

Government 2305 - Federal Government Course Syllabus - Spring 2012



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COURSE OBJECTIVE

Since 1947, the Texas state legislature has required that public college and university students complete six semester-hours in American national, state, and local government. The survey course in national government is designed not only to meet that requirement but also to provide you with the basic knowledge and understanding of government activity at the federal level. This course should also give you a better understanding of certain germane disciplines such as history, sociology, philosophy, literature, and economics while preparing you for careers in teaching, public service and the law. You may also benefit from taking a course such as this by not only learning how government affects your life but how you can affect public policy.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of our federal system.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties
6. Analyze the election process.
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens
8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

TEXTBOOK

Dye, Thomas R., *Politics in America*, 9th ed.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

This course will be taught using assigned readings, multi-media presentations, class discussion boards. Student progress will be demonstrated and measured through targeted writing assignments and examinations.

The student's final grade will be determined by the following:

Three Unit Exams	45%
Weekly Quizzes	15%
Review Questions/Discussion Boards	15%
Research Paper	15%
Comprehensive Department Final	10%

The following grading scale applies:

90+ = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, >59 = F

EXAMINATIONS

There will be three examinations which will cover the material in the designated chapters of your text, lectures/presentations, discussions and assignments. These tests will consist of a total of forty multiple choice or true/false questions and two essay questions which you will choose from the four offered.

CUMULATIVE FINAL EXAM

There will be a comprehensive final exam offered at the end of the semester and will be of the same format of the previous three exams, however, this exam will be cumulative and consist of new questions not used on prior exams.

DISCUSSION BOARDS

Each week a discussion topic will be posted on blackboard and students will be required to submit at least a one paragraph response to the topic. Further, each student will need to reply to at least two other students' responses. Each response should be at least two sentences. Simple, one-word responses of agreement or disagreement or the like will not qualify for credit for this assignment. For weeks when multiple chapters are covered, there will still only be one discussion board.

WEEKLY QUIZZES

Each week there will be a ten question quiz administered. This will cover the chapter(s) which are covered each week and will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. For weeks when multiple chapters are covered, there will still only be one quiz.

RESEARCH PAPERS

Students will be required to complete a 4+ page paper throughout the course of the semester. These papers will each cover a topic focused on a branch of the American

government and they are to be your original work which will contain both researched information and personal analysis of that information. These papers will be graded mostly for content but will need to be composed at a level appropriate for college students. You may choose your paper from the topics provided below.

The topics for the papers are as follows:

1. Choose a Congressman or Senator, not from Texas, and write a brief biography of your chosen member. Be sure to include their political party, election information, vital issues, and any controversial or newsworthy actions. Additionally, you will detail a bill on which they voted against the majority of their party and explain why they chose to do so.
2. Choose and profile a federal government agency. Provide details on this agency including year established, function, leadership and at least two newsworthy incidents involving this agency from the past five years.
3. Choose a Supreme Court Justice and provide a brief biography on that Justice. You must include their appointment, their previous career work and education. You will also be required to detail their position on two cases; one example of a case in which they voted with the majority and another in which they held the minority opinion.

All written assignments are to be typed, double-spaced, on white, 8.5x11 inch unlined paper. If you are using a word processor, use a 12-point font (Arial or Times New Roman) and 1-inch margins. Include your name on the assignment. Do not use report covers or folders, unless instructed. When applicable, papers should be stapled in upper, left-hand corner of paper (no paper clips or bent corners).

LATE WORK POLICY

Make-up examinations with no penalty will be allowed if the student provides documentation of the need to miss class in advance or of an unforeseeable emergency. If the student misses an exam without prior notice or documented emergency, the examination will not be offered.

All assignments, aside from examinations will be accepted for **six (6)** days after the original due date, with a 5% penalty for each day it is past due. No work will be accepted **seven (7)** days or later than the original date unless a certifiable exception should be necessary.

WITHDRAWAL PROCESS STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

If you stop attending class, and do NOT fill out the appropriate form to drop or withdraw from the class, you will receive an “F” as your final grade. It is your responsibility to be aware of the dates and procedures for this process. Properly dropping or withdrawing from a course ensures that your GPA and financial aid will not be adversely affected. **The last day to withdraw for Spring 2012 courses is April 13, 2012.**

SPECIAL NEEDS

Odessa College complies with Section 504 of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act and with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. Issues with special needs will be referred to the Office of Disability Services.

ACADEMIC HONESTY STATEMENT

Cheating and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Suspected cheating or plagiarism may result in a (re)examination in a controlled environment, a failing grade, or dismissal from the course. As per OC Board Policy the option is with the instructor: In cases of academic dishonesty, the instructor has the authority to impose appropriate scholastic penalties.

No student shall engage in behavior that, in the judgment of the instructor of the class, may be construed as cheating. This may include, but is not limited to, plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty such as the acquisition without permission of tests or other academic materials and/or distribution of these materials and other academic work. This includes students who aid and abet as well as those who attempt such behavior.

Plagiarism: *The unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work.*

All work must be in your own words, written, edited and produced for this course, this semester. If there is Evidence of plagiarism, or any form of academic dishonesty, on any work for the course will receive an automatic score of zero for the exercise in question. The instructor may also take additional steps consistent with Odessa College regulations. This syllabus and schedule are subject to change as the instructor deems necessary.

COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1: January 17, 2012

Politics and Political Culture

Reading: Chapters 1 and 2

Quiz/Discussion Board

Week 2: January 23, 2012

The Constitution

Reading: Chapter 3

Quiz/Discussion Board

Week: 3: January 30, 2012

Federalism

Reading: Chapter 4

Quiz

Discussion Board

Week 4: February 6, 2012

Political Participation

Reading: Chapter 5

Quiz/Discussion Board

Week 5: February 13, 2012**Paper #1 Due**

The Media

Reading: Chapter 6

Quiz/Discussion Board

Week 6: February 20, 2012**Test #1: Chapters 1-6**

Political Parties

Reading: Chapter 7

Quiz/Discussion Board

Week 7: February 27, 2012

Campaigns and Interest Groups

Reading: Chapters 8 and 9

Quiz/Discussion Board

Week 8: March 5, 2012

Congress

Reading: Chapter 10

Quiz/Discussion Board

Spring Break: March 12-17**No Assignments****Week 9: March 19, 2012**

The Presidency

Reading: Chapter 11

Quiz/Discussion Board

Week 10: March 26, 2012**Paper #2 Due**

The Bureaucracy

Reading: Chapter 12

Quiz/Discussion Board

Week 11: April 2, 2012**Test #2: Chapters 7-12**

The Judiciary

Reading: Chapter 13

Quiz/Discussion Board

Week 12: April 9, 2012

Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Reading: Chapters 14 and 15

Quiz/Discussion Board

Week 13: April 16, 2012

Politics and the Economy

Reading: Chapter 16

Quiz/Discussion Board

Week 14: April 23, 2012**Politics and Social Welfare****Reading: Chapter 17**

Quiz/Discussion Board

Week 15: April 30, 2012**Paper #3 Due**

Politics and National Security

Reading: Chapter 18

Quiz/Discussion Board

Week 16: May 7, 2012:**Test #3: Chapters 13-18****Cumulative Final Exam**