



Course Syllabus: 1433 – 202 American–Texas Government II

College of Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Spring 2024

MWF 10:00 a.m. - 10:50 a.m. (PY 200)

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Mohsen Jalali

Office: O'Donohoe Hall, Room 204

Office hours:

- Monday & Wednesday: 11:00 -12:30 p.m.
- Tuesday & Thursday: 11:00-12:00 p.m.
- and by Appointment

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- In case you could not reach me by that email, you can also contact me at mohsen.jalali@msutexas.edu

Course Description

Political Science 1433 is an introductory course designed to provide students with a basic understanding of the American and Texas governments. The course aims to explore the political dynamics of both the American and Texas political systems, different branches of the government both in Texas and the United States, the ongoing challenges and evolving nature of the government system. Learning about the different branches of government that produce policies in the national and state levels as well as non-governmental actors, students will gain insights into the ways the political system produces policies that affect everyday life across the nation and the state. The study of politics is to examine who gets what when and how; in this course, students learn about who gets what when and how by gaining insights into the processes of decision-making at both national and state levels.

By the conclusion of the course, students will have developed a good understanding of key components of the national and state governing institutions, including the legislative, the executive, local governments, public policy, campaigning and elections, political participation and voting, and the United States' foreign policy. The class will utilize a variety of instructional methods, such as engaging lectures, group discussions, debates in class, student presentations, and short writing essays. These diverse components will provide students with the opportunity to cultivate essential skills that are useful to real-world situations.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of the course, students are expected to have learned and be able to critically discuss the following:

- ◆ Examine and engage in debates surrounding civil rights.
- ◆ Describe the process through which the United States and Texas legislative branches function.
- ◆ Describe the power of the President in the United States and the complexities of the executive branch in Texas government.
- ◆ Analyze how political parties campaign in the United States and who can and do participate elections.
- ◆ Identify the key players shaping the United States' foreign policies.
- ◆ Analyze the role of groups in influencing public policy for the day-to-day affairs of society at both national and state levels.
- ◆ Learning about the power and significance of local governments.

As this course is part of the MSU Core Curriculum, students are expected to demonstrate the following:

- ◆ Critical thinking.
- ◆ Oral communication.
- ◆ Personal responsibility.
- ◆ Civic engagement.

NOTE: The syllabus is subject to change but any changes made to the syllabus will be communicated ahead of time with students and posted on D2L.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

- ❖ Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore Lowi, Margaret Weir, Caroline Tolbert, and Andrea Campbell. 2021. *We the People*. 14th Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
 - *We the People* in Syllabus **WTP**
- ❖ Anthony Champagne, Edward Harpham, and Jason Casellas. 2021. *Governing Texas: An Introduction to Texas Politics*. 5th Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
 - *Governing Texas* in syllabus **GT**
 - **Note:** The publishers issue a new edition every few years, and earlier editions will contain much of the same material. If you purchase a different edition of any of these books, just be sure to compare assignments with someone who has this edition to make sure you are reading the right pages. In the syllabus for these books, I do not use page numbers but chapter number and title.

***Notice.** POLS 1433 is included in MSU Texas Access & Affordability Program for the Spring semester. What does this mean?

- Your course material is in D2L on the first day of class, for everyone in your class. Your Professor opted to have this course in the program to save you time and money.
- The money saving charge of \$104.50 + tax has been added to your student account. This charge includes both WE THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNING TEXAS.
- You have the choice to “opt out” of this special pricing and find your material on your own. If you prefer to “opt out”, the instructions will be in your [my.msutexas.edu email](mailto:my.msutexas.edu) on the second day of class. The last day to “opt out” of this program is 01/22/24.

- For questions concerning the program or if you need assistance, please contact the Bookstore at jenny.denning@msutexas.edu.

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

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 individuals to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

A Note on Chat GPT

***AI use is strictly prohibited.**

This course assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any substantive portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and using artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT. The online portal for uploading assignments detects and flags sections of writing that has been generated by AI.

Academic dishonesty on exams, quizzes and assignments will result in a **Zero** on the quiz, assignment, or exam and the student or students in question may receive an F in the course and/or be turned over to the University for sanction. ***More than one incident of academic dishonesty during the course will automatically result in a course grade of F.**

The MSU Honor Creed applies in this course, and students are expected to abide by it. Student work in this course expected to be original and produced only for this course. Students may not use the textbook, chapter summaries, notes, PowerPoints, lectures, or any online material during quizzes and exams. Students may not collaborate with each other during quizzes or exams or to create substantially similar responses to writing assignments.

