

# POLS 1333-X20: American and Texas Government I

Midwestern State University  
Spring 2021

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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 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.

## Required Texts:

The following books are required for this course:

- Theodore J Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere. 2019. *American Government: Power and Purpose*. 15<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York: WW Norton.
- Anthony Champagne and Edward J. Harpham. 2019. *Governing Texas*, 4<sup>nd</sup> 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.

## Required Technology:

This course will be conducted in D2L. It will utilize the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor for testing. In order to install these programs, you will need the following:

- A desktop computer or laptop other than a Chromebook.
  - Chromebooks **are not** compatible with the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor.
  - Apple iPads may be used for quizzes and exams, but these are not advised for any assignment with a written component.
  - Mobile phones and similar devices are not compatible with the required programs.
- A working webcam on the computing device used for the exam.
- Microsoft Office or a compatible program for written assignments. Access to Microsoft Office 365 available through the Office 365 for Students on the Microsoft website.

Please note: a limited number of webcams and laptops with cameras are available for check-out through the MSU Texas Moffett Library.

For more information about MSU Texas technology requirements:

<https://msutexas.edu/it/assets/files/basic-software-and-hardware-list.pdf>

Exams and quizzes will require the Respondus Monitor and webcam access. Please plan to take your exam on a computer with a webcam that is accessible for video monitoring. Because you are being made aware of this requirement at the start of the course, students without the technology required to take the online exams will not be given a make-up test option.

## Grades:

### Breakdown of Grades:

Grade Category	Grade Percentage
Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	20%
Exam 3	20%
Quizzes	10%
Chapter Exercises	15%
Final Exam	20%

### 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

Letter Grade	Numerical Grade
D	60-69
F	0-59

### **Course Grade Formula:**

$(\text{Exam 1 Grade} \times .15) + (\text{Exam 2} \times .2) + (\text{Exam 3} \times .2) + (\text{Chapter Exercises Total Points Earned} / \text{Chapter Exercises Points Available} \times .15) + (\text{Quiz Average} \times .10) + (\text{Final Exam Grade} \times .20) = \text{Final Grade}$

## **Class Policies:**

### **Online Courses:**

#### **Online Courses and Technology:**

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:**

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.

#### **Technological Difficulties:**

I do not have any control over technological difficulties associated with using D2L, Respondus Lockdown Browser, or Respondus Monitor. Any technology problems will have to be resolved by Distance Education, which is responsible for D2L. Because technology is a requirement for this course, technology other than an outage of the D2L platform at MSU will not be grounds for an extension on assignments. In case difficulties arise, I suggest that you do not wait until close to the deadline to complete an assignment or take an exam. Personal technological difficulties will not be sufficient cause for an extension or make-up exam.

## **Engagement:**

#### **Engagement:**

Because this is an online course, we will all be working asynchronously. However, attendance matters. Students who do not engage regularly with online work often have difficulty with the course and receive lower grades.

#### **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.

## **Assignments and Late Work:**

Because students have multiple days to complete assignments for chapter activities, **no late work accepted**, except unforeseen, limited circumstances such as a multi-day 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 using the formula provided in the syllabus, you are welcome to calculate different scenarios on your own.

### **Communication:**

The best way to reach me is to contact me 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 general. Try to come up with a specific request when you are having difficulty.

If we need to meet, we can do so via a Zoom meeting, which I will schedule with you.

## Quizzes and Exams:

### Online Exams and Quizzes:

Exams will be 60 minutes in length and quizzes 10 minutes, unless otherwise specified. Chapter quizzes will consist of approximately 10 multiple choice questions. Exams may consist of multiple-choice questions and written response questions. Students receiving accommodations through the DSS office involving exam and quiz time, will be accommodated.

Once the quiz or exam begins, you will not be able to exit the browser. So, please plan carefully when you will take your quiz or exam during the specified day. Quizzes and Exams will require the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor. Before taking a quiz or exam, please make sure that your browser is up-to-date and that your webcam is working.

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. All work submitted must be that of the student in this course. Receiving outside assistance in any form on a quiz or exam will be considered academic dishonesty; it will result in a zero on the assignment. In addition, it may result in an F in the course. A second incident of academic dishonesty will automatically result in an F in the course.

### Make-up Quizzes and Exams:

Like chapter exercises, there will be multiple days to take the chapter quiz. Because of this, any quiz not taken by the due date will be marked as a zero.

Exam dates are marked on the syllabus. Students will have a full 24-hour period in which to take the exam. Exam dates are not flexible. A make-up exam will only be given if the following criteria are met: If a student has a course-approved excuse, such as hospitalization, legal proceeding or university-sponsored travel that prevents the taking of the exam during the allotted time and date, and the instructor is notified **in writing, prior to the examination**. If 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 in accordance with this policy, 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.**

### Missing the Final Exam:

Students will have at least a 24-hour period in which to take 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.**

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

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

## **Safe Zone Statement:**

This classroom is 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.

**MSU Campus Carry Statement:**

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84<sup>th</sup> 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.*

<b>Module</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Module 0: Course Introduction	Wednesday, January 13
Module 1: The Five Principles of Politics	Friday, January 22
Module 2: US The Constitution	Friday, January 29
<b>Module 3: Exam 1</b>	<b>Friday, February 5</b>
Module 4: Federalism	Friday, February 12
Module 5: Public Opinion	Friday, February 19
Module 6: The Media	Friday, February 19
<b>Module 7: Exam 2</b>	<b>Friday, February 26</b>
Module 8: Elections	Friday, March 5
Module 9: Political Parties	Friday, March 12
Module 10: Interest Groups	Friday, March 19
<b>Module 11: Exam 3</b>	<b>Friday, March 26</b>
Module 12: Texas Political Culture	Friday, April 2
Module 13: The Texas Constitution	Friday, April 9
Module 14: Political Parties in Texas	Friday, April 16
Module 15: Elections in Texas	Friday, April 23
<b>Module 16: The Final Exam</b>	<b>Wednesday, April 28</b>

Note: Modules 5 and 6 have the same due date.