

**SYLLABUS**

**POLS 2311-012 U.S. Government- Spring 2014**

**Professor:**Michael W Morris, BAS, MA

**Office Hours:**   
Not Applicable

**E-mail:**   
*mwmorris@uta.edu*

**Course Objectives and Goals**

This course aims to acquaint you with the fundamentals of American government and to encourage the critical evaluation of issues related to politics. The course also strives to give you an appreciation of the demands and difficulties of a modern democracy. After completing this course, students will (1) demonstrate a well-rounded knowledge of American government and politics; (2) demonstrate an understanding of how political scientists analyze and interpret the foundations, institutions, processes, and actors that constitute American government and politics; and (3) demonstrate critical thought about American government and politics.

**Anticipated Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to be able to:

* Define fundamental concepts associated with American politics
* Describe the structure and function of the differing branches of American Government
* Explain the theoretical and historical underpinnings of the U.S. Constitution
* Explain how individuals participate in the American political system
* Comprehend the civil rights and civil liberties afforded to American citizens and this historical development
* Identify the influence of mass media, socio-political movements, interest groups, corporations, political parties, campaigns and elections have on American politics.

**Course Features**

This course is a guided, self-paced, Web-based course. Students in this course will obtain all the course information from their textbook and from materials available on the Internet via the course Web site. As a guided, self-paced course, students are responsible for keeping up with their course work (see schedule below) or you may advance at an accelerated pace. Since we will not meet on a regular basis, I will send periodic electronic reminders to help you pace yourself, but **the ultimate responsibility of keeping up with the course is yours.**

**Required Course Tools**

There are two required course tools:

**1.Text*: We the People***. 10th Edition. Thomas E. Patterson. **ISBN:** 978-1-2592-4218-2

**2**. **MyMavs Email Account:** All students **MUST** use their UT Arlington email account for communication with the instructor and posting comments in the course discussion section. The account is free to all students enrolled at UTA. If you do not have a UTA account, please visit the UTA [*helpdesk*](https://webapps.uta.edu/oit/selfservice/index.php) for information on setting up the account. You may also call the OIT Help Desk at 817-272-2208 or e-mail them at [*helpdesk@uta.edu*](mailto:helpdesk@uta.edu).

**Note: When communicating with your professor directly from your MyMav email account, you should use the following in the Subject line:**

**POLS 2311-011 U.S. Govt-2014 Spring-1**

**Course Requirements**

**1. Unit Exams and Final Exam**

During this course you will take **3 units** exams that will cover information presented in the online text, online audio lectures and the textbook. These exams will be weighted equally and count for **40% of your final course grade**. The exams must be completed according to the schedule posted later in this syllabus. All unit exams shall contain a total of 50 multiple choice and true/false questions. You will have **50 minutes** to complete the exams.

At the conclusion of the course, you will take a **final exam** which is worth **30% of your final course grade**. The final exam is comprehensive in nature. The final exam contains 100 multiple choice and true/false questions and you will have **100 minutes** to complete the exam.

You must take all exams without the aid of your notes, books, or other aides and are expected to adhere to the University policy on Academic Dishonesty (see below). Anyone suspected of cheating will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

**2. Learning Progress Activity (LPA)**

For each exam unit, you will complete a brief learning activity that is designed to prompt your thinking on the unit under discussion.  These learning activities are due at 11:59 p.m. CST on the due date listed below.  This is worth **15% of your grade**.

**NOTE: All assignments and exams are due by 11:59 p.m. CT on the due date listed below. Missed assignments will only be allowed to be made up with documentation of a medical emergency.**

**3. Pre-test**

For each exam unit, you will complete a brief pre-test exercise. The pre-test is designed to help you see the areas of the Chapter that you should focus on. This is a participation grade and you will receive 100% credit for the completion of the exercise. Failure to complete the exercise will result in a “0” for the assignment.  These pre-test activities are due at 11:59 p.m. CST on the due date listed below.  This is worth **10% of your grade**.

