

POLS 2311: Government of the United States
Spring 2017

Professor: Dr. Sledge

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 1.30pm-2.30pm

Section Information: POLS 2311-006

Time and Place of Class Meetings: UH 110

Description of Course Content: This course offers an introduction and broad overview of the constitution, government, and politics of the United States. It deals with the organization, procedures, and duties of the branches of the government along with central features of American political life and public policy.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students will demonstrate an understanding of 1) the functions of governing institutions in the United States, 2) central features of American politics such as political parties and elections, and 3) core issues in American economic and foreign policy

Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials: By The People, by Morone and Kersh. The text is available in the bookstore. Additional course materials will be available via blackboard.

Descriptions of major assignments and examinations: Grading is based on three exams (30% of grade each), and one short paper (10% of grade, 3 pages). For purposes of evaluation, there will be a quiz during the first few weeks of class that will not contribute to your final grade.

Attendance: At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, I allow students to attend at their own discretion. However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

Use of electronic devices in classroom: Cell phones, ipads, personal computers, and other electronic devices have a strong potential to become distracting in a classroom setting. In particular, there is strong evidence that they are disruptive to those surrounding you. As a result,

devices such as these may not be used during class. The use of such devices without prior authorization will result, without exception, in the deduction of 4 points from your final grade.

Though my motivation for prohibiting these devices is the strong likelihood that they will disrupt those around the user, it is worth pointing out that there is a great deal of research demonstrating that taking notes by hand helps students to better process and retain information. If there are circumstances that require you to take notes on a computer or other device, please come and talk to me.

Grading: A: 90-100; B: 80-89.9; C: 70-79.9; D: 60-69.9; F: 0-59.9

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://www.uta.edu/aao/faol/>).

Disability Accommodations: UT 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)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. 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 disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a **letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD) www.uta.edu/disability or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.

Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

Non-Discrimination Policy: *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos.*

Title IX Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or jmhood@uta.edu.*

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 in their courses by 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. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Campus Carry: Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” are 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 via the SFS database is

aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students' anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: for semester-long courses, a period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, [which is located \[insert a description of the nearest exit/emergency exit\]](#). When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

Students are encouraged to subscribe to the MavAlert system that will send information in case of an emergency to their cell phones or email accounts. Anyone can subscribe at <https://mavalert.uta.edu/> or <https://mavalert.uta.edu/register.php>

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 <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.

The IDEAS Center (2nd Floor of Central Library) offers **free** tutoring to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. To schedule an appointment with a peer tutor or mentor email IDEAS@uta.edu or call (817) 272-6593.

The English Writing Center (411LIBR): [\[Optional.\]](#) The Writing Center Offers free tutoring in 20-, 40-, or 60-minute face-to-face and online sessions to all UTA students on any phase of their UTA coursework. Our hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mon.-Thurs., 9 am-3 pm Fri. and Noon-6 pm Sat. and Sun. Register and make appointments online at <http://uta.mywconline.com>. Classroom

Visits, workshops, and specialized services for graduate students are also available. Please see www.uta.edu/owl for detailed information on all our programs and services.

The Library's 2nd floor Academic Plaza offers students a central hub of support services, including IDEAS Center, University Advising Services, Transfer UTA and various college/school advising hours. Services are available during the library's hours of operation.
<http://library.uta.edu/academic-plaza>

I reserve the right to alter the syllabus where necessary in order to further the objectives of the course. –Daniel Sledge

Part I: Foundations of Government in the United States

Week 1: Revolution and Confederation

Read: Chapter 3, The Constitution. Tuesday Jan 17: Intro, Thursday Jan 19: Revolution, Confederation

Week 2: Jan 24, Jan 26: Constitution, Federalism, Separation of Powers; Read: Chapter 4: Federalism and Nationalism

Week 3: Jan 31, Feb 2: Civil Liberties and Rights, *Quiz on Feb 2 covering everything up through Jan 31st* Read: Chapter 5, Civil Liberties

Week 4: Feb 7, Feb 9: Civil Liberties and Rights, Continued Read: Chap 6, Struggle for Civil Rights

Week 5: Feb 14, Feb 16: Review on Tuesday , EXAM 1 on Thursday

Part II: Institutions and Policymaking

Week 6: Feb 21, 23: The Congress; Reading: Chapter 13, Congress

Week 7: Feb 28, March 2: The Presidency; Reading: Chapter 14, the Presidency

Week 8: March 7, March 9: The Judicial Branch; Reading, Chapter 16, Judicial Branch

Week 9: *Spring Break*

Week 10: March 21, 23: Policymaking and Political Institutions Reading: Chapter 1: Spirit of American Politics

Week 11: March 28, March 30: Review on Tuesday, Exam 2 on Thursday

Governing

Week 12: April 4, April 6: Parties, Polarization, and Government; Reading: Chapter 11, Political Parties

Week 13: April 11, April 13: Interest Groups and the Media; Reading: Chapter 12, Interest Groups

Week 14: April 18, April 20: Foreign Policy; Reading: Chapter 18, Foreign Policy

Week 15: April 25, 27: Economic Policy. No reading. Short paper (3.5 pages) due by the end of the day on April 26th. In-class discussion of papers on April 27th: bring your paper and be prepared to talk with your classmates.

Week 16: May 2, May 4: Review of Important Concepts. No reading.

Exam 3, a cumulative exam: *Tuesday, May 9, 2017; 11am in the regular room.*