

POLS 2305 (sec 06): American Government
Department of Political Science
Spring 2018
CRN 20524
3 credit hours
MWF 3:00-3:50 p.m. CHSS 252

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Office Hours:
MW 4:00-7:00 p.m.
and by appointment

Course Description and Goals

This is the introductory course on American government. We will study both the institutions and political behavior in American politics. We will study the competing paradigms of American politics, the lenses through which scholars view and analyze the actual reality. We will proceed to study, in some depth, the policy making process.

There is a substantial amount of materials to be read, and it is imperative for each student's success that he or she develops a regular study schedule that permits keeping up with the assignment at all times. If you wait until the exams to begin reading, you would probably fail the class.

You are expected to watch national and international news such as CNN at least five times a week. I highly recommend PBS's News Hour with Jim Lehrer on channel 8 Monday through Friday between 5:30 and 6:30 p.m. If you do not have access to television, you should read *The New York Times* or the daily news from the Internet sites www.cnn.com or www.nytimes.com.

Course Objectives

Students enrolled in POLS 2305 will:

- 1) Gain factual and analytical knowledge of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations
- 2) Gain knowledge of civic responsibility and gain the ability to engage effectively in American democracy.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is mandatory. It is imperative that you attend all the lectures. If you are going to miss a class, ask a friend to tape the lecture for you. Rolls will be taken periodically. Anyone with 3 absences (that are not excused) will receive an "F." Make-up exams will be harder than the one given to the entire class.

Religious Holy Day or Days

A student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day or days or to travel for the purpose of religious observance may take an examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time. The student should inform me before or immediately after the absence in writing (e-mail preferred). The student will have 15 days to complete the assignment or take the exam. If you are to miss the lecture, have a fellow student tape the lecture for you. Absence due to religious holy day does not count towards the 3 absences.

The following is the official SHSU policy:

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

Academic Dishonesty

Anyone caught cheating will receive "F" for the course and will be referred to the Associate Vice President for Student Services for further disciplinary action.

The following is the official SHSU policy:

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Attention Students with Disabilities

Requests for accommodation must be initiated by the student. Please go to the Counseling Center for certification of disability. Then, let me know. I will do all I can to assist.

The following is the official SHSU policy:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

Visitors in the classroom

If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. As a rule, I have no objections to "tourists" if extra seats are available.

The following is the official SHSU policy:

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

Instructor evaluations

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form towards the end of the semester.

Classroom rules of conduct

The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link:
http://www.shsu.edu/students/StudentGuidelines2007_2008.pdf

Course Grade will be Computed as Follows*:

1 st Mid-Term Exam	30
2 nd Mid-Term Exam	30
Final Exam	40
Total	100 points

* There is a total of 100 points for the course. Exams are objective multiple choice or true/false questions. All grades will be posted at Bb. One might earn up to 5 extra points. Asking a pertinent question or answering my questions might get you extra point or points.

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	0-59

Textbook:

Ken Kollman, *The American Political System*, 2nd edition, (WW Norton, 2015). You may rent or purchase the E-Book or the hardcopy.

\$105.00

<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/webad.aspx?id=4294989279>

\$35.00

<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/webad.aspx?id=4294990357>

OUTLINE

weeks 1-2: Power, Politics, Democracy, Political Culture

ch. 1

weeks 3-4: Paradigms of American Politics

weeks 5-6: The Constitution

chs. 2, 3

1st Exam

weeks 7-8: Civil Liberties, Civil Rights

ch. 4

week 9: Congress

ch. 7

week 10: Presidency

ch. 8

2nd Exam

week 11: The Courts

ch. 10

weeks 12-13: Political Parties

ch. 12

weeks 14-15: Foreign Policy

ch. 17

FINAL EXAM