# Introduction to American Government

## Course Information
Course Number: POLS 2305.003  
Times: MWF 11:15-12:10  
Location: Braithwaite Building 1055

## Contact Information
Instructor: Jamie K. Bitzenhofer  
Email: jbitzenhofer@uttyler.edu  
Office Hours: By Appointment

## Overview of Introduction to American Government
Our government shapes us and impacts the world. Because of this, it is important to have an understanding of how it all works. This class examines the US political system, including its intellectual foundations and the Constitution. It studies America’s major institutional factors, the process of making policy, the role of citizens, the media and interest groups.

## Learning Outcomes
1. An understanding of governmental structures and their processes  
2. An ability to see the relationships between governmental institutions  
3. An understanding of the historical development of the American system  
4. A knowledge of political systems, ideologies, and policy processes  
5. A familiarity with some of the terminology used in political science  
6. A basic awareness of America's influence globally and relationships with other countries  
7. An increased interest in civic participation

In addition, this class hopes to foster critical thinking, communication, social skills and personal responsibility skills in its students.

## Method of Instruction
Instruction will be a combination of open lectures, class discussion and possibly, given the class size, group discussion. Students are expected to participate, even in the lectures, which will be in the open-form style. The textbook will serve as the basic outline of the course, so students need to do the reading and come prepared to class. Unannounced, in-class participation, assignments and quizzes will make up a portion of the grade.

## Required Textbook
*We the People* (10th Core Edition) by Ginsberg, et al.

## Class Expectations
Treat your classmates, their education and their views with respect. Do your work and participate in class. Do not carry outside conversation topics into the class. I am understanding of occasional tardiness unless it becomes disruptive or frequent. The use of technology should be limited to taking notes. I do not allow my lectures to be recorded without prior consent. A failure to meet class expectations will result in a lowering of participation grade and/or, if serious, can
result in further action.

**Assignments**
Exam 1: 25%
Exam 2: 25%
Exam 3: 30%
Attendance & Participation: 20%

- **Exams:** All exams will be drawn from the material covered in lecture, your textbook, and additional material provided.
- **Attendance & Participation:** 20% of the grade will be based on participation and attendance in class. This includes unannounced assignments and quizzes
- **Make up examinations:** Please see me if you have missed an examination or if you know in advance that you have a scheduling conflict.
- **Extra-credit:** Any opportunities offered by the instructor will be offered to all students on an equal basis. Please do not ask for or expect individual extra credit opportunities.
- **Technology:** This class may utilize email, Dropbox and Blackboard. Please see me if access to technology is an issue.

**Class Schedule** [Open to some variation]

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<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Chapter or Topics</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08/24/15</td>
<td>Ch 1: Intro</td>
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<td>09/07/15</td>
<td>Ch 2: Constitution</td>
<td>Labor Day</td>
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<td>09/14/15</td>
<td>Ch 3: Federalism</td>
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<td>09/21/15</td>
<td>Ch 4: Civil Liberties</td>
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<td>09/28/15</td>
<td>Ch 5: Civil Rights</td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
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<td>10/05/15</td>
<td>Chs 6-7: Public Opinion and Media</td>
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<td>10/12/15</td>
<td>Chs 8-9: Participation and Parties</td>
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<td>10/19/15</td>
<td>Ch 10: Campaigns and Elections</td>
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<td>10/26/15</td>
<td>Ch 11: Groups and Interests</td>
<td>Drop Date</td>
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<td>11/02/15</td>
<td>Ch 12: Congress</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
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<td>11/09/15</td>
<td>Ch 13: Presidency</td>
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<td>11/16/15</td>
<td>Ch 14: Bureaucracy</td>
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<td>11/23/15</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<td>11/30/15</td>
<td>Ch 15: Federal Courts</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/07/15</td>
<td>Finals Week</td>
<td>Exam 3</td>
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**POLICIES THAT MUST APPEAR IN EACH COURSE SYLLABUS**

The following University policies must appear on each course syllabus or be provided as an informational sheet (web-links to these policies may be used in the print or electronic syllabus)

http://www.uttyler.edu/academicaffairs/syllabuspolicies.pdf
Students Rights and Responsibilities
To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link:
http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies
Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar. Each semester’s Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:
- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a “W” grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy
Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.
Disability/Accessibility Services
In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible a disability diagnosis such as a chronic disease, learning disorder, head injury or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with an Accessibility Case Manager. If you are unsure if the above criteria applies to you, but have questions or concerns please contact the SAR office. For more information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR webpage (http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices/) or the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to saroffice@uttyler.edu.

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

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities
If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA 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. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation:
Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor’s directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.