

POLS 2305-60  
Summer I 2009  
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John Raulston

### **Introductory American Government**

This course offers a survey of the ideas and the practice of contemporary government and politics in the United States. It will examine the American political process with special attention to its context, institutions, and the electoral process. Furthermore, this course will emphasize the theoretical and practical understanding of how and why the American political system produces the kind of policies it does, and how the system itself is structured.

#### **Office Hours-**

Wednesday 2:00pm-3:30pm.

#### **Class Meetings-**

Online

#### **Text-**

The following text is required and is available for purchase at the campus bookstore.

American Government and Politics Today: The Essentials. Schmidt, Shelley, and Bardes.  
University of Texas at Tyler Custom Edition

#### **Course Requirements-**

1. Attendance of class meetings via participation in online discussion forums.
2. Successful completion of three exams to be held on June 15<sup>th</sup>, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, and July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009
3. Successful completion of the Final Exam on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

#### **Grading Scale-**

Each exam, including the final exam, will be worth 100 points for an overall total of 400 points. The Discussion is worth 100 points and broken down below. The grading scale will be as follows:

450-500 points = A  
400-449 points = B  
350-399 points = C  
300-349 points = D

299 or below = F

### Online Discussion/Participation

Each of the 4 units will have a number of discussion topics that each student will be required to participate in. The student will need to post a minimum of one response per topic in order to receive credit on each unit. Multiple posts are encouraged to impress the instructor. Failure to post at least once in each topic per unit will cause the student to have his or her discussion/attendance/participation grade to be reduced by the instructor up to 25 points per unit. Following the minimum participation requirements is necessary to get credit for each unit. Failure to participate in each discussion will result in no participation points for that particular unit, no matter how well thought out and regarded your partial participation might be. Since the course is divided into 4 units, the total points available for participation, attendance, and discussion is 100 points, or the equivalent of one test grade. Discussion posts must be well thought out, intelligently arranged, and supported by in depth academic level thought. No jargon or internet abbreviations will be accepted. In addition, all posts in the discussion topics must be clean and cannot be personally insulting. Any posts that offend the instructor will be removed and the person(s) responsible will not receive credit for that unit's discussion. Multiple infractions will result in the student receiving no discussion credit for the entire course. Please keep these guidelines in mind as you post in the discussion section. However, everyone's opinion is valuable and disagreements, even heated ones, are expected. These must be kept respectful and clean at all times.

### 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

**Disability Statement-** If you have a disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact Ida MacDonald in the Disability Support Services office so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, students 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 282. The telephone number is 903-566-7079.

**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 12<sup>th</sup> 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)

### **Course Outline-**

Unit 1-will be available from June 8<sup>th</sup>-June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

Chapter 1-Introduction

Chapter 2-The Constitution

Chapter 4-Civil Liberties

Chapter 5-Civil Rights

-each student will also be responsible for the discussion topics and lecture notes for Unit 1, which will be posted online.

Unit 2-will be available from June 16<sup>th</sup>-June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009.

Chapter 3-Federalism

Chapter 13-The Judiciary

Chapter 9-Voting Behavior, Campaigns, and Elections

-each student will also be responsible for the discussion topics and lecture notes for Unit 2, which will be posted online.

Unit 3-will be available from June 24<sup>th</sup>-June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

Chapter 6-Public Opinion

Chapter 7-Interest Groups

Chapter 8-Political Parties

-each student will also be responsible for the discussion topics and lecture notes for Unit 3, which will be posted online.

Unit 4-will be available from July 2<sup>nd</sup>-July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

Chapter 14-Domestic and Economic Policy

Chapter 10-Congress

Chapter 11-The Presidency

Chapter 15-Foreign Policy

-each student will also be responsible for the discussion topics and lecture notes for Unit 4, which will be posted online.