

**SYLLABUS**

**POLS 2311-701 U.S. Government- Spring 2018 (DE)**

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

**Office Hours:**   
Not Applicable

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*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**

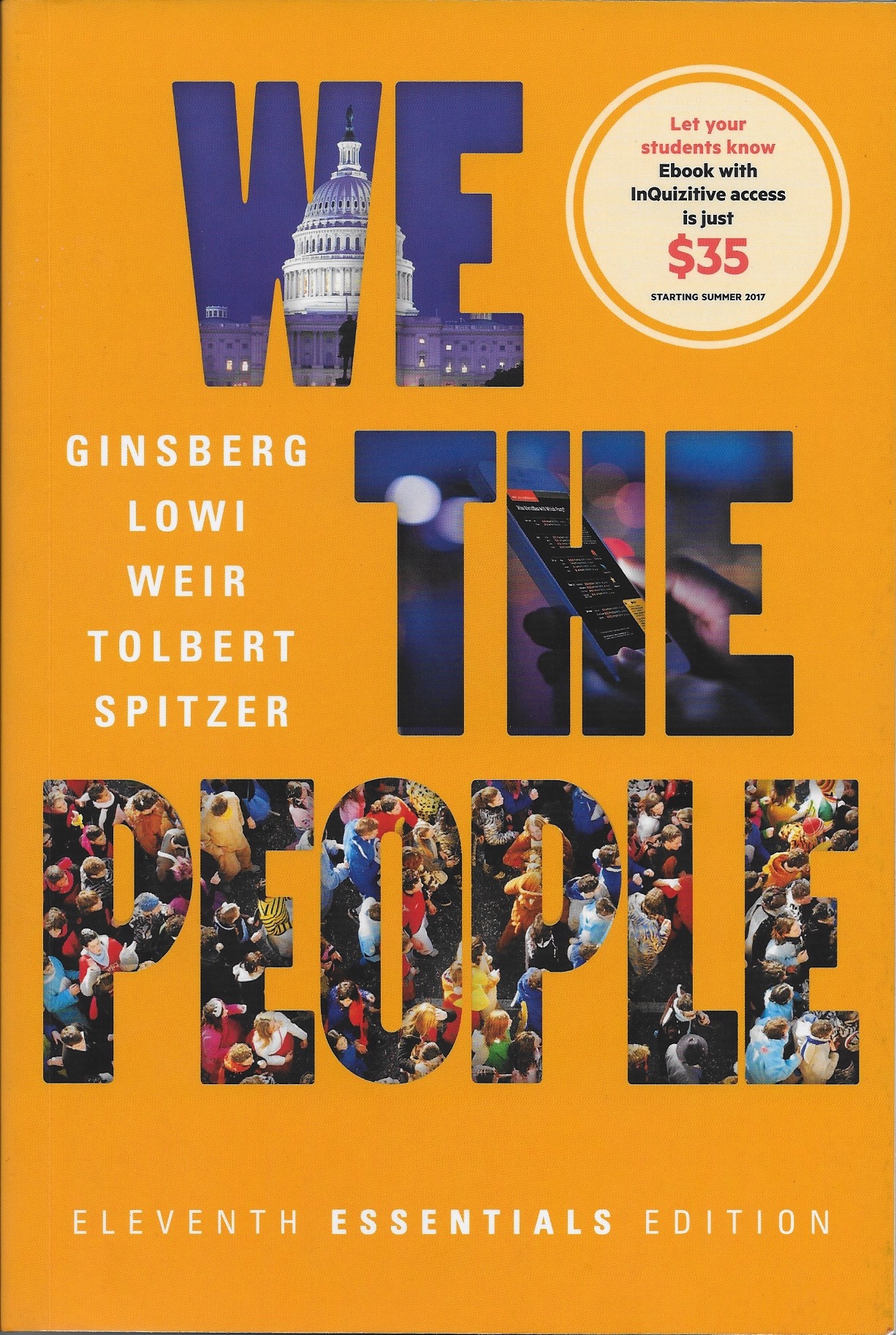
This course is a guided, self-paced, Blackboard based course. Students in this course will obtain all the course information from their textbook, materials available via Blackboard and possibly other internet website. As a guided, self-paced course, students are responsible for keeping up with their 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. **The ultimate responsibility for meeting the course deadlines for all assignments in this course rest with the student.**

**Required Course Tools**

There are three required course tools:

**1.Text*: We the People,*** Eleventh **Essentials** Edition. Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, Tolbert, Spitzer. **ISBN:** 978-0-3936-3998-8.

If you’d like you may purchase the eBook directly at <https://digital/wwnorton.com>



**NOTE**: This text is available through the UTA Bookstore or if you choose to do so, you can purchase or rent the textbook from other sources.

**2. 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 and the optional webcam feature (**which will be required for this course**).

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 or your Academic Coach. 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).

