

Government 310L
American Government
Unique Number
Semester Year

Instructor: Rachel Navarre
Office:
Office Hours:

rnavarre@utexas.edu
Class Time:
Class Location:

Teaching Assistants:

Course Description: This class provides an introduction to U.S. politics and governmental institutions. The main objective of this class is enable students to understand political processes, the role of governmental institutions, such as Congress, the Presidency, the Judiciary and the Bureaucracy, and the public policy processes. While the course focuses on the national level, it will also make connections between politics at the federal level and political processes in the state of Texas. By the end of the course, students should expect to have basic knowledge about the U.S. and Texas political systems, be able to apply basic political science theories of government to policy issues, and be able to think critically about politics.

Prerequisites: 12 hours of college course-work and a passing score on the reading section on the THEA test. The course fulfills the first half of the legislative requirement for Government.

Course Requirements:

Students are required to attend each lecture and complete the assigned readings before each meeting of the class. As the class will be concerned with political institutions and processes on the federal level and how these interact with government in Texas, students should also be prepared to discuss issues related to Texas state politics. In order to facilitate these discussions students will be required to complete supplemental readings assigned by the instructor at the Texas Politics website. You will also be periodically assigned readings from blogs and national news sources. These readings will be mentioned in class, and distributed through email and Canvas.

Required Text & Materials

1. Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, and Ansolabehere. *American Government: Power and Purpose*. Brief 13th Edition. New York: W.W. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-92246-2 (Available at the Co-op). If you order online, make sure to purchase the **Brief 13th** addition.
2. Texas Politics- online at <http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>
3. A number two pencil for exam days

Class Communication:

In this class, I will use Canvas (a web-based course management system) accessed at <http://canvas.utexas.edu>. The syllabus, additional readings, and announcements will be

posted on Canvas. Students are expected to check Canvas on a regular basis. Please refer to the ITS Help Desk at 512-475-9400 to find support in using Canvas. Important announcements may also be made during class, without other notice.

Class Email Policy:

Before contacting the instructor about questions regarding class policies, please re-check the syllabus. I will only answer emails during my normal business hours, typically Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm. Please be aware that depending on the time you send me an email, and the time I check my email, you may receive an answer the following **business** day.

Email will be used to communicate class changes through Canvas. All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

The University of Texas Code of Conduct

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Scholastic Dishonesty

According to the University, "Academic dishonesty" or "scholastic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two classes without the prior permission of the instructor), or the attempt to commit such an act" (General Information Catalogue Sec. 11-402. *Academic Dishonesty*).

By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to avoid academic and scholastic dishonesty as outlined in the General Information Catalogue. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. For more information on scholastic dishonesty, please visit the Student Judicial services Web site at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>. If you require accommodation, it is your responsibility to bring your accommodation letter to me early in the semester so we can work out arrangements. It is also the student's responsibility to schedule exams with

SSD.

Other Resources for Students

At UT, there are many resources for students dealing with academic or personal concerns. This website <http://www.utexas.edu/students/> provides links to many of these resources, including (but not limited to) Veteran Support Services, Diversity Services, the UT Campus Climate Response Team, the Sanger Learning Center for Academic Support and the Writing Center. These services are for you as a student, and I encourage you to use them as needed.

The Behavioral Concerns Line (BCAL) number is 512-232-5050.

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class or an examination in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Emergency Evacuation

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>.

Grading

This course will use plus/minus grades. Scores of 0.50 and higher will be rounded up, and scores that are 0.49 or lower will be rounded down.

Your final grade will be made up of the following:

Exam One (30%)

Exam Two (30%)

2 Short Papers (40%)

Your final grade will be calculated and converted into a letter grade using the following percentages:

A >93

A- 90-92

B+ 87-89

B 83-86

B- 80-82

C+ 77-79

C 73-76

C- 70-72

D+ 67-69

D 63-66

D- 60-62

F <60

Exams

There will be two in-class exams in this course. Each exam will be based both on readings and in class lectures. Exams will not be cumulative. Each exam is worth 30% of your grade and will be a mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions. You will be required to bring a number 2 pencil to the exam. Paper will be provided for the short answers.

