

POLS 1333-L16: American and Texas Government I

Midwestern State University
Fall 2022

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Course Description and Learning Objectives:

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. This course will:

- Assist you in developing a better understanding of the constitutions, systems, and the political processes that you will interact with as citizens.
- Provide you with analytical tools so that you can understand and think critically about American and Texas politics.
- Provide understanding for meaningful participation in American and Texas politics throughout your life.

The syllabus provides a general plan for the course; changes may be necessary.

This course is part of the MSU Core Curriculum. In this course students will demonstrate:

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

First-Year Mustangs Adventure:

This course is a learning community connected to the MSU First-Year Mustangs Adventure. All students in this course are enrolled in MWSU 1230-L16.

Required Texts:

The following books are required for this course:

- Theodore J Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere. 2021. *American Government: Power and Purpose*. 16th Edition. New York: WW Norton.
- Anthony Champagne and Edward J. Harpham. 2021. *Governing Texas*, 5th Edition. New York: WW Norton.

Books may be purchased in any format (hardcopy/digital). Links to purchase these books are available on the MSU Texas Bookstore website. Because page numbers may differ by format, no page numbers are included in the reading schedule. Chapter titles are included.

If you choose to use a different edition of the text other than the edition listed, please note that all exams, lectures, and assignments are based on the edition of the texts listed here.

Grades:

Breakdown of Grades:

| Grade Category | Grade Percentage |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Exam 1 | 15% |
| Exam 2 | 15% |
| Exam 3 | 15% |
| Quizzes | 15% |
| Civic Engagement Project | 15% |
| Course Participation | 10% |
| Final Exam | 15% |

Grading:

On each exam and for the final grade, points will be assigned according to the following scale:

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

Course Engagement Grading:

| Engagement Grade | Unexcused Absences/Non-Engagement Days |
|------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 95 | 1 |
| 90 | 2 |
| 85 | 3 |
| 80 | 4 |
| 75 | 5 |
| 70 | 6 |
| 60 | 7 |
| 50 | 8 |
| 40 | 9 |
| 0 | 10+ |

Class Policies:

Attendance and Engagement:

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 9 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.

Engagement:

Engagement during class is as important as attendance. Students are expected to engage in the class and be fully present with their engagement. 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. Distracting behavior will also constitute non-engagement for the class period. This syllabus serves as the notice of the above policies; students will receive no further alert if engagement points are not earned during a class meeting.

Lateness:

I will take attendance at each class meeting. Students arriving after the role has been called will not be counted as on-time and will be marked as tardy. **Two tardies will be the equivalent to one absence.** Students arriving more than 10 minutes late to class either in-person or online will be counted as absent for that class meeting. Students who

leave early without an excuse that meets the excused absence criteria for this course may be marked tardy or absent, depending upon how much time remains in the course meeting.

Leaving Class/Disruptions:

Students are expected to be present for the entire class period. Excessively leaving the classroom during the class period is defined in this syllabus as more than 2 times during one class period or leaving 1 time for more than 10 minutes in one class period. **Excessive trips outside of the classroom during a class period will be the equivalent to 1 absence.** This is a form of disruptive behavior. If a student requires an accommodation to this rule (e.g. due to illness or medical condition), please let me know in advance.

Disruptive Behavior:

Furthermore, disruptive behavior, including but not limited to raising one's voice to the instructor or classmates, threatening the instructor or classmates, recording the instructor or classmates without permission, sharing screenshots or videos of course material or student work on other platforms, slurs and insults directed at the instructor or classmates, or other behavior that disrupts the course will not be tolerated. **This syllabus serves as the warning** that disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students committing disruptive behavior will be removed from the course.

Safe Zone Statement:

This classroom is to be a place where students will be treated with respect. We will work together to 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. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, 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.

D2L:

This course will use D2L through MSU Texas as the online platform. All course material other than the assigned textbook readings will be available in D2L.

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.

Assignments and Late Work:

No late work accepted, except unforeseen, limited circumstances such as a medical emergency requiring hospitalization for which documentation is provided. All other assignments not submitted by the due date will receive the mark of zero.

Grades and Communication:

Grading Policy:

Grades will be determined in accordance with the information on grading in this syllabus. Although grades will post in the D2L gradebook, the weight of assignments may not always be reflected in the D2L gradebook. I will calculate the final course grade using the provided formula. Students are welcome to calculate their grades at any time and to use D2L to see their progress. However, I will not calculate individual grades for students during the course term, nor will I calculate hypothetical grading scenarios for individual students. In other words, please do not ask me what grade you will need to receive on a particular exam or assignment in order to earn a particular final grade. With the information provided in D2L and the syllabus, you are welcome to calculate different scenarios on your own.

Communication:

The best way to reach me is to contact me is to visit me during my office hours or via email (not via D2L email). My email address is listed on the first page of the syllabus. Most of the time, I will respond within Monday-Friday business hours) and within 24 hours during the week. On weekends, I may not be checking email as often, so please be aware that I may not respond until Monday. If you email me, please wait a day before sending the same email again or a follow-up email. In other words, please do not send a follow-up email within minutes of the first email if you have not yet received a response. While quick, email is not an instant communication.

When emailing me, please include the following:

- Your name (first and last): Students' names do not always appear with your email address. So, without your name in the email, I may not be able to tell from whom the email was sent.
- Your course number: I have more than one class, so it helps to know to which class you are referring.
- A specific question: If you have a question or are having difficulty with a particular concept, I am happy to help. However, please have a specific request. For example, "I don't understand federalism" or "what should I take away from chapter 2" are really too general. Try to come up with a specific request when you are having difficulty.