**Course Requirements**

**1. Pre-test**

As you begin each chapter you will complete a brief pre-test exercise. **No preparations are required before taking the Pre-test.** 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. CT on the due date listed below and will no longer be available or visible in Blackboard once the due date has passed. The combined Pre-test assignments are worth **15% of your final course grade**.

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

For each chapter, you will complete a brief learning activity that is designed to prompt your thinking on one aspect of the unit under discussion. Your response must be a minimum of 50 words in your own voice, of course you should give attribution and cite any source you use. Deductions will be made for plagiarism. These learning activities are due at 11:59 p.m. CT on the due date listed below and will no longer be available or visible in Blackboard once the due date has passed. The combined Learning Progress Activities are worth **15% of your final course grade**.

**3. Unit Exams**

During this course, you will take **7 unit** **exams (each covering the two chapters covered for the week)** that may cover information presented in the course videos, lectures, class discussions, and/or text. These exams must be completed during the date and times listed below. All unit exams will contain a total of 25 multiple choice and/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**

At the conclusion of the course, you will take a Final Exam. **The final Exam is comprehensive in nature containing questions from all 14 chapters**. The final exam contains a total of 100 multiple choice or true/false questions. The final exam must be completed during the date and times listed below. You will have **120 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.**

**Assignment Weightings**:

Pre-test 15%

LPAs 15%

Unit Exams (3) 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.**

**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: April 23, 2018**

**Final Review Week**

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.

**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**

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 within12 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.**

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

**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](mailto: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 topics and the required readings. All graded assignments must be completed by the dates indicated. All graded assignments and exams are due by 11:59p.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 deadlines. Avoid waiting until the eleventh hour to complete your assignments, as you may find it difficult to complete the coursework on time. My advice is that you 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 3/19/18 |
| **Chapter 1:**  The Citizen and Government  **Chapter 2:**  The Founding and the Constitution | **Take Pre-test 1 & 2** | **Monday, Mar 19 by 11:59pm CT** |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| **Complete/Submit LPA 1 & 2** | **Thursday, Mar 22 by 11:59pm CT** |
| **Exam 1 (Chapters 1 & 2)** | **Friday, Mar 23 by 11:59pm CT** |
| **Chapter 3:** Federalism  **Chapter 4:**  Civil Liberties and Civil Rights | **Take Pre-test 3 & 4** | **Monday, Mar 26 by 11:59pm CT** |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| **Complete/Submit LPA 3 & 4** | **Thursday, Mar 29 by 11:59pm CT** |
| **Exam 2 (Chapters 3 & 4)** | **Friday, Mar 30 by 11:59pm CT** |
| **Chapter 5:**  Public Opinion  **Chapter 6:**  The Media | **Take Pre-test 5 & 6** | **Monday, Apr 2 by 11:59pm CT** |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| **Complete/Submit LPA 5 & 6** | **Thursday, Apr 5 by 11:59pm CT** |
| **Exam 3 (Chapters 5 & 6)** | **Friday, Apr 6 by 11:59pm CT** |
| **Chapter 7:**  Political Parties, Participation, and Elections  **Chapter 8:**  Interest Groups | **Take Pre-test 7 & 8** | **Monday, Apr 9 by 11:59pm CT** |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| **Complete/Submit LPA 7 & 8** | **Thursday, Apr 12 by 11:59pm CT** |
| **Exam 4 (Chapters 7 & 8)** | **Friday, Apr 13 by 11:59pm CT** |
| **Chapter 9:**  Congress    **Chapter 10:**  The Presidency | **Take Pre-test 9 & 10** | **Monday, Apr 16 by 11:59pm CT** |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| **Complete/Submit LPA 9 & 10** | **Thursday, Apr 19 by 11:59pm CT** |
| **Exam 5 (Chapters 9 & 10)** | **Friday, Apr 20 by 11:59pm CT** |
| **Chapter 11:** Bureaucracy  **Chapter 12:**  The Federal Courts | **Take Pre-test 11 & 12** | **Monday, Apr 23 by 11:59pm CT** |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| **Complete/Submit LPA 11 & 12** | **Thursday, Apr 26 by 11:59pm CT** |
| **Exam 6 (Chapters 11 & 12)** | **Friday, Apr 27 by 11:59pm CT** |

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| **Chapter 13:**  Domestic Policy  **Chapter 14:**  Foreign Policy | **Take Pre-test 13 & 14** | **Monday, Apr 30 by 11:59pm CT** |
| View Videos/Read Chapters | Prior to submitting LPA & taking Exam |
| **Complete/Submit LPA 13 & 14** | **Thursday, May 3 by 11:59pm CT** |
| **Exam 7 (Chapters 13 & 14)** | **Friday, May 4 by 11:59pm CT** |
| **Final Exam** | **Study for Comprehensive Final Exam** | Friday, **May 11 by 11:59pm CT** |

*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.*

*–Michael W Morris*