

**Syllabus for POLS 1433 (Honors)  
American Government II  
Spring 2021**

**Course: POLS 1433 American Government II (Honors)**

Class: M, W, & F 9:00–9:50, 177 Dillard

**Lecturer: Steve Garrison, Ph.D.**

Contact	Information
Office:	111B Bridwell
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Bridwell Office Hours:	M,W,&F 10-12, T & R 9:00 am-1:50 pm and by appointment

**Course Description:**

This course introduces students to the political system of the United States and the state of Texas. In this course we will study the institutions of American government including the three branches of government at the Federal and state level; governmental bureaucracy and foreign policy.

**Texas Core Objectives:**

This course will support the development of the following state mandated core learning objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Social Responsibility, and Personal Responsibility.

**Texts:** *American Government in Black and White: Diversity and Democracy (3rd edition)*, Paula McClain and Steven Tauber. (2018), New York: Oxford university Press. There will also be some readings on Texas politics that will be available in D2L.

In addition to text books there are a series of readings on Texas politics and various material as well as for our discussions that I will place in D2L.

**Expectations, Examinations, and Grading:** Students are expected to attend class. Lectures will not reproduce the texts. During lectures, students are expected to behave in an adult fashion:

i.e. no note passing, punching, kissing, kicking or other juvenile behavior. Disrespectful behavior towards other students or the teacher will not be tolerated and will result in your removal from the class. Also, please turn cellular phones off during class. There will be two inclass exams and a final exam. The format of each is short answer questions and a longer essay question. The highest grading scale will be 90 (A), 80 (B), 70 (C), and 60 (D). If for any reason you should have to miss a test or assignment you must inform the instructor prior to the time of the test and proper documentation is required for any makeup test. The privilege of additional work will not be granted.

Since this is an honors course students will also complete a research project. This project is designed to allow students to pursue a political issue relating to their area of study or interest. Additional requirements and details will be presented at the beginning of the course, including due dates. Throughout the semester we will devote several class periods to discussion of some contemporary political events. In order to engage in thoughtful discussions it is imperative that students begin paying attention to some reliable news source, such as National Public Radio, Newshour (PBS), CNN, FOXNEWS, MSNBC, The New York Times, USA Today, Dallas Morning News, Austin American Statesman, Washington Post or any variety of reputable news sources. Separate discussion readings will be posted in D2L to guide these discussions. Students are expected to participate in classroom discussion and will be graded on their participation.

**Note on COVID-19 Issues:** If you develop COVID-19 or are required to quarantine and must attend class on Zoom you need to participate and be present in class. This means present at the start of class with your camera on and responsive to class questions. Not doing so will result in deduction for classroom participation.

**Grading:**

Activity	Grade
First Examination:	20%
First Examination:	20%
Final Exam:	20%
Research Project Paper:	20%
Research Project Presentation:	10%
Classroom Participation:	10%

**Disability Policy:** Any student in this course who has a disability that may preclude demonstrating fully his or her abilities should contact me as soon as possible. We will discuss the accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and to facilitate education.

**Plagiarism:** I take plagiarism very seriously and will check your work. By enrolling in this course, the student expressly grants MSU a “limited right” in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The “limited right” shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student’s work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, for educational purposes. The University’s *minimum penalty* for cheating or plagiarism is a *failure of assignment*. Cheating or plagiarism can lead to expulsion from the Honors program and the university. If you have questions about original work, please consult the Student Handbook Code of Student Conduct on Academic Dishonesty (page 55): <https://msutexas.edu/student-life/assets/files/handbook.pdf>

*Calendar* The following course schedule represents the schedule of readings and topics for the course. The reading assignments are located under the date and topic. Student’s should read the assigned readings prior to class. The instructor reserves the right to change the schedule.

Note: the following key applies to the reading schedule.

MT = McClain and Tauber. *American Government in Black and White*.

## Course Schedule

### Section I: Governing & Equality in America

#### January 11: Introduction

- Syllabus

#### January 13, & 15: Formulating Policy

- Morone, James and Rogan Keresh. 2019. ”Public Policymaking and Budgeting” in *By The People* (D2L).

#### January 20, 22, 25 & 27: Civil Liberties

- MT Chapter Four

**January 29: Discussion I: First Amendment & its Limitations**

- D2L

**Feb 1 & 3: Civil Rights**

- MT Chapter Five

**February 5: Discussion II: Social Justice**

- D2L

**Feb 8: Civil Rights (continued)**

- MT Chapter Five

**February 10: Catch up**

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**February 12: Exam One**

- Study Guide One

**Section II: American Institutions**

**February 15 & 17: US Presidency**

- MT Chapter Seven

**February 19: Discussion III: Impeachment 2.0**

- D2L

**February 22 & 24: Texas Governor**

- Texas Executive (D2L)

**February 26: Discussion IV**

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**March 1 & 3: US Congress**

- MT Chapter Six

**March 5: Discussion V**

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**March 8 & 10: Texas Legislature**

- Texas Legislature (D2L)

**March 12: Discussion VI: Financing of Higher Education**

- D2L

**March 15, & 17: US Judiciary**

- MT Chapter Nine

**March 19: Discussion VII**

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**March 22, & 24: TX Judiciary**

- Texas Judiciary (D2L)

**March 26: Discussion VII**

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**March 29: Catch up**

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**March 31: Exam Two**

- Study Guide Two

**April 2: Easter Break**

- No class

**April 5 & 7: The Bureaucracy**

- MT Chapter Eight

**April 9: Discussion VIII**

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## **Section III: Reforming Policy**

### **April 12 & 14: Foreign Policy**

- Kollman, Ken. 2017. "Foreign Policy" in The American Political System

### **April 16: Discussion IX**

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### **April 19, 21, & 23: Presentations**

- In Class presentations

### **April 26: Final Exam: 8:00-10:00 am**

- Study Guide Three
- Final projects due