Grading

Completing ALL the readings and regular attendance (online) will be required of all students. Active participation in discussions is critical for students to succeed in this course.

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
Quiz I	5
Quiz II	5
Midterm Exam	20
Reflection Papers (4*5)	20
Quiz III	10
Final Exam	20
Class Participation (attendance, presentations, participation in conversations)	20
Total Points	100

Assignment Description

1. **Response Papers** (20 points) (4 of them, each 5 points):

- The topic of these papers will be responding analytically to some topics discussed in one or few weeks. More specific guidelines will be given and discussed before each response paper.
- A good paper must evaluate the merits and weaknesses of the arguments the student is writing about or the argument the student is making. Originality will be critical for your grade (similarity rate above 5% will be penalized).

2. **Short Quizzes (20 points):**

- During the semester, there will be three short quizzes (multiple-choice questions).

3. **Midterm (20 points):**

- Each exam will consist of multiple-choice questions. Questions will test your understanding of the key concepts and arguments that will be covered in class materials.

4. **Final Exams (20 points):**

- Each exam will consist of multiple-choice questions. Questions will test your understanding of the key concepts and arguments that will be covered in class materials.

5. **Class Participation (20 points):**

- Students must attend the lectures. In addition, engagement during class is as important as attendance. Students are expected to participate in group discussions and class debates and demonstrate that they are fully present. Students observed using mobile phones, reading non-class materials, or otherwise not fully engaged in class, will not receive engagement credit for that class period. This syllabus serves as the notice of the above policies. Over the course of the semester, 2 absences will be allowed for all students. More than 2 absences will significantly lower your final grade.

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

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

Class Policies

Absences

You should attend class. Students who do not attend class often have difficulty with the course and receive lower grades. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting and will be noted in Attendance and Engagement. **Students missing more than 10 course periods may be dropped from the course without notice.* Excused absences will be those as follows: illness, death in the family, legal proceedings occurring during class period, university-approved absence such as travel as member of a MSU sports team, or emergency situation as determined by me. To excuse an absence, I must be notified in advance of the class meeting.

Safe Zone Statement:

This classroom is a place where students will be treated with respect. We will work together to be create an inclusive space that respects equality and diversity in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, political beliefs, culture, age, or ability.

All students are free to express their ideas even the ones that might sound controversial so long as they are presented as an argument which can be defended and countered with another argument. Diversity of thought is appreciated, encouraged, and it is all what the class is about provided you can agree to disagree.

It is the expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment. Harassment, sexual misconduct, violence, bullying, and disruptive behavior will not be tolerated will result in removal from the classroom and reporting to the appropriate university authority. This syllabus is your warning.

Late Work

**Late work is accepted* with grade deduction. So, I encourage students to submit their assignments even if it is late.

In case of unforeseen circumstances such as a medical emergency requiring hospitalization for which documentation is provided, late submission is graded for full grade.

Make Up Work/Tests

There are no make-up exam/tests if you miss any of the assignments, except for insinuating circumstances.

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).

Deadline to file for graduation: Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).

Last Day to drop with a grade of “W:” Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).

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

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.

Web Browser for D2L: The preferred web browser for D2L is Google Chrome. While it works in Safari for many functions, Chrome is a more reliable browser for D2L. If you do not have Chrome or a similar web browser installed on your computer, I suggest that you do so before working through the course material.

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.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “*Run. Hide. Fight.*” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

Weekly Readings and Assignments

Module 1 (Jan 16 – 19): Syllabus and Introduction

Wed: Syllabus

Fri: Chapter 5: Civil Rights (*WTP*)

- Podcast (Optional)— “[Federal Surveillance and Civil Rights](#)” (American Politics and the US Constitution) (50 minutes)
- Podcast (optional)— “[African American Women and the Civil Rights Movement](#)”
University of Delaware professor Tiffany Gill teaches a class about the role of African American women in the Civil Rights Movement.

