



Course Syllabus: American and Texas Government I
Prothro Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences
POLS 1333 Section 103
Fall 2021 (August 23 - December 11, 2021)

Contact Information

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Course Description

Political Science 1333 is an introductory course in American and Texas government and politics that focuses on how the U.S. government and Texas government work and why they work the way they do. The purpose of this course is to assist you in developing a better understanding of the government institutions and the political processes that you will interact with as citizens. This course is also designed to provide you with analytical tools so that you can understand and meaningfully participate in American and Texas politics throughout your life. This course will be challenging and critical thinking about Texas and American government will be part of everything that we do. The syllabus provides a general plan for the course; changes may be necessary.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Theodore J Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere. 2020. **American Government: Power and Purpose**. 16th Edition. New York: WW Norton. (APP)

Anthony Champagne and Edward J. Harpham. 2020. **Governing Texas**, 5th Edition. New York: WW Norton. (GT)

Grading

On each assignment, quiz, exam and for the final grade, grades will be assigned according to the following scale

Table 1: Letter Grade

Letter Grade	Numerical Grade
A	90 to 100
B	80 to 89
C	70 to 79
D	60 to 69
F	0 to 59

Table 2: Semester Grade Breakdown

Item	Percentage of Grade
Exam 1	15
Exam 2	18
Exam 3	20
Project	20
Quizzes	15
Discussions	12
Total Points	100

Communication

The best way to reach me is to contact me via email. My email address is listed on the first page of the syllabus. When emailing me, if you would like a helpful response, you must include your full name, a subject in the subject line, the name of the course in which you are enrolled, and your question. Please use full sentences and not texting language. Individual Zoom or phone appointments can also be set up.

Assignments

Weekly D2L Module Assignments: Each week there will be module activities to complete listed in a checklist such as reading, discussion questions, content to watch, and taking a quiz. Assignments that are graded will appear in the gradebook. Weekly modules can be accessed in D2L by clicking on CONTENT, then COURSE SCHEDULE.

Discussion: Each of you will be assigned a week to lead discussion in class based on a question to consider on the respective topic/question(s) posed for the week.

Quizzes

Quizzes will cover recent weekly textbook material. These help make sure students are keeping up with content. No notes, book, cell phones or additional electronic devices may be used during quizzes or exams. You will be required to take your quizzes on a lockdown browser through D2L. If you have previously utilized the lockdown browser with a different school, you may be required to uninstall from your device and reinstall the MSU Texas version. Quizzes can be accessed on D2L by clicking on, ASSESSMENTS, then TESTS.

Exams

All three exams are currently planned to be taken in person. Should in-person attendance become an impossibility due to mandated quarantine (notification from Office of Student Rights and Responsibility required) exams will be taken using Respondus Monitor and Lockdown Browser through D2L. You will need to make sure you have a device that has a webcam enabled to use Respondus Monitor. This safeguards

the academic integrity of performance on an exam. Please be sure that you are in an area free from distractions, with a strong and reliable internet signal, you are in full view of the camera and on a computer that has the minimum system requirements to run Respondus Monitor and Lockdown Browser. Your exam sessions are recorded and any indication of academic dishonesty, or cheating, will result in an automatic grade of ZERO for that exam, as well as possible expulsion from the course.

Project

Brief Overview: Throughout the semester, you will work towards creating a infographic and an elevator pitch (1-2 minute) about a special interest topic. You will be expected to submit a visual infographic and presentation utilizing the research you have done over the course of the semester as to the importance of the particular subject matter. This final part of this project will be due **December 8, 2021** and will be the final grade for this course section.

Guidelines: A rubric will be provided on D2L as well as more details of guidelines for the project by accessing the D2L Dropbox. To access Dropbox in D2L, click ASSESSMENTS, then ASSIGNMENTS.

Project Due Dates: In order to ensure that you are on track to completing a successful project, portions of the progression toward the project will be due in the D2L Dropbox to be graded. They are as follows:

Table 3: Project Part Due Dates

Project Part and Description	Due Date
Part 1 - Select Topic	09/03/21
Part 2 - Topic and 3 cited sources + summary	09/27/21
Part 3 - 5 additional cited sources + summary (8 total)	10/25/21
Part 4 - Final infographic, presentation and written summary	12/08/21

Make Up Work/Tests

It will be at the discretion of the instructor to allow make up work or tests. Please contact the instructor directly to be assessed. Work conflict will not be considered a reason as to why an assignment, quiz, or test cannot be completed by the due date.

