

Introduction to American Government

POLS 2305.060

Spring 2026

Lecturer:

Melissa Salgado, M.A.

Office: CAS 114A

Office Hours: Office hours will be held Mondays: 12:30-1:30 and Wednesday/Friday: 10:00-11:00 AM or by appointment. If you need a virtual option please send me an email.

Form of Contact:

Email: msalgado@uttyler.edu

- Please send an email from your *patriots' email only* as I will not respond to emails from any other accounts. **Email is the best way to contact me.**
- During weekdays students can expect an email back within a minimum of 24 hours, on weekends students can expect at least 48 hours before a response back. (Weekends begin Friday at 5PM!)
- Please make sure you are paying attention to announcements on Canvas, outside of in class announcements, canvas is how I will be communicating with everyone.

Textbook: Textbook for the course is *Game of Politics: Conflict, Power, and Representation*, this textbook is available online and can be found [here](#) or under the Modules tab.

Course Description and Objectives:

This course is meant to examine the creation of the United States political system, including its foundations and the Constitution. The course will look at the three branches of government, their importance as well as the changing political climate and the process in which policy is created. By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Identify and define terminology used to study political science and American Government
- Have basic knowledge of the historical evolution of American government and the political process
- Describe the constitutional, institutional, political, and legal processes and structures of the United States

Requirements, Dates, and Grades:

Grades will be determined by the following:

This table outlines the graded requirements for this course.	
Small Assignments	35%
Quizzes	10%
Voting Assignment	5%
Exams (50% Total)	
Exam 1 (February 6th)	12.5%
Exam 2 (March 6th)	12.5%
Exam 3 (April 3rd)	12.5%
Final Exam (April 27)	12.5%

*Dates are subject to change

Question of the Week (Small Assignments):

Questions of the week are meant to help students learn from the lectures and book and apply the information in a well-articulated response to a question. Students should be aware some questions may require a little outside research, and at times will have two parts to them. Each question of the week will be related to the content for the unit we are focusing on at the time and should use lecture materials as well as the book to support their answers. Although most of the questions are opinion based, you must use factual evidence to support your responses. You can use lectures the book, or outside sources (must be cited if used). Students can submit up to one week after the assignment is due with penalty, but after a week the assignment *will no longer be available and will not reopen*. There is not a question of the week every single week so please make sure you know when these are due. Full grades are awarded to those responses that are well thought out, use examples and materials from class and the book, in ***your own words***, and written with proper grammar. Please make sure you are aware of all due dates for these small assignments, quizzes, and exams. Student should not use AI to write their responses. Although AI can be useful in research, answers should be cited with reliable sources, and written by each student themselves. The use of AI is considered cheating and will result in a zero as well as being reported.

Quizzes:

There will be a total of 12 quizzes or assignments to be completed. The due dates for these will be on canvas. The two lowest quiz grades will be dropped at the end of the semester. The quizzes will cover material covered that week and will also be helpful when exam time comes around. Please note, **late quiz grades will not be accepted**. Students may still take the quizzes late for study material, but *late quizzes will receive a zero*.

Voting assignment:

Students are required to submit one essay for this class. The requirements for the assignment are explained further on canvas, students are expected to use the knowledge from this class as well as cited resources. This essay prompt may also be similar to other essay prompts in your classes but students are not allowed to submit the same essay. Please keep this in mind when writing your essays. This assignment is due April 10th.

Exams:

The exams will cover material discussed in the lectures, readings from your textbook, and anything else that may be uploaded to canvas. Extra credit may be available throughout the semester at the lecturer's discretion and will be given to the class not on an individual basis.

Exams will be online on canvas; students will have an hour on exam day to take their exams and will have **one** chance to the exam. Exams will not be reopened, or due dates extended, because the lowest exam grade will be dropped, there are no exceptions to this rule. Please note the exam will close at midnight so the latest it can be started is 10:30 pm for the full time.

Course grades will be assigned as follows:

- 90 – 100% = A
- 80 – 89% = B
- 70 – 79% = C
- 60 – 69% = D
- 0 – 59 % = F

UT Tyler AI Policy:

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for

the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

For this course, this use of AI is not allowed.

Semester Break Down

This table outlines the schedule students should follow for this course.

Unit 1: Basics, the Constitution, Civil Liberties & Rights, Public Opinion

<i>Week #</i>	<i>Class Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Assignments Due</i>
Week 1	Introduction/ Basics	Syllabus, Ch.1	QOW #1,
Week 2	Constitution/Federalism Ch.1		
Week 3	Civil Liberties/Civil Rights		QOW #2
Week 4	Finish Unit 1	Ch. 1	Quizzes 1-3, Exam 1

Unit 2: Congress, The Presidency, the Executive Branch, The Judiciary

Week 5	Congress	Ch. 3	
Week 6	Presidency/ Executive Branch	Ch.4&5	QOW#3

Week 7	The Judicial Branch	Ch. 6	QOW #4
--------	---------------------	-------	--------

Week 8	Finish Unit 2	Ch. 3-6	Quizzes 4-6, Exam 2
--------	---------------	---------	---------------------

Spring Break 3/9-3/13

Unit 3: Political Parties, Interest Groups, Campaigns and Elections

Week 9	Political Parties	Chapter 7	QOW #5
--------	-------------------	-----------	--------

Week 10	Interest Groups	Chapter 10	QOW #6
---------	-----------------	------------	--------

Week 11	Campaigns & Elections	Chapter 11	Quizzes 8-10, Exam 3
---------	-----------------------	------------	----------------------

Unit 4: Media, Domestic Policy, and Foreign Policy

Week 12	Media	Chapter 8	QOW #7
---------	-------	-----------	--------

Week 13	Public Opinion	Chapter 2	
---------	----------------	-----------	--

Week 14	Domestic Policy/Foreign Policy	Chapter 9	QOW #8
---------	-----------------------------------	-----------	--------

Week 15	Finals Week	Finish Readings for Unit 4	Quizzes 10-12 due, Final Exam
---------	-------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------