

POLS 1433-X21: American and Texas Government II

Midwestern State University
Spring 2024
Internet

Herbert McCullough IV

Email: herbert.mccullough@msutexas.edu

Office Telephone: (940) 397-4576

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description and Learning Objectives:

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.

Required Texts:

Benjamin Ginsberg, et. al. 2025. *We the People*. 15th Core Edition. New York: WW Norton. (D2L access)

Anthony Champagne, et. al. 2025. *Governing Texas*. 7th Edition. New York: WW Norton. (D2L access)

Grades:

Breakdown of Grades:

Grade Category	Grade Percentage
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final Exam	20%
Current Events	20%
Quiz Average	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
D	60-69
F	0-59

Course Grade Formula:

$(\text{Exam 1 Grade} \times .20) + (\text{Exam 2} \times .20) + (\text{Quiz Grade} \times .20) + (\text{Current Events Grade} \times .20) + (\text{Final Exam Grade} \times .20) = \text{Final Grade}$

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.

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 to this rule (e.g. due to illness or medical condition), this matter must be approved by the professor in advance of the exam.

Current Events:

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.** They will be five current event assignments that are as follows:

Congress: January 30

Presidency: February 13

Federal Court: February 27

Human Rights & Civil Liberties: March 27

Civil Rights and Human Rights: April 10

Texas Legislature: April 24

Texas Executive Branch: May 8

Texas Courts: May 15

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. 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): January 30
Presidency (*We the People*: Chapter 13): February 13
Federal Courts (*We the People*: Chapter 15): February 27
Civil Liberties (*We the People*: Chapter 4): March 37
Civil Rights (*We the People*: Chapter 5): April 10
Texas Legislature (*Governing Texas*: Chapter 7): April 24
Texas Executive Branch (*Governing Texas*: Chapter 8): May 8
Texas Courts (*Governing Texas*: Chapter 9): May 15

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.

Accommodations:

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from the University's Disability Support Services (DSS) during the instructor's office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from DSS has been provided. The DSS office is at the Redwine Wellness Center.

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>

Schedule

Subject	Date
Holiday Break	January 19
Congress (<i>We the People</i> : Chapter 10)	January 20-30 Current Event Due: Jan. 30 Congress Quiz Due: Jan 30
Presidency (<i>We the People</i> : Chapter 11)	February 2-13 Current Event Due: Feb. 13 President Quiz Due: Feb. 13
Federal Courts (<i>We the People</i> : Chapter 13)	February 16-27 Current Event Due: Feb. 27 Federal Courts Quiz Due Feb. 27
Exam 1: US Government	February 23-27
Human Rights (PowerPoint)	March 2-6
Spring break	March 9-14
Civil Liberties (<i>We the People</i> : Chapter 4)	March 16-27 Current Event Due: Mar. 27 Civil Liberties Quiz Due: Mar. 27
Civil Rights (<i>We the People</i> : Chapter 5)	April 3-10 Civil Rights Quiz Due: Apr. 10
Holiday break	April 2-3
Exam II: Human Rights, Civil Liberties, and Civil Rights	April 6-10
Texas Legislature (<i>Governing Texas</i> : Chapter 8)	April 13-24 Texas Legislature Quiz Due: Apr. 24
Texas Executive Branch (<i>Governing Texas</i> : Chapter 9)	April 27-May 8 Texas Executive Branch Quiz Due: May 8
Last W Day	April 29
Texas Courts (<i>Governing Texas</i> : Chapter 10)	May 11-15 Texas Courts Due: May 15 Current Event Due: May 15
Final Exam: Texas Government	May 5-11