

**SYLLABUS**

**POLS 2311-701 U.S. Government- Fall 2014**

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

**Office Hours:**
Not Applicable

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**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, Blackboard based course. Students in this course will obtain all the course information from their textbook, materials available via Blackboard and McGraw-Hill Connect website. 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 do not meet, it is your responsibility to review your syllabus and adhere to the due dates for each assignment. T**he ultimate responsibility of keeping up with the course is yours.**

**Required Course Tools**

There are three required course tools:

**1.Text*: U S Government (We the People) w/Connect +***. 10th Edition. Thomas E. Patterson. **ISBN:** 978-1-2592-4218-2.



**NOTE**: This is a customized edition for UTA and is best ordered through the UTA Bookstore.

**2**. **McGraw-Hill Connect:** When you purchase the text you will be given an access code that will allow you to sign into **Connect** and complete the assignments contained in **Connect**. (One you receive your access code you can SignIn to **Connect** at [www.mhhm.com](http://www.mhhm.com), also directions for registering for **Connect** can be found in the “Start Here” section in Blackboard.)

**3.** **MyMav Email Account:** All students **MUST** use their UT Arlington email account for communication with the instructor. 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*.

**Course Requirements**

**1. Pre-test**

As you begin each chapter 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 start and/or 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. The combined Pre-test assignments are worth **15% of your final course grade**.

**2. Learning Progress Activities (LPAs) or Discussion Topic**

For each chapter, 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.  The combined Learning Progress Activities are worth **15% of your final course grade**.

**Chapter Exams**

Each week of this course you will take an **exam** that will include materials covered in the two chapters studied that week. The exam may cover information presented in the course videos and/or text. Theses exams must be completed by the dates listed in your syllabi. All unit exams will contain a total of 25 multiple choice or true/false questions. You will have **25 minutes** to complete the exams. These exams will be weighted equally and count for **45% of your final course grade.**

**Final Exam**

At the conclusion of the course, you will take a **Final Exam**. The final exam is comprehensive in nature containing questions from all chapters. The final exam contains a total of 100 multiple choice or true/false questions. You will have **100 minutes** to complete the exam. The final exam is worth **25% of your final course grade**.

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.

**NOTE:** All assignments and exams are due by 11:59 p.m. CT on the due date listed below. **10 points will be deducted from actual exam score for each day that an assignment is late.**

**Assignment Weightings**:

 Pre-test 15%

 LPAs or Discussion Topic 15%

 Chapter Exams 45%

Final Exam 25%

**Grading Scale**:

 A 90-100%

 B 80-89%

 C 70-79%

 D 60-69%

 F 59% and below

**Note: There will be no curving or rounding of grades, if you want an “A” you must score 90 or higher.**

**Drop Policy**

Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Last Day to Drop:** November 24, 2014

**Student Feedback Survey**

At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>

**Instructor’s Policies**

You will be assigned an **academic coach** whose responsibility is to assist you with the course. Your first point of contact with any course issue is your academic coach.

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. Your primary means of reaching is via email. For example, you may e-mail from within Blackboard or directly from your MyMav email account. I will make every effort to respond to you within 24 hours. **Be sure to identify which course and section (Example: POLS 2311-700) you are enrolled in. Failure to do so may delay a response.**

**Student Support Services**

UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**Technical Difficulties**

Technical difficulties are no excuse for not completing the course on schedule. 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. While technical difficulties are rare, they do occur. In case of a technical problem that prohibits you from completing an assignment you must provide me with a timely submission of the helpdesk ticket #. You can reach the Blackboard 24/7 Support Desk at 1.855.308.5542.

**Academic Integrity**

Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX**

The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law “Title IX” such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**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*](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.

**Course Schedule**

Below you will find an outline of chapter topics, assignments and due dates. All graded assignments must be completed by the dates indicated. All graded assignments and exams are due by 11:59 p.m. CT 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.

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| **Chapter: Topics** | **Assignments** | **Due Dates** |
| **Chapter 1:** PoliticalThinking **Chapter 2:** Constitutional Democracy | Take Pre-test 1 & 2 | Monday, Oct 20 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Complete/Submit LPA 1 & 2 | Thursday, Oct 23 by 11:59p.m. |
| Chapters 1 & 2 Exams | Friday, Oct 24 by 11:59p.m. |
| **Chapter 3:** Federalism**Chapter 4:** Civil Liberties | Take Pre-test 3 & 4 | Monday, Oct 27 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Complete/Submit LPA 3 & 4 | Thursday, Oct 30 by 11:59p.m. |
| Chapters 3 & 4 Exams | Friday, Oct 31 by 11:59p.m. |
| **Chapter 5:** Equal Rights**Chapter 6:** Congress | Take Pre-test 5 & 6 | Monday, Nov 3 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Discussion #1 | Thursday, Nov 6 by 11:59p.m. |
| Chapters 5 & 6 Exams | Friday, Nov 7 by 11:59p.m. |
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| **Chapter 7:** The Presidency**Chapter 8:** The Federal Bureaucracy | Take Pre-test 7 & 8 | Monday, Nov 10 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Complete/Submit LPA 7 & 8 | Thursday, Nov 13 by 11:59p.m. |
| Chapters 7 & 8 Exams | Friday, Nov 14 by 11:59p.m. |
| **Chapter 9:** The Federal Judiciary**Chapter 10:** Public Opinion | Take Pre-test 9 & 10 | Monday, Nov 17 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Complete/Submit LPA 9 & 10 | Thursday, Nov 20 by 11:59p.m. |
| Chapters 9 & 10 Exams | Friday, Nov 21 by 11:59p.m. |
| **Chapter 11:** Political Parties**Chapter 12:** Political Participation | Take Pre-test 11 & 12 | Monday, Nov 24 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Discussion #2 | Thursday, Nov 27 by 11:59p.m. |
| Chapters 11 & 12 Exams | Friday, Nov 28 by 11:59p.m. |

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| **Chapter 13:** Interest Groups **Chapter 14:** The News Media | Take Pre-test 13 & 14 | Monday, Dec 1 by 11:59p.m. |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| Complete/Submit LPA 13 & 14 | Thursday, Dec 4 by 11:59p.m. |
| Chapters 13 & 14 Exams | Friday, Dec 5 by 11:59p.m. |
| **Final Exam** | **Study for Comprehensive Final Exam** | Friday, **Dec 12 by 11:59p.m. CT** |
| Complete the Course Evaluation |  | This will be sent through the MyMav University E-mail system |

If it becomes necessary to make changes to the syllabus you will be notified via your MyMavs email account.