

**SYLLABUS**

**POLS 2311-701 U.S. Government- Spring 2017**

**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 **(after week two)**. 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 meeting the course deadlines rest with the student.**

**Required Course Tools**

There are three required course tools:

**1.Text*:* Loose Leaf for We The People: An Introduction to American Government** ***w/ConnectPlus***. 2nd Edition. Thomas E. Patterson. **ISBN:** 978-1-2601-2581-8.



**NOTE**: This is the latest edition of the text and can be ordered through the UTA Bookstore. If you chose to do so you can purchase or rent the textbook from other sources and purchase the required Access Code directly from the McGraw-Hill website. Be aware that if you purchase or rent elsewhere the edition may be different and may not contain the required Access Code. The combined cost of the text book and required Access Code may be more or less than purchasing through the bookstore. You should further note that exam questions will be based on the 12th Edition.

**2**.  **McGraw-Hill ConnectPlus:** When you purchase the text through the bookstore you will be given an access code that will allow you to sign into **McGraw-Hill Connect** and complete the assignments contained in **Connect**. (Directions for registering for Connect will be found on the “Start Here” section of Blackboard once you are granted access to the course.)

**3. LockDown Browser Required for Unit and Final Exams**

This course requires the use of LockDown Browser for online exams. Watch this [short video](http://www.respondus.com/products/lockdown-browser/student-movie.shtml) to get a basic understanding of LockDown Browser.

Then download and install LockDown Browser from this link: <http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=163943837>

To take an online test, start LockDown Browser and navigate to the exam. (You won't be able to access the exam with a standard web browser.) For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this [Student Quick Start Guide (PDF)](http://www.respondus.com/products/lockdown-browser/guides.shtml#student).

Finally, when taking an online exam, follow these guidelines:

* Ensure you're in a location where you won't be interrupted
* Turn off all mobile devices, phones, etc.
* Clear your desk of all external materials — books, papers, other computers, or devices
* Remain at your desk or workstation for the duration of the test
* LockDown Browser will prevent you from accessing other websites or applications; you will be unable to exit the test until all questions are completed and submitted

**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 (2 each week)**

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; 2 each week)**

For each chapter, you will complete a learning progress activity that is designed to prompt your thinking on the unit under discussion. These learning activities are due at 11:59 p.m. CT on the due date listed below.  The combined Learning Progress Activities and Discussion Topics are worth **15% of your final course grade**.

**3. 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. These 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.**

**4. Final Exam**

After 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 you are expected to adhere to the University policy on Academic integrity (see below). Anyone suspected of cheating will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

**NOTE: 10 points will be deducted from each exam score, for each day that an exam is late, up to a total of 20 points**

**Weightings**:

 Pre-test 15%

 LPAs or Discussion Topic 15%

 Chapter Exams 45%

Final Exam 25%

**Note: Your final grade for this course will be based on the “Weighted Total” in Blackboard utilizing the grading scale below.**

**Grading Scale**:

 A 90-100%

 B 80-89%

 C 70-79%

 D 60-69%

 F 59% and below

**Note: There will be no extra credit assignments, curving or rounding of grades, if you want an “A” you must conclude the course with a Weighted Total of 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: March 27, 2017**

**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. **In you have course questions or if you are struggling with the course you should contact me immediately.** Your primary means of reaching me 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 8 hours. **Be sure to identify which course and section (Example: POLS 2311-701) 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 assignments on schedule. Plan your work schedule to allow sufficient time to complete all course requirements. You do not have to 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 on time you must immediately provide the help desk ticket #, stamped with the date the issue occurred.** 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 honour, 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 Honour 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. **After the first two weeks of the course** 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** |
|  | Review Syllabus & Complete Quiz | Required to Access Assignments by 3/20/17 |
| **Chapter 1:** PoliticalThinking **Chapter 2:** Constitutional Democracy | **Take Pre-test 1 & 2** | **Monday, Mar 20 by 11:59p.m.** |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| **Complete/Submit LPA 1 & 2** | **Thursday, Mar 23 by 11:59p.m.** |
| **Exam 1 (Chapters 1 & 2)** | **Friday, Mar 24 by 11:59p.m.** |
| **Chapter 3:** Federalism**Chapter 4:** Civil Liberties | **Take Pre-test 3 & 4** | **Monday, Mar 27 by 11:59p.m.** |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| **Complete/Submit LPA 3 & 4** | **Thursday, Mar 30 by 11:59p.m.** |
| **Exam 2 (Chapters 3 & 4)** | **Friday, Mar 31 by 11:59p.m.** |
| **Chapter 5:** Equal Rights**Chapter 6:** Public Opinion | **Take Pre-test 5 & 6** | **Monday, Apr 3 by 11:59p.m.** |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| **Complete/Submit LPA 5 & 6** | **Thursday, Apr 6 by 11:59p.m.** |
| **Exam 3 (Chapters 5 & 6)** | **Friday, Apr 7 by 11:59p.m.** |
| **Chapter 7:** Political Participation**Chapter 8:** Political Parties | **Take Pre-test 7 & 8** | **Monday, Apr 10 by 11:59p.m.** |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| **Complete/Submit LPA 7 & 8** | **Thursday, Apr 13 by 11:59p.m.** |
| **Exam 4 (Chapters 7 & 8)** | **Friday, Apr 14 by 11:59p.m.** |
| **Chapter 9:** Interest Groups**Chapter 10:** The News Media | **Take Pre-test 9 & 10** | **Monday, Apr 17 by 11:59p.m.** |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| **Complete/Submit LPA 9 & 10** | **Thursday, Apr 20 by 11:59p.m.** |
| **Exam 5 (Chapters 9 & 10)** | **Friday, Apr 21 by 11:59p.m.** |
| **Chapter 11:** Congress**Chapter 12:** The Presidency | **Take Pre-test 11 & 12** | **Monday, Apr 24 by 11:59p.m.** |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| **Complete/Submit LPA 11 & 12** | **Thursday, Apr 27 by 11:59p.m.** |
| **Exam 6 (Chapters 11 & 12)**  | **Friday, Apr 28 by 11:59p.m.** |

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| **Chapter 13:** The Federal Bureaucracy**Chapter 14:** The Judicial System | **Take Pre-test 13 & 14** | **Monday, May 1 by 11:59p.m.** |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| **Complete/Submit LPA 13 & 14** | **Thursday, May 4 by 11:59p.m.** |
| **Exam 7 (Chapters 13 & 14)**  | **Friday, May 5 by 11:59p.m.** |
| **Final Exam** | **Study for Comprehensive Final Exam** | Friday, **May 12 by 11:59p.m. CT** |
| Complete the Course Evaluation |  | This will be sent through the MyMav University E-mail system |

*As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. If it becomes necessary to make changes to the syllabus you will be notified via your MyMav email account.*