

## U.S. GOVERNMENT, POLS-1333: (FALL OF 2023)

### ***Faculty Information:***

**Instructor: Mr. Rithi DeMonteiro**

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### **Course Description**

This course explores the structure, dynamics and processes of the political system of the United States and Texas by providing a comprehensive introduction to the origins and development of ideas and institutions that influence the contemporary political milieu. The course examines the development and composition of the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Texas Constitution, the three branches of government, political parties and interest groups within the framework of the historical, economic and social context. In addition, students will intellectually wrestle with the challenges and dilemmas of the American regime, at the federal and state level, throughout history. Last, but not least, students will grapple with the question on whether virtue is sufficient for the current structure of the American regime.

### **Measurable Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Understand how the differences between the political thinking of classical figures (such as Aristotle and Polybius) and pre-modern to modern figures (such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Founding Fathers) shaped the formation of the American government.

2. Understand how the historical developments in the English political experience and tradition from medieval times to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century shaped and influenced the American political tradition.
3. Understand how the American political system was influenced by the American Revolution, post-Revolutionary circumstances, and the debates of the Constitution's drafting and ratification
4. Understand the development and composition of the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Texas Constitution, the three branches of government, political parties, and interest groups within a historical, economic, and social context.
5. Understand the different perspectives regarding the interpretations of the Constitution.
6. Understand the various dilemmas of the American regime, at the federal and state level (especially Texas), throughout history.
7. Understand the differing arguments on whether virtue is enough to revitalize the American regime, at the federal and state level (especially Texas).

## **Required Course Materials**

### **Course Works**

#### **Official Texts**

*Investigating American Democracy: Readings on Core Questions*, Thomas K. Lindsay and Gary D. Glenn: Oxford University Press: New York, NY & Oxford, England, UK. June 15, 2013

Excerpts from *Major Problems in American Constitutional History (Second Edition)*, Kermit L. Hall and Timothy S. Huebner: Wadsworth Cengage Learning. March 27, 2009

Excerpts from *American Government: Political Development and Institutional Change: 12<sup>th</sup> Edition*, Cal Jillson: Routledge: New York, NY. January 22, 2021

Excerpts from *Texas Politics: Governing the Lone Star State: 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*, Cal Jillson: 7<sup>th</sup> Edition: Routledge: New York, NY. March 11, 2019

Packets of primary sources such as writings and speeches will be provided by the instructor.

### **Required Course Materials**

- Course works requested and provided by the instructor
- 1 Notebook for notes
- 3-Ring Binder for Handouts (1”- 2”)
- College-ruled notebook paper
- Black/Blue Pens (No gel pens of other colors, please.)
- One Red Pen for Grading
- Pencils (Pens or pencils are dependent on student preference.)
- Pencil Sharpener (If pencils are used, please get the sharpener that holds pencil shavings)
- Laptop Computers (Used only for work and paper days, NOT lecture days)

### **Grading & Assignments**

#### **Grading**

Online Discussion Board Posts/Responses/Pop or Announced Quizzes: 20%

End-of-Course Essay (Civic Engagement Project): 20%

1 Midterm Exam: 25%

1 Final Exam: 25%

Socratic Seminars: (Civic Engagement Assignments): 10%

## Grading Scale

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79

D: 60-79

F: 0-59

## Assignments

### *Discussion Board Posts/Responses*

From time to time, students are expected to complete discussion board posts and responses to ensure they are reading the assigned works and paying attention to the class lectures.

### *Pop/Announced Quizzes*

Students should also expect pop and announced quizzes. The instructor may announce the date of a quiz. However, he can also give an unannounced pop quiz at any day to verify whether students are doing the assigned reading.

### *Midterm/Final Exams/Notebook Checks*

All exams (Midterm and Final) will definitely consist of short answer questions and an essay. If there are any multiple-choice questions at all on the midterm or final exams, they will be few and challenging. However, the instructor can determine whether or not there will be multiple-choice questions on the exam. After every exam, the instructor will ask students to turn in notebooks for checking sufficient notes. **In order to do well in this class, complete and reliable notes are essential.**

Essays in exams must have a coherent and complete thesis and be written in comprehensible academic English.

### *End-of-Course Essay: Civic Engagement Project*

The course's Civic Engagement Project will be in the form of an End-of-Course Essay. This essay will allow students to grapple with historical or contemporary political issues. This essay will be an argumentative essay, in which students will have the choice to choose different topics outlined by the instructor.

The End-of-Course Essay must have a coherent and complete thesis and be written in comprehensible academic English.

Students will be given advance notice about the details and expectations of the End-of-Course Essay. This essay is expected to be written in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, one-inch margins, and according to a citation asked for by the instructor. However, essays written in Chicago format will be required. (Many Political Science and Political Philosophy courses in colleges and universities require Chicago style format.) The instructor will review basic formatting guidelines for this format.

Additional guidance will be provided by the course instructor in preparation for written assignments. Make up work due to extraordinary and/or necessary circumstances will be possible at the instructor's discretion.

### ***Socratic Seminars: Civic Engagement Assignments***

Along with the End-of-Course Essay, the civic engagement assignments in this course will come in the form of Socratic Seminars. There will be Socratic seminars once or twice this semester. The instructor will announce the topic of Socratic discussion beforehand. The topics will include any part of the content in this course such as federal and state politics, and the role of virtue and reform in politics. It is expected that every student participates well in these discussions. Each student will be graded on the quality and depth of their arguments, and how well they can integrate learned material into their arguments.

### **Academic Honesty Policy**

There is zero-tolerance for academic dishonesty in this class. According to the handbook, academic dishonesty is defined as cheating or plagiarism. Cheating is defined as the copying of the work of another student. Plagiarism is defined as the possessing, viewing, or distributing pictures, text messages, or e-mails of test content or answer keys, or the submission of another author's work (in the context of an essay) as one's own without providing proper citation and attribution. If a student is caught engaging in dishonest academic behavior, they will receive a penalized grade on that particular assignment and suitable disciplinary action per the Student Code of Conduct.

If you are having trouble with an assignment in the class, the best thing to do would be to contact the course instructor for help, rather than damaging your personal and academic integrity by resorting to dishonesty.

### **The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

**According to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a student's grades and performance in this course are confidential between the course professor and that individual student. The course instructor cannot talk to any of his students' parents or to anyone else about his students' performance without violating FERPA regulations.**

### **Student Responsibility of Course**

All students are held responsible for in-class behavior and academic performance in this course, under the guidelines and procedures of Founders Classical Academy of Corinth, Midwestern State University, and the instructor himself.

### **No Food & Electronics Policy**

Food and all liquids other than water will not be permitted, unless otherwise specified. **No gum.** Any consumption of any food, gum, or drink other than water is considered disrespect and will not be tolerated. Violation of this policy will be dealt with, according to the policies of the instructor and Founders Classical Academy of Corinth.

You are not allowed to have phones or any other electronic devices **EXCEPT laptops (laptops only used on paper and work days)** for me to see. **Laptops are not allowed during lectures.** If you have a device, it needs to be in a backpack and in off mode (like they do in the airlines). The instructor will take action in the case that an electronic device is heard or seen, according to his policies and those of Founders Classical Academy of Corinth.



