

**Syllabus for POLS 1333
American Government I Politics
Fall 2024**

Course: POLS 1333 American Government I

Class: MWF 8:00-8:50 am DB 101

Lecturer: Steve Garrison, Ph.D.

Contact	Information
Office:	111B Bridwell
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Office Hours:	M and W 11:00–11:50 am and 1:00-2:00 pm, TR 8:30-9:30 am and 11:00-2:00 pm and by appointment

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the political system of the United States and the state of Texas. In this course we will study the role and creation of government in society; the role of democracy in government; how history has influenced the state and federal constitutions; the impact of federalism; elections, the media, political parties; public opinion and interest groups.

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.

Texts: *American Government in Black and White: Diversity and Democracy (4th edition)*, Paula McClain and Steven Tauber. (2019), New York: Oxford university Press. We will also be using an online Texas politics text entitled *Texas Politics (2nd Edition)* it can be accessed here: <http://www.soomolearning.com/catalog/texas-politics/overview>

Expectations, Examinations, and Grading: Students are expected to attend class. Lectures will not reproduce the texts. During lectures, students are expected to behave in an adult fashion:

i.e. no note passing, punching, kissing, kicking or other juvenile behavior. Disrespectful behavior towards other students or the teacher will not be tolerated and will result in your removal from the class. Also, please turn cellular phones off during class. There will be two inclass exams and a final exam. The format of each is short answer questions and identification of key terms. The highest grading scale will be 90 (A), 80 (B), 70 (C), and 60 (D). If for any reason you should have to miss a test or assignment you must inform the instructor prior to the time of the test and proper documentation is required for any makeup test. To prepare for these exams student will also be required to complete three quizzes. In addition to these requirements students will be required to complete a current even project. Details on this project will be presented in class. The privilege of additional work will not be granted.

Throughout the semester we will discuss contemporary political events. In order to engage in thoughtful discussions it is imperative that students begin paying attention to some reliable news source, such as National Public Radio, Newshour (PBS), Associated Press, Reuters, The New York Times, USA Today, Dallas Morning News, Austin American Statesman, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post or any variety of reputable news sources.

Grading:

Activity	Grade
First Examination:	25%
Second Examination:	25%
Final Exam:	25%
Current Events Project:	10%
Quizzes:	15%

Disability Policy: Any student in this course who has a disability that may preclude demonstrating fully his or her abilities should contact me as soon as possible. We will discuss the accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and to facilitate education.

Plagiarism: I take plagiarism very seriously and will check your work. By enrolling in this course, the student expressly grants MSU a “limited right” in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The “limited right” shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student’s work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, for educational purposes. The University’s *minimum penalty* for cheating or plagiarism is *a failure of assignment*. Cheating or plagiarism can lead to expulsion from the university. If you have questions about original work, please consult the Student Handbook Code of Student Conduct section 10.

Calendar The following course schedule represents the schedule of readings and topics for the

course. The reading assignments are located under the date and topic. Student's should read the assigned readings prior to class. The instructor reserves the right to change the schedule.

Note: the following key applies to the reading schedule.

MT = McClain and Tauber. *American Government in Black and White*.

TP = *Texas Politics*

Course Schedule

August 26: Introduction

- No Readings

August 38 : Why do We Need Government?

- MT Chapter 1

August 30 : The Process of Institutional Design

- MT Chapter 1 (cont.)

September 2: Labor Day

- No class.

Section I: Foundations of American Politics

Sept 4 & 6 : Declaration of Independence

- MT Appendix I.

Sept. 9, 11 & 13: US Constitution

- MT Chapter 2

Sept. 16, 18 & 20: US Constitution

- MT Appendix II

Sept. 23, 25 and 27: Federalism

- MT Chapter 3.

Sept. 30, Oct. 2 and 4: Texas Constitution

- TP Chapter Two.

October 7: Review

- Study Guide II.

Oct. 9: Exam One

- Study Guide One

Section II: Societal Influences on American Politics

October 11, 14, 16 and 18: U.S. Political Parties

- MT Chapter Fourteen

October 21, 23, and 25: Texas Political Parties

- TP Chapter Eight

October 28: Review

- Study Guide II.

Oct. 30: Exam II

- Study Guide II

Nov 1: No class

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Nov 4, 6, and 8: Public Opinion

- MT Chapter Ten

Nov 11, 13, and 15: Media

- MT Chapter Eleven.

November 18, 20, & 22: Interest Groups

- MT Chapter Thirteen

November 25: No Class

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November 28 and 29: Thanksgiving Break

- no class

Section III: Local Politics

December 2, 4, and 6: Local Texas Government

- TP Chapter Twelve

Final Exam

December 11, Wednesday (8:00-10:00 a.m.): Final Exam

- Study Guide III