



POLS 1433 American & Texas Government

Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences

CRN 30692 Section X32

Summer 2021, Online Course

Instructor: Dr. Rebekah Dowd

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Course Description

In this course, we will survey the key institutions of US and Texas government, including the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. This course is designed to give students a basic understanding of the inner workings of US political institutions and how these institutions impact your daily life through policy-making and implementation of previously passed laws. During this course, we will look at how each of the branches of government are responsible for various aspects of governance, and how they interact with one another and with American society at large. In addition, we will examine the twin areas of civil rights and civil liberties provided within the US Constitution. Finally, we look at Texas government institutions, civil liberties, and civil rights as a complement and contrast to those at the national level. **The syllabus provides a general plan for the course; changes may be necessary. Any changes made will be posted to D2L.**

Learning Objectives

- Identify the key structural features of the federal government including the Legislative (Congress), Executive (the President), and Judicial (the courts) branches.
- Identify the key structural features of the three main branches of government in Texas (legislative, executive, and judicial)
- Discuss the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments and their implications as well as how they relate to civil rights.
- Learn the differences between civil liberties and civil rights, and give examples of each in the US and Texas constitutions
- Describe the policy-making process within the US and Texas governmental systems

Required Textbook & Instructional Materials

- American Government – Power and Purpose, by Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, and Ansolabehere; W.W. North, 15th edition: ISBN: 978-0-393-76500-0
- Governing Texas, by Champagne, Harpham, and Casellas; W.W. Norton, 4th edition, ISBN: 978-0-392-64430-2
- “Advise and Dissent” - \$2.99 on Amazon Prime or YouTube <https://youtu.be/fc8Tdn-k4kk>

Student Handbook

Refer to: [2020-2021 MSU 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Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting and citation, or the submission for credit of work not produced by the student). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Office Hours:

This is a fully online course, meaning I will not be available in my campus office during this summer class. However, I am accessible via virtual office meetings, using Zoom. From time to time during the term, I may also schedule “open” office hours using the Virtual Classroom in D2L. Email me at any time if we need to set up an office appointment to discuss anything related to the course. My email address is at the top of this syllabus.

Contacting Me:

The best way to reach is by email. I will make all attempts to answer emails within 48 **business** hours unless it is over a holiday break. THIS MEANS I WILL NOT ANSWER EMAILS ON WEEKENDS. I have a life 😊

Attendance Policy:

This is a fully online course. Your attendance and participation are tied to Monday-Friday, regular logins to D2L and completion of course assignments. I will closely monitor your participation in discussion board assignments, as this replaces the regular in-class attendance of traditional classes.

Disability Accommodations:

Any student having an education disability plan on file with the university needs to inform me within the first week of the class so I make the appropriate arrangements to accommodate your situation. 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 Clark Student Center, Room 168, (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](#).

Clery Act Notification:

Sexual misconduct includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any other nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature; sex or gender discrimination violate University policies. THIS ALSO APPLIES TO INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR IN ONLINE COURSES. Any person experiencing such behavior may receive confidential support from the Counseling Center. Counseling Center staff will hold what you share in strict confidence. If you disclose sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex or gender discrimination occurring on campus, in a University-sponsored program, or involving a campus visitor or University student or employee (whether current or former) to me, I as the instructor of this course am required to forward such information to the MSU Title IX office. This should not prevent you from speaking to me should you wish to do so, but know that what you tell me in this area cannot be held confidential, but must be shared with the Title IX office.

Grading

Assignments	Percentage
Discussion boards	20%
Reading Quizzes	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Exam 3	20%
Total	100%
Bonus: Films	Up to 5 points

Grading Scale:

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

Student Responsibilities:

Discussion Boards

These are designed to replace the dialogue and conversations we would normally have in an in-person class. You have one discussion post due each week, with varied due dates. Your replies are expected to be original, courteous, and completed to follow the directions for each discussion. The method will vary – some written responses, some memes, some video responses.

Reading Quizzes

These are to insure you are reading and understanding the assigned texts each week. Read thoroughly and take good notes; much of the exam material is based on the textbook content. The lectures will be to help you synthesize the concepts across the readings, and to fill in any gaps in the textbooks. The reading quizzes are posted in D2L, under the Quizzes tab. They are open book, with 10 questions each, and you can take them multiple times until the due date. Due on Fridays, unless otherwise noted.

Lectures

You will watch narrated PowerPoint lectures, which can be accessed in D2L. The links open a new window for a closed YouTube channel that contains the lectures. Each lecture is approximately 15 minutes in length. The lectures will contain additional material not found in the textbook, so it is in your best interest to view these and take notes. Each day's material includes one, sometimes two, of these lectures. Content on the exams will include lecture material.

Exams

There are three multiple choice exams, taken online in D2L, open-book, and based on lecture content and textbook readings. Anything I say in in the lectures, along with anything in the assigned readings could be used for the exams. Most exams are open 48-72 hours. They are timed, so take careful notes and study before opening the exam. Once it is open, it must be completed. **NO EXAMS WILL BE REOPENED AFTER THE DUE DATE HAS PASSED.** Prior to the exams you must download the Lockdown Browser AND have a working and activated webcam. You will be recorded while taking the exam to avoid having someone else take the exam for you.

