Course Syllabus: American and Texas Government I
Prothro Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences
POLS 1333 Section X22
Spring 2021 (January 11, 2021 to April 27, 2021)

Contact Information

Instructor: Elizabeth Ysasi
Office hours: Contact for virtual appointment
Office phone: (940) 397-4208
E-mail: Elizabeth.ysasi@msutexas.edu

Course Description

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.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Theodore J Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere. 2018. *American Government: Power and Purpose*. 15th Edition. New York: WW Norton. (APP)

Anthony Champagne and Edward J. Harpham. 2019. *Governing Texas*, 4th Edition. New York: WW Norton. (GT)

Grading
On each assignment, quiz, exam and for the final grade, grades will be assigned according to the following scale

Table 1: Letter Grade

| Letter Grade | Numerical Grade |
|---|---|
| A | 90 to 100 |
| B | 80 to 89 |
| C | 70 to 79 |
| D | 60 to 69 |
| F | 0 to 59 |

Table 2: Semester Grade Breakdown

| Item | Percentage of Grade |
|---|---|
| Exam 1 | 15 |
| Exam 2 | 18 |
| Exam 3 | 20 |
| Project | 20 |
| Quizzes | 15 |
| Discussions | 12 |
| Total Points | 100 |

## Communication

The best way to reach me is to contact me via email. My email address is listed on the first page of the syllabus. When emailing me, if you would like a helpful response, you must include your full name, a subject in the subject line, the name of the course in which you are enrolled, and your question. Please use full sentences and not texting language. Individual Zoom or phone appointments can also be set up.

## Assignments

Weekly Module Assignments: Each week there will be module activities to complete listed in a checklist such as reading, discussion questions, watching content, and taking a quiz. Assignments that are graded will appear in the gradebook. Weekly modules can be accessed in D2L by clicking on CONTENT, then COURSE SCHEDULE.

Discussion Questions: Submission of responses to discussion questions are due online no later than the next Sunday at 11:59 PM CST from when the date of assignment, unless otherwise noted on D2L. For example, if a discussion is posted on Monday, January 11, 2021, the next Sunday would be January 17, 2021. Assignments will not be accepted late, but they may be submitted early. Instructor has discretion if the circumstance is out of the norm to make an exception. Discussion topics can be accessed on D2L by clicking on, COMMUNICATION, then DISCUSSIONS, or navigating from the weekly module checklist under CONTENT.

## Quizzes

Quizzes will cover recent weekly textbook material. These help make sure students are keeping up with content. No notes, book, cell phones or electronic devices may be used during quizzes or exams. You will be required to take your quizzes on a lockdown browser through D2L. If you have previously utilized the lockdown browser with a different school, you may be required to uninstall from your device and reinstall the MSU Texas version. Quizzes can be accessed on D2L by clicking on, ASSESSMENTS, then TESTS.

## Exams

All three exams will be taken using Respondus Monitor and Lockdown Browser through D2L. You will need to make sure you have a device that has a webcam enabled to use Respondus Monitor. This safeguards the academic integrity of performance on an exam. Please be sure that you are in an area free from distractions, with a strong and reliable internet signal, and on a computer that has the minimum system requirements to run Respondus Monitor and Lockdown Browser. Your exam sessions are recorded and any indication of academic dishonesty, or cheating, will result in an automatic grade of ZERO for that exam, as well as possible expulsion from the course.

## Project

Brief Overview: Throughout the semester, you will work towards creating a infographic and elevator pitch about a special interest topic. You will be expected to submit a visual infographic and an accompanying recording explaining the importance of lobbying for the particular subject matter This project will be due April 27, 2021 and will be the final grade for this course section.

Guidelines: A rubric will be provided on D2L as well as more details of guidelines for the project by accessing the D2L Dropbox. To access Dropbox in D2L, click ASSESSMENTS, then ASSIGNMENTS.

