

# Political Science 2305-06: American Government

Spring 2019

M/W/F 11:00am – 11:50am

CHSS 252

Instructor: Dr. Christopher Patane

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Campus Address: CHSS 470

Office Hours: M/W 2:00pm-4:00pm or by appointment

## Course Description

This is an introductory course in which we consider the basic ideas, structures, and political processes of the United States government, including the fundamental institutional relationships in the federal system. By the end of the semester, students should be able to recognize the major players in American politics, the basic structure of the U.S. Government, and the roles ideas, individuals, and institutions play.

In addition, we will apply these ideas in our discussion about the development of civil liberties and rights and the defining/protecting of these rights. Students will also be introduced to patterns in voter turnout and civic participation, as well as the role of public opinion and the media. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to bring up current events or issues that apply to our academic discussions in class. I will attempt to set aside time each week to discuss these issues and relate them to both our lecture and assigned readings.

## Learning Objectives

1. Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (factual knowledge, principles, theories)
2. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual activity
3. Learning to apply course material to improve thinking and problem solving

## Course Textbook

There is one textbook required for this course:

Textbook: Ginsberg, Benjamin, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, Caroline J. Tolbert, and Robert J. Spitzer. 2017. *We the People: An Introduction to American Politics*. Eleventh Essentials Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 978-0-393-93705-3

To keep costs to students to a minimum, only the ebook version of this text is required, but students can purchase a paper copy if they prefer. I will also have a copy available in my office for students to come by and look at during office hours.

## **Blackboard**

All communication for this course will be conducted via the course's Blackboard site and University email. Any supplementary material, assignments, or changes to the course structure will be made available on this site. Each student should ensure that they have access to these materials and are able to receive emails through their student account. Please note that I cannot accept or respond to student emails that come from a non-university address.

## **Grading**

Exam 1: 100 points

Exam 2: 100 points

Exam 3: 100 points

5 Blackboard Reading Quizzes: 10 points each

To prepare for each exam, I will make a review sheet available alongside my lecture slides. This material does not mean that class attendance is not important. Slides will only outline important points for the lecture, and are provided so that you can focus on taking notes from lecture rather than copying slides.

## **Grading Scale**

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79

D: 60-69

F: Below 60

## **Information and University Policies**

### **Academic Dishonesty:**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

[http://www.shsu.edu/~slo\\_www/](http://www.shsu.edu/~slo_www/)

### **Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy:**

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy

day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001.pdf>

### **Students with Disabilities Policy:**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu)). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/7ff819c3-39f3-491d-b688-db5a330ced92.pdf>

### **Visitors in the Classroom:**

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

### **Copyright on Lecture and Course Materials**

Copyright 2018 (Christopher Patane) as to this syllabus and all lectures. During this course, students are prohibited from selling notes or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the instructor teaching this course.

## **Mental Health**

Sometimes the study of Political Science involves dealing with difficult material. In some cases these may reflect or reference your own personal, family, or group experiences. Other times, life events may interfere with your ability to succeed in class. We do not want neglect our own health or well being. If you need support, the Counseling Center can be reached at 936-294-1720. The [website](#) also contains self help resources, and those services available in the Huntsville community.

As with all other parts of the course, students are welcome and encouraged to come talk to me to voice their concerns, seek support, or discuss accommodation for coursework after a crisis.

## **Class Outline**

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. Changes will be announced in class and on the course Blackboard site. It is the responsibility of the student to take note of any changes.

### **Week 1: January 16-18**

#### **The Citizen and Government, American Political Thought**

Reading: Chapter 1

Friday, January 18: No Class, **SPSA 2019**

### **Week 2: January 21-25**

#### **The Founding and Constitution**

Monday, January 21: No class, **MLK Day**

Reading: Chapter 2

Reading Quiz 1

### **Week 3: January 28-February 1**

#### **Federalism**

Reading: Chapter 3

### **Week 4: February 4-8**

#### **Civil Liberties**

Reading: Chapter 4

Friday, February 8, Exam 1

### **Week 5: February 11-15**

#### **Civil Rights**

Reading: Chapter 5

Reading Quiz 2

### **Week 6: February 18-22**

#### **Public Opinion**

Reading: Chapter 6

**Week 7: February 25-March 1**

**The Media**

Reading: Chapter 7

**Week 8: March 4-8**

**Political Participation**

Reading: Chapter 8

Reading Quiz 3

**Week 9: March 11-15**

**No Class, Spring Break**

**Week 10: March 18-22**

**Political Parties & Elections**

Reading: Chapter 9 & 10

Friday, March 22, Exam 3

**Week 11: March 25-29**

**Interest Groups**

Reading: Chapter 11

Reading Quiz 4

**Week 12: April 1-5**

**Congress**

Reading: Chapter 12

**Week 13: April 8-12**

**The Presidency**

Reading: Chapter 13

**Week 14: April 15-19**

**The Bureaucracy**

Reading: Chapter 14

Reading Quiz 5

Friday, April 19: **No Class, Good Friday Holiday**

**Week 15: April 22-26**

**The Courts**

Reading: Chapter 15

**Week 16: April 29-May 3**

**Public Policy**

Reading: None

**Week 17: May 6-9**

**Finals Week**

Wednesday, May 8 12:00pm-2:00pm, Exam 3