Exam	Due Date
1	Sunday, June 13, 11:59PM
2	Sunday, June 20, 11:59PM
3	Weds, June 30, 11:59PM

Policy on Missed Work

There is **NO MAKEUP WORK ALLOWED** during this fast-paced summer course. You must stay organized and on-top of all reading quizzes, discussion boards, and exam due dates. The term is too short for me to re-open material, because you will fall further and further behind, with no chance of catching up and understanding the material well enough to pass the course.

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:"

Please note, the semester's midpoint is **June 17, 2021, at 4:00pm. This is the last Day for "W"**. Students can **withdraw from the class up to this point and** receive a W for the class. However, there is a limited number of W's a student can receive over their academic career. **Drops after this date will receive grades of "F."** If you intend to withdraw from a course, you must do so yourself. If you are still on the roll when I have to assign grades and you haven't done any passing work, then you will fail. So, if you intend to drop, please make sure you do so in time. Also note, after the first few days of the semester, I have to report to the university whether students have participated at least

once. If you have never logged into D2L or have stopped doing work when I have to submit my report to the university, it is possible that the university will drop you from the course, potentially impacting your academic record and financial assistance.

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

All of the material for this course is located on the MSU D2L platform. Each student is expected to be familiar with this platform 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. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO TAKE QUIZZES OR EXAMS. IF TECHNICAL PROBLEMS OCCUR WITH D2L OR YOUR COMPUTER, I CANNOT HELP YOU WITH THIS.** You will need to contact the distance learning staff for help with these issues. They can be reached MONDAY-FRIDAY, through this link: [D2L Help](#)

Class Behavior Policies

In order to make this a successful class, it is important that we create an environment where everyone has an opportunity to learn. **This includes online classes.** To this end, you should know that the university policy on disruptive behavior in class applies. Disruptive class behavior includes, but is not limited to, verbal or physical threats, repeated obscenities, unreasonable interference with class discussion, making/receiving personal phone calls or pages (text messaging) and persisting in harassing personal conversations with other class members. For purposes of this policy, it may also be considered disruptive behavior for a student to exhibit threatening, intimidating, or other inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates outside of class or on D2L. If your behavior is disruptive to other students or the instructor, this will violate University guidelines, and you will be reported to administrative authorities.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 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) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

Course Schedule

Module and Material	Assignments	Due Dates
<p><i>Module 1</i> Course Intro</p> <p>US Congress</p> <p>US Presidency</p>	<p>Read Syllabus, Download Lockdown Browser, Make Introduction video, Watch Intro</p> <p>Power and Purpose, Ch. 6, p. 188-221, Watch Video Lecture</p> <p>Power and Purpose, Ch. 6, p. 221-242, TWO Video Lectures, Take Quiz 1</p> <p>Power and Purpose, Ch. 7, p. 248-272, Video Lecture</p> <p>Discussion board – <i>President v. Congress</i></p> <p>Power and Purpose, Ch. 7, p. 273-296, Video Lecture, Take Quiz 2</p>	<p>Reading Quiz 1 and Discussion post 1 end Friday, June 4, 11:59PM</p>
<p><i>Module 2</i> US Judicial System</p>	<p>Power and Purpose, Ch. 9, p. 336-346, Watch Video Lecture</p> <p>Power and Purpose, Ch. 9, p. 347-367, Watch Video Lecture</p> <p>Discussion board – <i>Celebrity Judge</i></p> <p>Power and Purpose, Ch. 9, p. 368-382, Watch Video Lecture</p> <p>EXAM 1 OPEN June 11-13.</p>	<p>Reading Quiz 2 ends, Friday, June 11, 11:59PM</p> <p>EXAM 1 CLOSES, 11:59PM Sunday, June 13.</p>
<p><i>Module 3</i> Civil Liberties</p> <p>Civil Rights</p>	<p>Power and Purpose, Ch. 4, p. 104-130, Watch Video Lecture</p> <p>Power and Purpose, Ch. 4, p. 131-146, Watch Video Lecture</p> <p>Discussion Board – <i>Women’s Suffrage</i></p> <p>Power and Purpose, Ch 5, pgs. 148-170, Watch TWO Video Lectures</p>	<p>LAST DAY for COURSE Withdrawal- June 17 BY 4PM</p>

Module and Material	Assignments	Due Dates
	<p>Power and Purpose, Ch 5, pgs. 171-186, Watch Video Lecture</p> <p>EXAM 2 OPEN Friday June 18- June 20</p>	<p>Reading Quiz 3 and Discussion 3 end Friday, June 18, 11:59PM</p> <p>EXAM 2 ends, Sunday, June 20, 11:59PM</p>
<p>Module 4 <i>Texas Legislature</i></p> <p><i>TX Executive Office/Governor</i></p> <p><i>Texas Judicial System</i></p>	<p>Texas Government, Ch. 7, pgs. 213-231, Watch Video Lecture Texas Government, Ch. 7, pgs. 232-244, Watch Video Lecture, Take Quiz 6</p> <p>Texas Government, Ch. 8, pgs. 251-268, Watch Video Lecture</p> <p>Discussion board – <i>Texas Politics Craziiness</i> Texas Government, Ch. 8, pgs. 269-288, Watch Video Lecture</p> <p>Texas Government, Ch. 9, pgs. 293-310, Watch Video Lecture</p> <p>Texas Government, Ch. 9, pgs. 311-325, Watch Video Lecture</p> <p>EXAM 3 OPEN Friday June 25-Wednesday June 30</p>	<p>Reading quiz 4 and Discussion 4 end Friday, June 25, 11:59PM</p> <p>EXAM 3 ENDS, 11:59PM</p>