Quizzes and Exams:

Exams:

Exams will be given in person during class time. Now materials including notes, a book, websites, apps, etc., may be used during the exam. Any use of outside materials or collaboration with another during the exam will result in a 0 on the exam. The academic dishonesty policy will apply.

Make-Up Exams

A make-up exam will only be given if the following criteria are met: If a student has a course-approved excuse and the instructor is notified **in writing, prior** to the examination, and the instructor approves the excuse and make up exam, arrangements for a make-up exam will be made. If a student fails to notify the instructor, the student will receive a zero for the exam. **Unless arrangements have already been made in accordance with this policy, no exam may be administered after the graded exam is returned to the class.**

If the final exam is missed and arrangements for a make-up exam have not been made with me, the final exam cannot be made up.

No materials are allowed during quizzes or exams. Use of the textbook, slides, notes, flashcards, text messages, calls, online apps, or websites, for example, are not allowed.

Missing the Final Exam:

If the final exam is missed and arrangements for a make up exam have not been made in advance, the final exam cannot be made up.

Taking Exams Early:

Only under **extraordinary circumstances** can a student take an exam early. Only university-approved excuses, death in the family, or illness with a doctor's note be considered for taking an exam early. Scheduled vacations are not reasons for exam to be given early. The request for an early exam must be made **in writing**. For any reason, no request will be approved to schedule the final exam earlier than one week before its scheduled date.

Extra Credit:

Unless otherwise specified, **no extra credit or bonus assignments will be given**. Sometimes bonus points are available on quizzes. No individualized extra-credit/bonus assignments will be created for individual students. No extra credit or bonus points are available after the last day of classes or the final exam.

Academic Dishonesty:

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.

In addition, students **may not** copy the textbook or websites, such as Wikipedia pages, for written response questions. Every written assignment or written response is expected to be in your own words. Submitted work that replicates the textbook or a webpage will be considered academic dishonesty.

Accommodations:

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 that you have a disability requiring accommodation, please contact:

Disability Support Services (DSS)
Room 168, Clark Student Center
940-397-4140

Please note: instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation until verification from DSS has been provided.

<https://msutexas.edu/student-life/disability/current-students.php>

MSU Campus Carry Statement:

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at <http://mwsu.edu/campus-carry/rules-policies>

Class Schedule:

The following is a tentative outline of the semester. Students will be notified of any changes.

| Week | Unit | Assignment/Topic | Date |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Week 1 | Unit 0 | Introduction to Course | Mon, Aug 22 |
| | | Using D2L Using the Texts | Wed, Aug 24 |
| | | Civic Engagement Project Introduction | Fri, Aug 26 |
| Week 2 | Unit 1: The Principles of Politics | <i>American Government: Power and Purpose</i> , Chapter 1 | Mon, Aug 29 Wed, Aug 31 |
| | | Begin Civic Engagement Project Quiz: Chapter 1 | Fri, Sept 2 |
| Week 3 | Unit 2: The Constitution | <i>American Government: Power and Purpose</i> , Chapter 2 | Wed, Sept 7 Fri, Sept 9 |
| Week 4 | | Quiz: The Constitution | Mon, Sept 12 |
| | | Work on Civic Engagement Project (no class) | Wed, Sept 14 |
| | | Exam 1 | Fri, Sept 16 |
| Week 5 | Unit 3: Federalism | <i>American Government: Power and Purpose</i> , Chapter 3 | Mon, Sept 19 Wed, Sept 21 |
| | | Civic Engagement Project – Part 1 Due | Fri, Sept 23 |
| Week 6 | Unit 4: Public Opinion | <i>American Government: Power and Purpose</i> , Chapter 10 | Mon, Sept 26 Wed, Sept 28 |
| | | Quiz: Public Opinion | Friday, Sept 30 |
| Week 7 | Unit 5: Elections | Political Parties <i>American Government: Power and Purpose</i> , Chapter 11 | Mon, Oct 3 Wed, Oct 5 |
| | | Exam 2 | Fri, Oct 7 |
| Week 8 | Unit 6: Political Parties | <i>American Government: Power and Purpose</i> , Chapter 12 | Mon, Oct 10 Wed, Oct 12 |
| | | Quiz: Elections Project – Part 2 Due | Fri, Oct 14 |
| Week 9 | Unit 7: Interest Groups | <i>American Government: Power and Purpose</i> , Chapter 13 | Mon, Oct 17 Wed, Oct 19 |
| Week 10 | Unit 8: The Media | <i>American Government: Power and Purpose</i> , Chapter 14 | Mon, Oct 24 Wed, Oct 26 |
| | | Exam 3 | Fri, Oct 28 |
| Week 11 | Unit 9: Texas Political Culture | Texas Political Culture <i>Governing Texas</i> , Chapter 1 | Mon, Oct 31 Wed, Nov 2 |

| Week | Unit | Assignment/Topic | Date |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | Quiz: The Media Project – Part 3 Due | Fri, Nov 4 |
| Week 12 | Unit 10: The Texas Constitution | <i>Governing Texas</i> , Chapter 2 | Mon, Nov 7 Wed, Nov 9 |
| | | Quiz: Texas Political Culture | Fri, Nov 11 |
| Week 13 | Unit 11: Texas Political Parties | <i>Governing Texas</i> , Chapter 4 | Mon, Nov 14 Wed, Nov 16 |
| | | Quiz: The Texas Constitution Project – Part 4 Due | Fri, Nov 18 |
| Week 14 | Unit 12: Texas Elections | <i>Governing Texas</i> , Chapter 5 | Mon, Nov 21 |
| Week 15 | Civic Engagement | Final Project Presentations | Mon, Nov 28 – Fri, Dec 2 |
| | | Final Exam | Mon, Dec 5: 8-10 AM |