



Course Syllabus: American and Texas Government II

College of Humanities and Social Science

POLS 4311 – X11

Fall 2026

Contact Information

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Course Description

Political Science 1433 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. 2023. *We the People*. 15th Core Edition. New York: WW Norton.

Anthony Champagne and Edward J. Harpham. 2023. *Governing Texas*, 7th Edition. New York: WW Norton.

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Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without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). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Here is the course grade formula as follows: (Exam 1 Grade x .20) + (Exam 2 x .20) + (Quiz Grade x .20) + (Current Events Grade x .20) + (Final Exam Grade x .20) = Final Grade

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
Current Event Average (8 each)	20
Exam 1	20
Exam 2	20
Exam 3	20
Quiz Average (8 each)	20
Total Points	100

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	100-90
B	89-80
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	Less than 69

Homework

All assignments will be conducted on D2L and are at your pace.

Quizzes

There will be weekly quizzes covering lectures and textbook material. These quizzes will be graded and will count towards your quiz grade for the course. You will have 30 minutes to complete each quiz, and it should be completed by 11:59pm on the due date. There will be 8 questions. This should encourage you to keep up with the reading. If you do not turn in a quiz by the due date/time, and do not have a university approved excuse, you will be given a grade of ZERO on that quiz.

Congress (We the People: Chapter 12): September 4
Presidency (We the People: Chapter 13): September 18
Federal Courts (We the People: Chapter 15): September 25
Civil Liberties (We the People: Chapter 4): October 19
Civil Rights (We the People: Chapter 5) and Human Rights: October 30
Texas Legislature (Governing Texas: Chapter 7): November 13
Texas Executive Branch (Governing Texas: Chapter 8): November 30
Texas Courts (Governing Texas: Chapter 9): December 4

Exams

Make-up Exams:

Students are expected to be present for all exams on the dates which the class will take them. 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.

Missing the Final Exam:

If the final exam is missed and arrangements for a makeup 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. 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.

Arriving Late to Exams:

Students arriving late for an exam, including the final exam, will not be allowed to take the exam if any student on the course has already completed the exam.

Leaving During Exams:

Students are expected to be present for the entire exam. Once a student has received the exam, the student may not leave the classroom until the exam has been submitted. If a student requires accommodation in accordance with this rule (e.g. due to illness or medical condition), this matter must be approved by the professor in advance of the exam.

Current Event Assignments

At the end of each session, students will be assigned to write a one to two paged double-spaced paper regarding a current event that is happening in the session discussed. For example, during a class session in Congress, students are required to write their current events assignment on a current event regarding congress. This can be a paper on a bill congress has passed or something controversial a congressperson has done. The student must address three points about the current event they have chosen. First, what is the current event; second, what are their opinions on the current event; and finally, what questions or solutions would they have regarding the current event. Rather if it is MLA, APA, or APSA format, citations and a reference page are expected! Points will be deducted without this. There will be five current event assignments that are as follows:

Congress: September 4
Presidency: September 18
Federal Courts: September 25
Civil Liberties: October 19
Civil Rights and Human Rights: October 30
Texas Legislature: November 13
Texas Executive Branch: November 30
Texas Courts: December 4

Mid-Term Exam

There will be two mid-term exams. To run it down, the two exams will be 40 multiple-choice questions, and you will have 3 hours to complete it. The first midterm exam will be available on D2L for the last week of Unit 1 and the second exam will be available on D2L for the last week of Unit 2. Here are the following two midterms and the topics you will be tested on:

Exam 1: Congress (We the People: Chapter 12), President (We the People: Chapter 13), & Federal Courts (We the People: Chapter 15) – **September 21 - 25**

Exam 2: Civil Liberties (We the People: Chapter 4), Civil Rights (We the People: Chapter 5), & Human Rights – **October 26 - 30**

Final Exam

There will be a final exam. To run it down, the exam will be 40 multiple-choice questions, and you will have 3 hours to complete it. The final exam will be available for finals week.

Final Exam: Texas Legislature (Governing Texas: Chapter 7), Texas Executive Branch (Governing Texas: Chapter 8), & Texas Courts (Governing Texas: Chapter 9) – **December 07 - 11**

Extra Credit

There will be no extra credit available for this class.

Late Work

No late work accepted and work cannot be made up. Technical difficulties of the student's equipment or internet provider are not excused. When such difficulties occur, students are expected to locate an alternative source for submitting assignments, e.g., neighbor, workplace, public library, etc. Technical difficulties caused by the University or D2L can be excused provided the student obtains documentation from technical support. Students should always have a back-up in mind for unexpected glitches in technology.

