance, absences may lower the student's grade where class attendance and class participation are deemed essential by the faculty member.

Students will only be exempt from attending classes in person if they have been placed under quarantine by the Vinson Health Center and the instructor has been notified via email from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

**Authorized Absences:** Students with written approval for absences due to required participation in university-sponsored activities must present a signed letter or memo to the instructor at least two class days prior to the date of the absence. Only prior notification can guarantee lack of penalty for these absences.

Academically-related activities (class field trips, attendance at conferences, etc.) which result in absences do not qualify as university-sponsored activities. Excused absences for these activities are given at the discretion of the instructor.

It is the responsibility of the student to arrange with the instructor to make up all work missed during an authorized absence. Material from missed lectures (i.e. powerpoints or notes) will only be provided to those students with a university approved absence or other extra-ordinary circumstance. These instances will be judged on a case by case basis by the instructor and in no way does it obligate the instructor to provide any material to students who miss excessive classes.

**Procedures for Authorized Absences:** For personal emergencies such as hospitalization or family emergency, or a prolonged absence, a student should notify **the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities**.

When a student's illness warrants verification, the student may seek medical treatment through the Vinson Health Center, after which the Office of Student

Rights and Responsibilities and/or faculty members will be notified by the Vinson Health Center.

For the absence(s) to be excused, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities must forward the authorized absence documentation via email to the instructor. (*Portions of this policy was adapted from the MSU Student Handbook 2020-2021, 61-62*).

**Grading of Attendance:** A student who has 6 unexcused absences during the entire semester will not receive any attendance points. Those students who have 6 unexcused consecutive absences will be dropped from the course.

**Recording of Attendance:** At the beginning of each class, the student will log into D2L and the Zoom class for that date. This will record the students attendance under the email name that they registered under (this must include their full name; if it does not the student must make the instructor aware of the discrepancy). Periodically, attendance will be taken manually and cross checked with the Zoom roster for that class date and any student trying to 'game' the system by signing onto Zoom but not actually attending class will lose **ALL** attendance points.

### ***InQuizitive***

InQuizitive is an adaptive quizzing tool that combines interactive question types with game-like elements to engage students. Instructions for accessing InQuizitive will be given during the introduction to the class. Students are required to purchase the electronic textbook, the accompanying InQuizitive software, and access the proper class through the student set ID. Students who fail to do so or who do not follow the posted instructions will not receive a grade for this assignment. Each week we will cover a different subject and the InQuizitive assignment must be completed by the end of that week. In InQuizitive, students must answer a minimum number of questions in each activity before receiving a grade and reach a Target Score to earn a 100%. These grades will be imported into D2L as a percentage (1% to 100%) and at the end of the semester the lowest two scores will be dropped, the rest of the scores will be multiplied by 0.01, and then added together.

### ***Exams***

**Exam Policies:** There will be three required examinations: exams 1 & 2 and a final. The scheduled examination dates are posted in the calendar section and these are not subject to change. All of the exams will be given in person.

**Scantrons:** At the beginning of the semester, all students are required to give the instructor 3 **new** scantrons. Any student who does not turn in the scantrons will not be allowed to take the exams.

**Late:** If you arrive late for an exam, you will not be able to take the exam once one student has taken the exam and left the exam room. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late for the final exam, you will not be allowed to take the final exam. In both of these cases you will be given a grade of **ZERO**.

**Exam Make-Ups:** If a student misses an exam, to be eligible for a make-up exam they must have documentation from the **Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities** that detail the reason for the absence.

If a student fails to notify the instructor and provide the required documentation, the student will receive a **ZERO** for that grade.

If a student does have a sufficient reason for missing the exam, the make-up exam must be completed within 7 days of the regularly scheduled exam date or 7 days upon their returning to school.

Scheduling the make-up exam is the student's responsibility, not the instructor, and the exam must be conducted in person during the instructor's office hours.

The only exception to this rule is for students who are under quarantine per the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

All make-up exams will be in **essay** and **multiple-choice format** that will be conducted through D2L. The student must contact the instructor to schedule a specific date and time for the exam. Technical difficulties will not be considered as sufficient reason for retaking the make-up exam.

Any student who misses the first exam, has no university approved excuse, and who does not schedule or take the make-up the exam within the required period will be dropped from the class.

**Final Exam:** Any student who misses the final exam and has a legitimate excuse will receive a grade of 'Incomplete' and will have to take the make-up exam within 30 days of the beginning of the next semester or else the grade will be changed to reflect the students grade without the final.