Project Due Dates: In order to ensure that you are on track to completing a successful project, portions of the progression toward the project will be due in the D2L Dropbox to be graded. They are as follows:

Table 3: Project Part Due Dates

| Project Part and Description | Due Date |
| --- | --- |
| Part 1 – Topic and 3 cited sources + summary | 02/14/21 |
| Part 2 – 5 additional cited sources + summary | 03/21/21 |
| Part 3 – Final infographic and pitch | 04/27/21 |

## Make Up Work/Tests

It will be at the discretion of the instructor to allow make up work or tests. Please contact the instructor directly to be assessed. Since this is an online course, work conflict will not be considered a reason as to why an assignment, quiz, or test cannot be completed by the due date.

## 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 myself.

## Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with reliable Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class as well reliable internet or data to submit assignments. ***Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties or services issues 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. There are many places to access your class, including on a tablet and/or smartphone. Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. 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. Contact distance education and copy your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. For help, log into D2L**.**

## Class Policies

Engagement: Engagement in discussion is an important component of the online course. Preparedness and participation, as well as non-engagement will be noted. Discussion topics can be accessed on D2L by clicking on, COMMUNICATION, then DISCUSSIONS.

The Learning Environment: Since this course does not take place in-person where body language, facial expressions, and tone can be interpreted, let us all try to be mindful of what we type. Students are expected to be respectful of their classmates at all times during this course. Students should be respectful of their classmates' identities and backgrounds, such as racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds; religious and political beliefs; language, national origin, and migration or refugee status; sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity.

This syllabus serves as written notice that harassing or disruptive behavior, either verbal or written, will not be tolerated in the course and that actions will be subject to the disruptive behavior policy.

## Disruptive Behavior:

Disruptive behavior, including but not limited to using vulgarity, threatening the instructor or classmates, excessive intentional comments that are meant to troll other classmates that disrupt the class will not be tolerated. This syllabus serves as the warning that such behavior will not be tolerated. Students committing disruptive behavior will be removed from the class.

## Student Handbook

Refer to:  Student Handbook-2019-20

## 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 Rights and Responsibilities.

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 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.

## College Policies

Coronavirus

Please refer to the MSU Texas Coronavirus Update page for the latest guidance. This webpage is updated frequently. If you do visit campus, please be sure to wear appropriate facial coverings and complete a screening test through the MSU Safety App.

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.

Title IX

At Midwestern State University, the Title IX Department provides students, faculty, and staff with access to their rights and options under Title IX. The Title IX Department conducts investigations into possible violations of MSU's Sexual Misconduct Policy, as well as oversees the university's primary prevention and education programming related to sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and sexual harassment. To find out more or make a report please visit Title IX.

Notice

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

Table 4: Brief Overview of Course Schedule

| Week | Topic | Assigned Date | Due Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Introduction and Five Principles of Politics<br>Reading: APP – Ch 1 | 01/11 | 01/17 |
| 2 | Brief History up to U.S. Constitution<br>Reading: APP – Ch 2 | 01/18 | 01/24 |
| 3 | Federalism<br>Reading: APP – Ch 3 | 01/25 | 01/31 |
| 4 | Review and Exam 1 | 02/01 | 02/07 |
| 5 | Project | 02/08 | 02/14 |
| 6 | Political Parties<br>Reading: APP – Ch 12 | 02/15 | 02/21 |
| 7 | Elections<br>Reading: APP – Ch 11 | 02/22 | 02/28 |
| 8 | Public Opinion<br>Reading: APP – Ch 10 | 03/01 | 03/07 |
| 9 | Review and Exam 2 | 03/08 | 03/14 |
| 10 | Groups & Interests + Project Part 2<br>Reading: APP – Ch 13 | 03/15 | 03/21 |
| 11 | Texas Culture and Demographics<br>Reading: GT – Ch 1 | 03/22 | 03/28 |
| 12 | Texas Constitutions<br>Reading: GT – Ch 2 | 03/29 | 04/04 |
| 13 | Texas Political Parties<br>Reading: GT – Ch 4 | 04/05 | 04/11 |
| 14 | Texas Elections<br>Reading: GT – Ch 5 | 04/12 | 04/18 |
| 15 | Review and Exam 3 | 04/19 | 04/25 |
| 16 | Final Project Due | 01/11 | 04/27 |