Short Papers

There will be two short papers assigned in this course. Each will be worth 20% of your grade. The first paper will be on current debates and discussions about the constitution and its role in American society that are brought up through the text and the Constitution USA series from PBS. The second paper will focus on the media and sources. You will be required to look at a how popular political blog or website covers an issue, and discuss who the website is trying to appeal to, what assumptions do its authors make, and how this effects the site's coverage. More details will be given when the papers are assigned.

Grading Appeals/Questions

After I have returned or made the grades available to the class on Canvas, you have one week from that day to question the grade. If you wish to appeal the grading on a question you must submit an appeal **in writing via email** that outlines your concerns, and why you think re-grading is required. Grades are confidential. If you wish to discuss your grades, please contact me to schedule an appointment or visit me during my office hours.

Absences/Makeup Exam Policies

You are required to attend exams. Unexcused absences from examinations will result in a score of zero for that exam. Make-ups will only be allowed under extreme emergencies (accident, illness, or university or legal obligation per the University Handbook). You must present prior documentation, such as a letter from your doctor, or a letter from the appropriate university authority for university events if you need to take the make-up exam.

It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor about a missed exam. With the exception of documented hospitalization or other extreme circumstances, students are required to contact the instructor before the missed exam. In case of unexpected emergencies, the student must contact the instructor within three (3) days of missing the scheduled exam. If the student fails to do so, they will be assigned a zero for that exam. The instructor reserves the right to change the format of the exam for any exam given outside of normally scheduled exam times. The instructor will inform the student of the time and date of makeups

Class Calendar and Reading Assignments

I reserve the right to adjust the schedule as needed. The readings across from each day should be read prior to that day in class

Date	Topic	Assigned Readings
Wed 8/27	Introduction to US government, Class Overview	none
Fri 8/27	Constitution USA video	none
Labor Day	No class	none
Wed 9/3	Making Sense of Government	Ch 1
Fri 9/5	American Founding, Paper 1 assigned	Ch 2
Mon 9/8	The Constitution	Ch 2
Wed 9/10	Compromises and Negotiations	Ch 2
Fri 9/12	Federalism	Ch 3
Mon 9/15	Separation of Powers	Ch 3
Wed 9/17	Current Constitutional Debates	To be assigned
Fri 9/19	Civil Liberties	Ch 4
Mon 9/22	Civil Rights	Ch 4
Wed 9/24	Texas Political History and Culture	TP ch 1.4- 1.6
Fri 9/26	PAPER 1 DUE Issues in Rights and Liberties	To be assigned
Mon 9/29	The Presidency	Ch 6
Wed 10/ 1	Presidential Government	Ch 6
Fri 10/3	The Executive Branch	Ch 7
Mon 10/6	The Bureaucracy	Ch 7
Wed 10/8	Congress	Ch 5
Fri 10/10	The Legislative Branch	Ch 5
Mon 10/13	The Legislative Process	Ch 8
Wed 10/15	The Judiciary Branch	Ch 8
Fri 10/17	The Judiciary Branch	Ch 8
Mon 10/20	The Supreme Court	Ch 8
Wed 10/22	Exam 1 Review	none
Fri 10/24	EXAM 1	Ch 1-8, notes
Mon 10/27	Texas Constitution and Executive	TP, 2.1, 2.8-2.14, 6.4
Wed 10/29	Legislative Process in Texas	TP Ch 3
Fri 10/30	Legislative Process in Texas	TP Ch 4
Mon 11/5	Public Opinion	Ch 9
Wed 11/7	The Media – PAPER 2 Assigned	Ch 9
Fri 11/9	Elections	Ch 10
Mon 11/10	Interest Groups	Ch 12
Wed 11/12	Parties	Ch 11
Fri 11/14	Groups and Interests	Ch 11, 12
Mon 11/17	The Policy Process	Ch 13
Wed 11/19	Policy Theory	Ch 13
Fri 11/20	Policies in Practice	Ch 14
Mon 11/24	Political Culture in Texas	TP 1.1-1.4, 1.7-1.9
Wed 11/26	Interest groups and Parties in Texas	TP 4.2.1, 9.11-9.12
Thanksgiving	NO CLASS	TP 4.2.1, 9.11-9.12
Mon 12/1	Public Policy in Texas- PAPER 2 DUE	none

Wed 12/3	Exam 2 Review	none
Fri 12/ 5	EXAM 2	none
