



## **Introduction to American Government**

POLS 1333-X66

Spring 2021

Online

### **Contact Information**

Dr. Jeremy F. Duff

Office: 211 O'Donohoe at Midwestern State University

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 11:00am-12:00pm

Tuesday and Thursday: 10:00am-11:00am

Office hours are by appointment only. You must email me and indicate which office hours you wish to attend, and how you wish to attend them (in-person or via zoom).

E-mail: [jeremy.duff@msutexas.edu](mailto:jeremy.duff@msutexas.edu)

### **Course Description**

This is an undergraduate course on the American and Texas system of governments. This course is meant to introduce the student to how the American and Texas Governments work. In this course we will cover such topics as American and Texas political culture, the American and Texas Constitutions, the system of federalism, and the media, elections, political parties, public opinion, and interest groups for both the United States and Texas.

### **Textbooks**

Ginsberg, Benjamin, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, and Caroline Tolbert. 2018. *We the People: An Introduction to American Politics*. **12<sup>th</sup> Edition**. W. W. Norton.

And

Champagne, Anthony, Edward Harpham, and Jason Casellas. *Governing Texas*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. W. W. Norton.

### **Course Website**

The course website is in the University's D2L system. Everything for the course will happen there. You will be able to use this website to read class announcements, correspond with me, view lectures, take exams and quizzes, and to view this syllabus, among other things.

## Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook-2018-19](#)

### Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty is cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given).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

The three exams will count 45% (15% each) toward your final grade. The quiz grades will be averaged. The average will make up 10% of your grade. The Simulation Quiz grades will be averaged and the average will make up 10% of your grade. The Children's Book Project will make up 15% of your grade. The Infographic Project will make up 10% of your grade and the Tik Tok Project will make up 10% of your grade. In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, you will be provided with a mid-term grade. Mid-term grades will be posted in D2L after the first exam on or before October 5.

**Table 1: Grade Scheme**

Cut Off	Grade
90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
Less than 60%	F

## Student Responsibilities

### Lectures

For each chapter I will post lecture material on the course website. Use this to supplement your reading. You will be responsible for knowing the material in the lectures as well as the material in the textbook for each chapter.

### Readings

The readings serve as a point of departure for lectures and discussions. Therefore, it is imperative that each student completes the assigned reading before a topic is taken up in class. Remember, the readings are a point of departure from class lectures. You will be held accountable not only for my discussion in lecture, but also for anything in the textbooks that may not be covered in lecture or discussion.

## **Participation**

Students should feel free to raise questions concerning the readings, the instructor's discussion, and the comments of other students. Participation enhances course quality.

## **Chapter Quizzes**

There will be chapter quizzes covering lecture and textbook material. These quizzes will be graded and will count towards your quiz grade for the course. Due dates and times for these quizzes will be posted in D2L. The quizzes will be completed in D2L. This should encourage you to keep up with the reading. If you do not turn in a quiz by the due date/time and do not have a University approved excuse, you will be given a grade of ZERO on that quiz. These will be available each week beginning on Monday and will be due by 11:59pm Friday evening.

## **Simulation Quizzes**

For each chapter there is a simulation posted. For each chapter you will participate in the simulation and complete the brief quiz associated with that simulation. Due dates and times for the simulation quizzes will be posted in D2L. The simulations and quizzes will be completed through D2L. If you do not turn in a quiz by the due date/time and do not have an approved excuse, you will be given a grade of zero on that quiz. These will be available each week on Monday and will be due by 11:59pm on Friday evening.

## **Projects**

You will be participating in two projects that will be presented in class. These are as follows:

1. Infographic Project
2. Tik Tok Project
3. Children's Book Project

Separate handouts detailing the instructions and rubrics for these projects will be provided.

## **Required Examinations**

There will be three required examinations. The scheduled examination dates are as follows (these will not change):

Exam 1: February 10, 2021

Exam 2: March 17, 2021

Final Exam: April 28, 2021

Exams for this course will be conducted in D2L.

## **Basic Policies**

### **Make-up Policy**

If a student has a University-approved excuse and if the instructor is notified in writing, prior to the examination or assignment, and the student can provide

official documentation to validate the excuse, arrangements for a make-up may be made. If a student fails to do any of these things, the student will receive a zero for the exam or assignment. Official documentation does not include a letter from the Dean of Students Office. You must provide me with actual documentation that validates the excuse and clearly demonstrates that you were unable to complete the assignment (or exam) by the due date. If a student fails to notify the instructor, or provide the proper documentation, the student will receive a zero for the assignment (or exam). For COVID related illnesses, I will be notified by the high school that you must be quarantined or self-isolated. In that case we will make the proper arrangements for you to complete the assignments.