**4. Assignments**: There will be three (3) Unit exams, an LPA for each chapter assignments, pre-test participation. The points for each are as follows:

Pre-test 10%

Learning Progress Activities (LPAs) 15%

Unit Exams 3 45%

Final Exam 30%

**5. Grading**: Your grades will be based on the following scale:

A 90-100%

B 80-89%

C 70-79%

D 60-69%

F 59% and below

**Course Evaluation**

After you have finished taking all the unit exams, you should complete a course evaluation form.  The link to the form will be emailed to you.  Your comments on this form are anonymous. This assessment will only be available until the final exam completion date. Please make plans to do the assessment before that time - your opinion is important!

**Instructor’s Policies**

Contacting Me: Even though I will not meet with you in a traditional classroom, I want you to know that I am available to answer your questions or to talk to you about the course. You may reach me in a variety of ways. For example, you may e-mail from the course pages. I will make every effort to get an answer to your question within 48 hours. You should also feel free to call me on my cell phone (214.507.5151) during normal business hours. I will make every effort to return calls within 4 hours.

Incompletes: No incompletes will be given except on the basis of a doctor’s certification that you are medically unable to complete the course.

**Technical Difficulties**

Technical difficulties are no excuse for not completing the course on schedule. While technical difficulties are rare, they do occur. Plan your work schedule to allow you sufficient time to complete all course requirements. Do not wait until the due date to complete your work.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form at the University of Texas at Arlington. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

“Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.” (Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Series 50101)

I reserve the right, at any time, to require a student to take or re-take any or all exams in a proctored environment. If I deem this necessary, the student is responsible for making the proctoring arrangements, subject to my approval. This policy applies to any and all assignments required in this course.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

If you are a student who requires accommodations in compliance with the ADA, please consult with me at the beginning of the semester. Student Services at UT Arlington include the Office for Students with Disabilities (located in the lower level of the University Center) which is responsible for verifying and implementing accommodations to ensure equal opportunity in all programs and activities.

**Privacy Policy**

The University of Texas at Arlington complies with the requirements of the Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. To learn more about this law please visit *<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>*

**TEKS**

If you are enrolled in this course as a high school student seeking dual credit for both college and high school, resources and activities to help you prepare for your high school assessments can be found by clicking the “Resource” link on the main page and then selecting “TEKS Preparation Material.” All the activities located at this site are optional and have no bearing on your grade in the course, however, you are encouraged to complete these activities so that you will be properly prepared for your high school assessments.

**Miscellaneous**

You are responsible for being aware of current University deadlines and policies as detailed in the University Calendar and the current Undergraduate Catalog. If you have any questions regarding any of these policies, please contact me.

**Class Schedule**

Below you will find an outline of topics and the required readings. Exams must be completed by the dates indicated. All exams are due on at 5:00 C.S.T on the dates listed below. You are free to work at a quicker pace than noted in the schedule, but you must adhere to these minimum deadlines. Do not wait until just before the due date to complete your exams since you will find it difficult to complete the coursework. My advice is to start early in the course and work at a steady pace. You will find this course much more enjoyable if you make it part of your regular schedule.

**Last Day to Drop: March 28, 2014**

**Note: Some students have had technical problems with Internet Explorer. On the other hand, there have been very few issues by students using Firefox as their internet browser. It is highly recommended that you use Firefox.**

**It is also recommended that you use a wired rather than wireless connection, especially when taking an exam (if possible).**

**Technical Support**

For technical support, please contact the Center for Distance Education at 817-272-5727 or CDESUPPORT@uta.edu.