**Taking Exams Early:** Only under extraordinary circumstances will a student be allowed to take an exam, including the final, early. Only university approved excuses from the **Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities** (i.e. death in the family, illness, etc.) will be considered for taking an exam early. Plane tickets or summer vacation plans are not a legitimate reason. You must request to take an exam early IN WRITING well before the date of the exam and approval is solely at the discretion of the instructor.

## **Exams 1 & 2**

Exams 1 & 2 will be worth 30 points each and they will be administered in person in the assigned classroom. They will consist of multiple-choice questions and the student will have 50 minutes to complete the exam on the specified date and time (See the course schedule).

### ***Final Exam***

The Final exam will be worth 20 points and it will be held on May 2 at 8am and it will be ***administered in person*** in the assigned classroom. It will consist of multiple-choice questions and the student will have 2 hours to complete the exam.

### ***Extra Credit***

There is ***NO EXTRA-CREDIT*** for this class.

### ***Late Work***

Late work will ***NOT*** be accepted.

### ***In-Class Assignments***

There are two in-class assignments for the semester. Instructions for these will be posted in D2L and will be discussed in class.

### **Important Dates**

Deadline for May graduates to file for graduation: February 14th

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" March 21st

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

### **Technology Requirement & Desire-to-Learn (D2L)**

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

***If necessary***, make-up exams will utilize the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor for testing. In order to utilize these programs, you will need to note the following:

- Chromebooks are not compatible with the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor;

- Apple iPads may be used for quizzes and exams, but these are not advised for any assignment with a written component;
- Mobile phones and similar devices are not compatible with the required programs;
- A working webcam on the computing device is needed for all exams and quizzes.

Please note: a limited number of webcams and laptops with cameras are available for check-out through the MSU Texas Moffett Library.

### **Instructor Class Policies**

**Readings:** The assigned chapters serve as a foundation for the lectures and the following classroom discussions and they should be read before the topic is taken up in class. Students who do not read the assigned chapter before the lecture will not be prepared to discuss the concepts covered in the chapter nor will they will they be prepared to ask any questions that the readings raised.

Not all of the material from the chapters will be discussed in the lecture, however, the student is accountable for all of the assigned information.

**Participation:** Students should feel free to raise questions concerning the readings, the instructor's lecture, the comments of other students, or current political events. Participation in the class discussions helps to bridge the gap between the readings, real world events, and adds the student's diverse perspectives to the classroom experience. It is important to note that in the discussion of political ideas and concepts, positions can be challenged and debated; however, this must be done in a respectful manner.

All students will accord the instructor and their fellow students with all due respect. Rude and abusive behavior will not be tolerated and will result in dismissal from the class.

**Cellphones** are a distraction from the learning process and their usage during class is frowned upon. They should be turned off in the classroom except where prior arrangements have been made with the instructor due to family or other emergency issues.

All phones must be out of sight during exams or quizzes and any student caught looking at their phone while taking an exam or quiz will receive a **ZERO**.

Other items and/or actions that are not allowed during the class include listening to headphones or ear buds, eating, and sleeping.

Due to the preponderance of students not paying attention to the lectures because they are distracted by their Laptops, these are also not allowed. All of

the powerpoints and lecture notes are posted in D2L. So, if the student is inclined to take notes, pen and paper must suffice.

There should be no talking during the lecture or while another student is answering a question or sharing their opinion on the subject matter of the class. If this occurs, students will be warned and if the disruptive behavior continues you will be removed from the class.

**Communication Policy:** In order to facilitate timely and effective communication between the instructor and the student the following policies will be put in place:

**All emails need to be sent through Desire2Learn.** This will keep student communications separate from the day to day administrative and campus wide emails.

All emails need to begin with your full name (i.e. the name that you are registered under) and your class number and section.

All emails received Monday through Friday (before to noon) will be answered within 24 hours, while emails received on Saturday, Sunday, or Friday afternoon will be answered on the following Monday.

All emails that concern questions that are already answered in the syllabus, exercise instructions, announcement section of D2L, or given during class will merely be referred to those communications (i.e. my response will be, "Please refer to the syllabus or instructions to answer this question.").

Emails that do not follow the above guidelines will not receive a response.

**Important Notice:** Only in certain circumstances that warrant it, (i.e. the administration of the college instructs me to do so) will any student be allowed to transition to an online format for the class. This includes taking the exams online.

### **Change of Schedule**

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

### **Refund and Repayment Policy**

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester.



HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

### **Services for Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

### **College Policies**

#### ***Campus Carry Rules/Policies***

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

#### ***Smoking/Tobacco Policy***

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

#### ***Alcohol and Drug Policy***

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

#### ***Grade Appeal Process***

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University Undergraduate Catalog for the proper procedure.

***Notice***

\*Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.