Make Up Work/Tests

Students are expected to submit and finish all assignments by the end of the due dates. A make-up exams, quizzes, and assignments 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, quiz, or assignment. Unless arrangements have already been made in accordance with this policy, no exam, quiz, or assignment may be administered after the graded exam, quiz, or assignment is returned.

Important Dates

- Last day for term schedule changes: **August 27**. Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Deadline to file for graduation: **September 21**. Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" **November 23**. Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

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 or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. Although in general students are graded on intellectual effort and performance rather than attendance, absences may lower the student's grade where class attendance and class participation are deemed essential by the faculty member. In those classes where attendance is considered as part of the grade, the instructor should so inform students of the specifics in writing at the beginning of the semester in a syllabus or separate attendance policy statement. An instructor who has an attendance policy must keep records on a daily basis. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to being dropped from the class. Instructor's records will stand as evidence of absences. A student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor. Any individual faculty member or college has the authority to establish an attendance policy, providing the policy is in accordance with the General University Policies.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ****Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.*** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. ****Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!*** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. 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. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Recording Classes

****Recording classes is generally prohibited without the professor's explicit permission.*** Such recordings, when permitted, are for personal use

only and may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published without the professor's prior consent. Some faculty may not permit recordings of their classes. When it is feasible and appropriate, students may record classes to accommodate disabilities under the Americans With Disabilities Act, with prior approval of Disability Support Services. Such recordings may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published.

Instructor Class Policies

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.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism. MSU Texas uses the Turnitin.com Artificial Intelligence detection tool. If Turnitin.com detects that your assignment was completed using AI, you will be given a grade of zero for that assignment. This is also considered a violation of the University Academic Dishonesty Policy.

Communication and Grades:

Discussion of Grades:

If you have questions about your grades, please make an appointment to discuss it with me. Discussion of grades is a matter between the instructor and the student. If the grading concern is regarding a fellow student receiving more points for an answer, both students must be present at the grade discussion appointment.

Communication:

The best way to reach me outside of class is to contact me via email or in person during my office hours. My email address and office number are listed on the first page of the syllabus.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

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 Student Wellness Center, (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](#).

Emergency Aid Resources for Basic Needs

Unexpected life circumstances can affect anyone. If you are experiencing challenges meeting basic needs—such as housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, technology, textbooks or other life necessities, resources may be available to help. Visit the [Student Emergency Support and Resources webpage](#) to learn more, and explore emergency support opportunities through MSU and how to access them. For additional information, please contact the Office of Student Affairs: Clark Student Center #108, (940) 397-7500, student.affairs@mstuexas.edu.

College Policies

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.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

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

Course Schedule:

Here is the following class schedule:

Week	Subject	Due Date
Week 1 & 2 8/24 to 9/04	Congress (<i>We the People</i> : Chapter 12) Labor Day (no class): 9/07	Congress Current Event: 9/04 Congress Quiz: 9/04
Week 3 & 4 9/08 to 9/18	President (<i>We the People</i> : Chapter 13)	President Current Event: 9/18 President Quiz: 9/18
Week 5 10/7 to 10/13	Federal Courts (<i>We the People</i> : Chapter 15)	Federal Courts Current Event: 9/25 Congress Quiz: 9/25 Exam 1: 9/25
Week 6 & 7 9/28 to 10/09	Civil Liberties (<i>We the People</i> : Chapter 4)	Civil Liberties Current Event: 10/09 Civil Liberties Quiz: 10/09
Week 8 & 9 10/12 to 10/23	Civil Rights (<i>We the People</i> : Chapter 5)	
Week 10 10/26 to 10/30	Human Rights	Civil Rights and Human Rights Current Event: 10/30 Civil Rights and Human Rights Quiz: 10/30 Exam 2: 10/30
Week 11 & 12 11/02 to 11/13	Texas Legislature (<i>Governing Texas</i> : Chapter 7)	Texas Legislature Current Event: 11/13 Texas Legislature Quiz: 11/13
Week 13 & 14 11/16 to 11/30	Texas Executive Branch (<i>Governing Texas</i> : Chapter 8) Last Day for W: 11/23 Thanksgiving Holiday (no class): 11/26-11/27	Texas Executive Current Event: 11/30 Texas Executive Quiz: 11/30
Week 15 12/01 to 12/04	Texas Courts (<i>Governing Texas</i> : Chapter 9)	Texas Courts Current Event: 9/25 Texas Courts Quiz: 9/25

Week	Subject	Due Date
Finals Week	Final Exam	Exam 3: 12/11