

POLS 1333- 205
American and Texas Government I
Instructor: Dr. Sam Watson

Spring Semester 2025
Midwestern State University
200 Prothro-Yeager Hall
8-9:20am T, R

Office: O'Donohoe 119
Phone: 397-4746
Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course is an introductory examination of both the U.S. and Texas political systems. The course fulfills one half of the Texas legislative requirement that undergraduates receive six semester hours of instruction in American government. Topics to be covered include the meaning of democracy and political culture; the significance of constitutions; and, the impact of federalism, public opinion, interest groups, political parties, elections, the media, and money on the political process in our country and state.

Course Goals

The primary goal of this course is for each student to become better informed about, more interested in, and more aware of the influence politics has over their individual lives. The course seeks to demonstrate to students the relevancy of politics to all, and the importance of understanding and respecting different ideas and viewpoints, whether one agrees with them or not.

POLS 1333 is part of the MSU Core Curriculum. As such, students in the course will demonstrate: critical thinking, oral communication, personal responsibility, and social responsibility.

Required materials

- 1) Ginsberg, et al., We The People, 14th edition
- 2) Champagne et al, Governing Texas, 6th edition

Strongly recommended materials

- 1) A map of the world and a map of the United States.

Resource Materials

The University (Moffett) Library contains valuable resources which can aid students in their study and research for this course. In addition to many relevant books, a number of periodicals will be particularly useful (recent issues will be found on the current periodicals shelves; back issues are either bound or on microfilm/microfiche). A list of selected periodicals available in the library and local sources of broadcast media significant for political science research is attached to this syllabus.

Course Requirements

First examination	Thursday, February 27	25 percent
Second examination	Thursday, April 3	25 percent
Final Examination	Thursday, May 15 (8am)	30 percent
Attendance, participation, and current events brief		20 percent

The first, second, and final examinations consist of a series of short answer, essay questions. The second exam tests only the material covered since the first exam. The final exam, however, is cumulative.

In order to pass this class, a student must participate. Participation means coming to and preparing for class. Attendance will be checked periodically by signature sheet.

The current events brief requires students, in consultation with the instructor, to select an appropriate topic and present a 10 to 15 minutes oral brief to the class. The instructor requests each student meet with him in an individual conference before finalizing a current events topic. All meetings must be held by February 25. Beginning March 4 through May 6, two to three students will present their briefs during the last 30 minutes of scheduled classes.

Schedule of Assignments

1/21 – Introductory session
1/23, 28 – Ginsberg, chapter 1
1/30; 2/4 – Champagne, chapter 1
2/6, 11 – Ginsberg, chapter 2
2/13 – Champagne, chapter 2
2/18, 20 – Ginsberg, chapter 3
2/25- Champagne, chapter 3
2/27 – First exam
3/4, 6- Ginsberg, chapter 6
3/18, 20- Ginsberg, chapter 8
3/25, 27- Ginsberg, chapter 11
4/1- Champagne, chapter 6
4/3- Second exam
4/8, 15- Ginsberg, chapter 9
4/22 – Champagne, chapter 4
4/24, 29- Ginsberg, chapter 10
5/1- Champagne, chapter 5
5/6, 8- Ginsberg, chapter 7

No Class

3/ 11, 13- Spring Break
4/10
4/17—Holiday Break