Module 2 (Jan 22 – 26) Political Participation and Voting

Mon: Chapter 8 (*WTP*)

Wed: Chapter 8 (*WTP*)

Fri: Chapter 8 (*WTP*)

- Podcast—[1960s African American Voter Registration](#)
Emory University professor Carol Anderson taught a class about efforts in the early 1960s to register African American voters in Mississippi. She described some of the leaders of the movement, their tactics, and the opposition they faced from segregationists.

***Quiz I**

Module 3 (Jan 29 – Feb 2) Campaigns and Elections

Mon: Chapter 10 (*WTP*)

Wed: Chapter 10 (*WTP*)

Fri: Chapter 10 (*WTP*)

- Podcast (Optional)— [Presidents and Campaign Communications since 1900](#)
Rider University professor Myra Gutin teaches a class on presidents and communications in both their campaigns and while in office, starting with Teddy Roosevelt in the early 20th century and continuing to the present day.
- Podcast (Optional)— [Dwight Eisenhower and 1950s Political Advertising](#)
Purdue University professor Kathryn Brownell teaches a class about political advertising in the 1950s, highlighting Dwight Eisenhower's presidential campaigns.

Module 4 (Feb 5 – 9) Congress

Mon: Chapter 12 (*WTP*)

Wed: Chapter 12 (*WTP*)

Fri: Chapter 12 (*WTP*)

Quiz II

Module 5 (Feb 12 – 16) Presidency

Mon: Chapter 13 (*WTP*)

Wed: Chapter 13 (*WTP*)

Fri: Chapter 13 (*WTP*)

- ◆ Podcast (Optional)—— “[Presidential Powers and the Constitution](#)” (We the People Channel) (50 minutes)

***Response Paper 1: (Due Saturday 11:59 p.m.) (5 points)**

Module 6 (Feb 19 – 23) Social Policy

Mon: Chapter 17 (*WTP*)

Wed: Chapter 17 (*WTP*)

Fri: Chapter 17 (*WTP*)

- ◆ Podcast (Optional)—— “[Affirmative Action Returns to the Court](#)” (We the People channel) (58 minutes)

Response Paper 2.

Module 7 (Feb 26 – Mar 1) Foreign Policy

Mon: Chapter 18 (*WTP*)

Wed: Chapter 18 (*WTP*)

Fri: Chapter 18 (*WTP*)

Response Paper 2: (Due Saturday 11:59 p.m.) (5 points)

(Mar 4 – 8) Midterm

Mon: Review

Wed: Review

Fri: Midterm Exam (in-class exam) (20 points)

*(Mar 11 – 15) __Spring Break Week

Mon: -----

Wed: -----

Fri: -----

Module 8 (Mar 18 – 22) The Legislature in Texas

Mon: Chapter 7 (*GT*)

Wed: Chapter 7 (*GT*)

Fri: Chapter 7 (*GT*)

***Module 9 (Mar 25 – 29) – (holiday break begins Thursday)**

Mon: Workshop: How to write a good response paper

Wed: the reading to be decide

Fri: ----- NO CLASS

Module 10 (Apr 1 – 5) The Executive Branch in Texas

Mon: Chapter 8 (*GT*)

Wed: Chapter 8 (*GT*)

Fri: Chapter 8 (*GT*)

***Quiz 3 (10 points)**

Module 11 (Apr 8 – 12) Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas

Mon: Chapter 6 (*GT*)

Wed: Chapter 6 (*GT*)

Fri: Chapter 6 (*GT*)

Module 12 (Apr 15 – 19) Local Governments in Texas

Mon: Chapter 10 (*GT*)

Wed: Chapter 10 (*GT*)

Fri: Chapter 10 (*GT*)

Module 13 (Apr 11 – 26) Public Policy in Texas

Mon: Chapter 12 (*GT*)

Wed: Chapter 12 (*GT*)

Fri: Chapter 12 (*GT*)

Module 14 (Apr 29 – May 3) Governing a Changing Texas

Mon: Chapter 14 (*GT*)

Wed: Chapter 14 (*GT*)

Fri: Chapter 14 (*GT*)

May 3rd Last Day of Classes

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 8th at 10:00 a.m. (20 points)

May 11th Commencement

Assignments

- 1) 5 points (Quiz I)
- 2) 5 points (Quiz II)
- 3) 20 points (midterm)
- 4) 10 points (Quiz III)
- 5) 20 points (final)
- 6) 20 points (4*5 writing assignments)
- 7) 20 points (attendance, participation, presentation)