### **Exams, Assignments, and Grading**

I will only discuss a grade with you in my office hours or via email. I will not discuss a grade with you before or after class in the classroom, in the hallway, outside by my car, or over the phone. I want you to take time to look over your exam thoroughly, outside of the classroom before you make an argument for a different grade. Any discussion of exam grades should take place within my office hours or via email if you are not able to attend the scheduled office hours. If you feel that you and another student provided similar or equal answers to an exam question and you received a lower grade on that question, then both students must come to the assigned office hours with their exams in order for me to evaluate the answers equally and fairly. Keep in mind that in some cases I may lower the grade of the other student and not raise yours after reviewing both answers, if I feel that the situation deems it necessary.

### **Taking Exams Early**

Only under extraordinary circumstances will a student be allowed to take an exam, including the final, early. Only university approved excuses, death in the family, illness, etc. will be considered for taking an exam early.

### **Wikipedia**

At no time will a student be allowed to use Wikipedia as a source for any project or paper in my class. If it is determined that Wikipedia was used as a source for a project or paper, the student will be given a grade of zero automatically.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism in any form is unacceptable. Any test, paper or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor.

In all of your assignments, including your homework or drafts of papers, you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, web sites, or other sources, but only with proper attribution. "Proper attribution" means that you have fully identified the original source and extent of your use of the words

or ideas of others that you reproduce in your work for this course, usually in the form of a footnote or parenthesis.

As a general rule, if you are citing from a published source or from a web site and the quotation is short (up to a sentence or two) place it in quotation marks; if you employ a longer passage from a publication or web site, please indent it and use single spacing. In both cases, be sure to cite the original source in a footnote or in parentheses.

This is not limited to direct quotations. Any time you use material from a published source, whether quoting directly, borrowing from it, or paraphrasing, you can only do so with proper attribution.

If you are not clear about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or examination, be sure to seek clarification from me.

Finally, you should keep in mind that as a member of the campus community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors and will be evaluated on your own merits. So be proud of your academic accomplishments and help to protect and promote academic integrity at MSU. The consequences of cheating and academic dishonesty – including a formal discipline file, possible loss of future internship, scholarship, or employment opportunities, and denial of admission to graduate school – are simply not worth it.

Any paper or assignment that is found to be plagiarized will be given a grade of zero and will be reported through the proper channels according to the guidelines provided in the MSU Student Handbook.

### **Late Assignments**

I do not accept late assignments, papers, exams, quizzes, or anything else. If it is late, it will receive a grade of zero. If you miss an assignment because you arrive to class late, you will receive a grade of zero on that assignment.

### **Quizzes and the Textbook**

I cannot keep students from using their textbook and/or notes when taking quizzes. However, you are not allowed to copy material straight from the textbook, notes, the internet, or any other source. Your answers need to be written in your own words. And just so there is no confusion, do not quote from these sources either. Again, write all answers in your own words. If I discover that you have violated this policy, for any part of an answer, you will receive 0 points for that answer (even if you did it just a little bit).

### **Student Honor Creed**

As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so. As students at MSU, we recognize that any great society must be composed of empowered, responsible citizens. We also recognize universities play an important role in helping mold these responsible citizens. We believe students

themselves play an important part in developing responsible citizenship by maintaining a community where integrity and honorable character are the norm, not the exception. Thus, we, the Students of Midwestern State University, resolve to uphold the honor of the University by affirming our commitment to complete academic honesty. We resolve not only to be honest but also to hold our peers accountable for complete honesty in all university matters. We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any unauthorized material in examinations, or to present, as one's own, work or ideas which are not entirely one's own. We recognize that any instructor has the right to expect that all student work is honest, original work. We accept and acknowledge that responsibility for lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty fundamentally rests within each individual student. We expect of ourselves academic integrity, personal professionalism, and ethical character. We appreciate steps taken by University officials to protect the honor of the University against any who would disgrace the MSU student body by violating the spirit of this creed.

Written and adopted by the 2002-2003  
MSU Student Senate.

### **Students with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Services in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center, 397-4140.

### **Course Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Readings/Activities</b>
January 11-15	American Political Culture: Chapter 1
January 18-22	The Founding and the Constitution: Chapter 2
January 25-29	Federalism: Chapter 3
February 1-5	American Public Opinion: Chapter 6
<b>February 10</b>	<b>Exam I</b>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Readings/Activities</b>
February 15-19	The Media: Chapter 7
February 22-26	Political Participation and Voting: Chapter 8
March 1-5	American Political Parties: Chapter 9
March 8-12	American Campaigns and Elections: Chapter 10
<b>March 17</b>	<b>Exam II</b>
March 22-26	Texas Political Culture: Texas Chapter 1
March 29-April 2	The Texas Constitution: Texas Chapter 2
April 5-9	Texas Political Parties: Texas Chapter 4
April 12-16	Texas Elections: Texas Chapter 5
April 19-23	Local Government: Texas Chapter 10
<b>April 28</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>