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.

Technology Requirements

Our course utilizes D2L to supplement and organize your learning in this course and as such requires you to have access to a computer. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class as well as reliable internet or data to submit assignments. ***Assignments and quizzes are due by the noted due dates, and personal computer technical difficulties or services issues will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, or quizzes.*** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Moffett Library. There are many places to access your class,

including on a tablet and/or smartphone. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. Contact distance education and copy your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Class Policies

Engagement: Engagement in discussion is an important component of the in-person course. Preparedness and participation, as well as non-engagement will be noted.

Attendance: Per state mandates, mask use and social distancing is not currently required for classrooms. However, face mask use is welcome and encouraged by me as the instructor, in accordance with CDC guidelines, Section 3, found here [CDC Guidelines for Higher Education](#). In the event of increased incidence of COVID-19 active cases that results in MSU Texas moving back to protective measures, I will notify you through an announcement on D2L. As the course instructor of record, I reserve the right to move the course online, either partially, or in full, in the event of a personal emergency or situation that prohibits me from delivering the course fully in-person. More instructions will be given at that time should the need arise.

Absence: It is your responsibility to keep up to date with the course should you need to miss class whether excused or unexcused. Students missing more than 3 unexcused days of class will be at risk of being dropped from the course. To be considered an excused absence, a student must have documentation sent from the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, or Athletics regarding required travel. Excuses will not be accepted for missing a quiz or exam unless student is hospitalized or other special circumstance at discretion of the instructor.

The Learning Environment: Students are expected to be respectful of their classmates at all times during this course. Students should be respectful of their classmates' identities and backgrounds, such as racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds; religious and political beliefs; language, national origin, and migration or refugee status; sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity.

This syllabus serves as written notice that harassing or disruptive behavior, either verbal, non-verbal or written, will not be tolerated in the course and that actions will be subject to the disruptive behavior policy.

Disruptive Behavior:

Disruptive behavior, including but not limited to using vulgarity, threatening the instructor or classmates, excessive intentional comments that are meant to troll other classmates that disrupt the class will not be tolerated. This syllabus serves as the warning that such behavior will not be tolerated. Students committing disruptive behavior will be removed from the class.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

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) will not be tolerated. Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

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

COVID-19

Please refer to the [MSU Texas Coronavirus Update](#) page for the latest guidance. This webpage is updated frequently.

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.

Title IX

At Midwestern State University, the Title IX Department provides students, faculty, and staff with access to their rights and options under Title IX. The Title IX Department conducts investigations into possible violations of MSU's Sexual Misconduct Policy, as well as oversees the university's primary prevention and education programming related to sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and sexual harassment. To find out more or make a report please visit [Title IX](#).

Notice

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

Table 4: Brief Overview of Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Assigned Date	Due Date
1	Introduction and Five Principles of Politics Reading: APP – Ch 1	08/23	08/29
2	Brief History up to U.S. Constitution Reading: APP – Ch 2	08/30	09/05
3	Federalism Reading: APP – Ch 3	09/06	09/12
4	Review and Exam 1	09/13	9/19
5	Project + Political Parties Reading: APP – Ch 12	09/20	9/26
6	Elections Reading: APP – Ch 11	09/27	10/03
7	Public Opinion (MIDTERM) Reading: APP – Ch 10	10/04	10/10
8	Review and Exam 2	10/11	10/17
9	Groups & Interests + Project Part 2 Reading: APP – Ch 13	10/18	10/24
10	Texas Culture and Demographics Reading: GT – Ch 1	10/25	10/31
11	Texas Constitutions Reading: GT – Ch 2	11/01	11/07
12	Texas Political Parties Reading: GT – Ch 4	11/08	11/14
13	Texas Elections Reading: GT – Ch 5	11/15	11/21
14	THANKSGIVING BREAK	11/23	11/28
15	Review and Exam 3	11/29	12/03
16	Final Project Due – 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM		12/08