**Course Topics; Required Readings; and Due Dates**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module 1: The Foundations of American Government** | | | |
| **Chapter: Topics** | **Assignments** | **Due Dates** | |
| Syllabus Quiz | Syllabus | Syllabus Quiz must be completed with a score of 100% before you can proceed in the course and take exams. | |
| **Chapter 1:**  Thinking Politically | Take Pre-test | Monday, Jan 13 by 11:59p.m. | |
| View Video/Read Chapter | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam | |
| Complete/Submit LPA | Thursday, Jan 16 by 11:59p.m. | |
|  |  | |
| **Chapter 2:**  The Constitution | Take Pre-test | Monday, Jan 20 by 11:59p.m. | |
| View Video/Read Chapter | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam | |
| Complete/Submit LPA | Thursday, Jan 23 by 11:59p.m. | |
|  |  | |
| **Chapter 3:** Federalism | Take Pre-test | Monday, Jan 27 by 11:59p.m. | |
| View Video/Read Chapter | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam | |
| Complete/Submit LPA | Thursday, Jan 30 by 11:59p.m. | |
| Discussion Topic 1 | Friday, Jan 31 by 11:59p.m. | |
| **Chapter 4:**  Civil Liberties | Take Pre-test | Monday, Feb 3 by 11:59p.m. | |
| View Video/Read Chapter | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam | |
| Complete/Submit LPA | Thursday, Feb 6 by 11:59p.m. | |
|  |  | |
| **Chapter 5:**  Civil Rights | Take Pre-test | Monday, Feb 10 by 11:59p.m. | |
| View Video/Read Chapter | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam | |
| Complete/Submit LPA | Thursday, Feb 13 by 11:59p.m. | |
| Chapters 1- 5 Exam | Friday, Feb 14 by 11:59p.m. | |
| **Module 2: The Institutions of American Government** | | | |
| **Chapter 6:**  The Congress | Take Pre-test | | Monday, Feb 17 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Video/Read Chapter | | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Complete/Submit LPA | | Thursday, Feb 20 by 11:59p.m. |
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| **Chapter 7:**  The Presidency | Take Pre-test | | Monday, Feb 24 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Video/Read Chapter | | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Complete/Submit LPA | | Thursday, Feb 27 by 11:59p.m. |
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| **Chapter 8:**  The Bureaucracy | Take Pre-test | | Monday, Mar 3 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Video/Read Chapter | | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Complete/Submit LPA | | Thursday, Mar 6 by 11:59p.m. |
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| **Spring Break** |  | | March 10-14 |
| **Chapter 9:**  The Judiciary | Take Pre-test | | Monday, Mar 17 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Video/Read Chapter | | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Complete/Submit LPA | | Thursday, Mar 20 by 11:59p.m. |
| Chapters 6-9 Exam | | Friday, Mar 21 by 11:59p.m. |
| **Module 3: The Influencers on American Government** | | | |
| **Chapter 10:** Political Parties | Take Pre-test | | Monday, Mar 24 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Video/Read Chapter | | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Complete/Submit LPA | | Thursday, Mar 27 by 11:59p.m. |
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| **Chapter 11:** Political Participation | Take Pre-test | | Monday, Mar 31 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Video/Read Chapter | | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Complete/Submit LPA | | Thursday, Apr 3 by 11:59p.m. |
|  | |  |
| **Chapter 12:** Political Parties | Take Pre-test | | Monday, Apr 7 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Video/Read Chapter | | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Complete/Submit LPA | | Thursday, Apr 10 by 11:59p.m. |
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| **Chapter 13:**  Interest Groups | Take Pre-test | Monday, Apr 14 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Video/Read Chapter | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Complete/Submit LPA | Thursday, Apr 17 by 11:59p.m. |
|  |  |
| **Chapter 14:**  The Media | Take Pre-test | Monday, Apr 21 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Video/Read Chapter | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Complete/Submit LPA | Thursday, Apr 24 by 11:59p.m. |
| Chapters 10-14 Exam | Friday, Apr 25 by 11:59p.m. |
| **Comprehensive Final Exam** | Study | Friday, **May 9 by 5:00 p.m. CT** |
| Complete the Course Evaluation |  | This will be sent through the MyMav University E-mail system |