



Introduction to American Government Learning Community

POLS 1333-L11

Fall 2019

Tuesday/Thursday 2:00pm-3:20pm

PY 209

Contact Information

Dr. Jeremy F. Duff

Office: 211 O'Donohoe

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 2:00pm-3:00pm

Tuesday and Thursday: 11:00am-12:00pm

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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.

As a learning community, this course will examine the relationship between politics and education. Students will have the opportunity to explore how the decisions of political officials and institutions effect their education. For example, we will discuss issues such as: curriculum development, textbooks, spending on education, and school choice. Students will participate in a learning community project which includes interaction with local public schools.

Textbooks

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

Course Website

The course will use a D2L page as a place to obtain copies of the syllabus, and any other course documents that may be posted. You will also use the dropbox in D2L to turn in some of your assignments.

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is cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given).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 Campus Passport will make up 10% of your final grade. The Service Learning Project will make up 15% of your grade. The Infographic Project will make up 10% of your grade and the Infomercial 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

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.

Attendance

Class attendance is strongly encouraged. It has been my experience that those who do not attend class tend to have a difficult time with the course and generally receive lower grades.

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.

Quizzes

There will be periodic "pop" quizzes given in class covering lecture and textbook material. These quizzes will be graded and will count towards your quiz grade for the course. This should encourage class attendance and also help make sure students are keeping up with the reading. If you are not present for a quiz and do not have a University approved excuse, you will be given a grade of zero on that quiz.

Learning Community Co-Curricular Projects

You will be participating in three projects that will be conducted across the two learning community courses that will combine elements from both courses.

These are as follows:

1. Service Learning Project
2. Infographic Project
3. Infomercial Project

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

Campus Passport Project

Learning Community students will complete a Campus Passport. Students are required to attend at least 3 campus events and have their Campus Passport stamped. A list of possible events will be provided, along with a Campus Passport for each student. Campus Passports will be turned in at the beginning of class on December 5, 2019. It is imperative that you do not lose your Campus Passport. If you lose your Campus Passport, a replacement will be provided. However, you must start over in acquiring your stamps for attending campus events. Additionally, if you attend a campus event and forget, or do not have your Campus Passport, you must find another campus event to attend to get the required stamp.

Extra Credit

Any extra credit opportunities will be offered at my discretion (and may not be offered at all). However, there will be one guaranteed opportunity for students to earn extra credit this semester. In order to earn this extra credit a student must perform I'm Just a Bill in its entirety in front of the class. Singing and costumes are required. Each performance will be limited to two students maximum. If you wish to perform, you must contact me at least one week prior to your requested performance date so I can schedule it. If all the requirements above are met, you will receive 10 points extra credit on the exam of your choice (this may include the final if you so choose).

Required Examinations

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

Exam 1: October 1, 2019

Exam 2: November 7, 2019

Final Exam: December 12, 2019 (1:00pm-3:00pm)

If you arrive more than 15 minutes late for any exam, you will not be allowed to take the exam. In these cases you will be given a grade of zero.

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 by the due date.

Exams, Assignments, and Grading

I will only discuss a grade with you in my office. I will not discuss a grade with you before or after class in the classroom, in the hallway, outside by my car, via e-mail 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 by appointment in my office 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.

Syllabus Test

First, do not mention this to any other student in the class. Second, for five points extra credit on the first exam, email to me the funniest meme you have

ever seen. It needs to be “clean.” I will show these in class. Do not send anything inappropriate, explicit, or of a sexual nature. Email the meme to me by 5:00pm, September 6, 2019.

Cellphones

These should be turned off when entering the classroom, unless prior arrangements have been made with me concerning an emergency. At no time will you be allowed to look at your cellphone during an exam or quiz. If you are observed looking at your cellphone once an exam or quiz has been handed to you, you will automatically receive a grade of zero for that exam or quiz.

General Behavior

Students are expected to act like responsible adults. There should be no talking while I am lecturing or while another student is answering a question or sharing their opinion on the subject matter of the class. If this occurs, students will be warned and if the disruptive behavior continues you will be removed from the class.

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.

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 [Campus Carry Policy Website](#).

Course Schedule

Date	Readings/Activities
August 27	Introduction and overview of course: No Readings
August 29-September 5	American Political Culture: Chapter 1
September 10-12	The Founding and the Constitution: Chapter 2
September 17-19	Federalism: Chapter 3
September 24-26	American Public Opinion: Chapter 6
October 1	Exam I
October 3-8	The Media: Chapter 7
October 10-15	Political Participation and Voting: Chapter 8
October 17-22	American Political Parties: Chapter 9
October 24-29	American Campaigns and Elections: Chapter 10
October 31-November 5	Interest Groups in American Politics: Chapter 11
November 7	Exam II

Date	Readings/Activities
November 12-14	Texas Local Politics: Texas Chapter 10
November 19-21	Texas Political Culture: Texas Chapter 1
November 26	The Texas Constitution: Texas Chapter 2
November 28	No Class: Thanksgiving
December 3-5	Texas Political Parties: Texas Chapter 4 Texas Elections: Texas Chapter 5
December 12 (1:00pm-3:00pm)	Final Exam