

POLS 2305.002  
Fall 2008

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Office: BUS 233 – Hours: T and TR 10:00am-11:00am

## **Introductory American Government**

### **Class Meeting Times**

Classes will meet Tuesday and Thursday from 12:30pm to 1:45pm..

### **Text**

American Government, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., James Q. Wilson, John J. DiIulio, jr.

### **Important Dates to Remember**

September 10 – Census Date

October 31 - last day to withdraw from class with an “W”

November 26-29 – Thanksgiving Holiday

December 18 – Final Exam 12:30-2:30pm

### **Course Description**

Study of the institutions governing the United States and related policy processes. Includes a focus on the legislative process, the executive branch, and the judicial system. May be taken in fulfillment of statutory requirements for a baccalaureate degree.

This class will focus on local and state and national political offices, the governing bodies at the state and national level, and the structure of the national legislature, judicial, and executive branches. It is hoped that this course will better inform the student about the political process, reasons one should be concerned about politics (local and national), and the manner in which the government functions.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to demonstrate:

- familiarity with terminology used to study political science and American government
- basic knowledge of the historical evolution of American governmental structures
- an understanding of the constitutional, institutional, political and legal processes and structures of the United States
- comprehension of the interrelationships of American governmental institutions
- awareness of basic values of American political culture

### **Grading Scale**

Exams will be graded on a 100-point scale. Make up exams will only be scheduled for students with a valid and credible excuse *and* will consist of different questions than the regular exam. Each exam will be worth 100 points. There will also be 1 Media Project worth 100 points. The total points possible will be 400 points.

The grading scale will be the following:

360 - 400 points = A

320 - 359 points = B  
 280 - 319 points = C  
 240 - 279 points = D  
 239 and below = F

### Course Outline

Week	Beginning	Description
1	August 28	Introduction to politics and government
2	September 2	Chapter 1, The Study of American Government
3	September 9	Chapter 2, Constitution
4	September 16	Chapter 3, Federalism
5	September 23	Chapter 4, American Political Culture
		<b>Test 1, Thursday September 25</b>
6	September 30	Chapter 5, Civil Liberties; Chapter 6, Civil Rights
7	October 7	Chapter 7, Public Opinion; Chapter 8, Political Participation
8	October 14	Chapter 9, Political Parties; Chapter 10, Elections and Campaigns
9	October 21	Chapter 11, Interest Groups; Chapter 12, The Media
		<b>Test 2, Thursday October 23</b>
10	October 28	Chapter 13, Congress;
11	November 4	Chapter 14, The Presidency
12	November 11	Chapter 15, The Bureaucracy
13	November 18	Chapter 16, The Judiciary
14	November 25	Chapter 17, The Policy Making Process
		<b>Media Project due December 4</b>
15	December 2	Chapter 18, Economic Policy; Chapter 19, Social Welfare
16	December 9	Chapter 20, Foreign and Military Policy; Chapter 21, Environmental Policy
Test	December 18	<b>Final Exam at 12:30pm</b>

We will adhere to this schedule as closely as possible. In the event that the class gets behind I will reschedule tests at least 1 week in advance. It is the students' responsibility to attend class in order to keep current with all schedule changes.

### Class Etiquette and Expectations

In my experience most people understand that in college there are expectations that the student should act as an adult in the classroom. Most of the time students conduct themselves with good manners and are greeted with respect from their fellow students as well as the instructor. However, from time to time a social "problem child" slips in and disrupts the classroom. To keep such disturbances to a minimum I will briefly give my expectations of the students in the classroom.

Tardiness is understood; sometimes we simply cannot help being late. If you must enter the class late please do so quietly and do not let tardiness become a habit. **Please turn cell phones and pagers off before entering class.** An occasional ring or two will not terribly bother me, but don't let it become a habit as well. **Please don't talk**

**to other students in class or text message friends!** It is disruptive and disrespectful to the professor and other students in class.

Students are expected to remain polite during classroom discussions. Even during heated debates, you must treat your classmates with respect. For example, you should not make derogatory remarks about your classmates' ideas. Instead, explain why you think they are wrong, backing up your viewpoint with sound logical analysis and refraining from personal attacks. Students should remain quiet while someone else (including your instructor!) has the floor.

**Class Attendance:**

I do not have a class attendance policy. However, experience shows me that students that diligently attend their classes and keep good notes tend to make high grades in their coursework, whereas students that are lax in their attendance and/or do not take lecture notes tend to make poor or failing grades in their classes. Remember this when you come to me wondering why you are failing this course. My first two questions will be are you attending class and are you taking good notes?

**Disability Statement:**

"If you have disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact Ida MacDonald in the Disability Support Services offices so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodation must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Support Services counselor. For more information, call or visit the Student Services Center located in the University Center, Room 111. The telephone number is 566-7079 (TDD 565-5579)."

**Social Security Statement:**

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number.

**Note Regarding Student Absence due to Religious Observance:**

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor by the second class meeting of such absences.

**Grade Replacement:**

If you are repeating this course for a grade replacement, you must file an intent to receive grade forgiveness with the registrar by the 12th day of class. Failure to file an intent to use grade forgiveness will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. A student will receive grade forgiveness (grade replacement) for only three (undergraduate student) or two (graduate student) course repeats during his/her career at UT Tyler. (2006-08 Catalog, p. 35)

**Academic Honesty**

I have a pretty simple policy, **DO NOT CHEAT OR PLAGERIZE.** Doing so will result in the immediate failure of the class.