

Political Science 261.02
Principle of American Government National and State
3 Semester Hours Credit
Spring 2008

Professor: John Holcombe
Time: MWF 9-10
Location: AB1 317

Textbook:

The Challenge of Democracy with Practicing Texas Politics (Ninth Edition -Sam Houston State University Edition) by Janda and others.

Office Information: My office is located in AB1 room 315 G. The phone number is 294-1467. My e-mail address is HOLCOMBE @shsu.edu. The Fax number is 936-294-4172. Hours: M-F, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Course Description:

This is a basic course dealing with the structures of the U.S. Government and the Texas State government. It includes the topics of the U.S. Constitution and the Texas Constitution. A lecture format is used.

Course Objectives:

1. To learn basic features of the U.S. Constitution and the Texas Constitution
2. To study the branches (legislative, executive, and judicial) of each level of government
3. To examine such major influences on government as political parties, interest groups, and political participation.

Attendance Policy:

1. Attendance will be taken each class period at the beginning of the period.
2. Attendance is encouraged, since the major exams will be based on the lecture notes.
3. There will be two points taken the final semester average for each absence in excess of three absences. On the other hand, points will be added to the semester average for having very few absences, as indicated below:

Absences	Points Added
0	6
1	4
2	2

Exams and Grades:

There are two kinds of examinations. The major exams are made up of multiple choice items. They are based on the class notes only. The first major exam is 25% of the semester average; the second major exam also counts as 25%. The final exam counts another 25% and is like the other major exams in being multiple choice items. The final exam is based on class notes after first major exam.

The average on the reading exams makes up the remaining 25% of the semester grade. Each reading exam is based on one chapter from the textbook and is announced at least one week in advance. A reading exam has 10 multiple-choice items to answer. There will be five reading exams. The lowest grade of the five reading will be dropped.

Make-up reading exams will be given May 6. The make-up reading exam will be based on a chapter different from the any other reading exam. Each make-up on a major exam will be arranged on an individual basis with the instructor.

The following point distribution will be used to determined letter grades:

A= 90-100+

B=80-89

C=70-79

D=60-69

F= 0-59

Other Policies:

Policies concerning the following topics may be found on the SHSU webpage at:

<https://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>

1. Academic Dishonesty
2. Americans with Disabilities Act
3. Religious Holidays
4. Visitors in the classroom

Instructor Evaluation:

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward 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/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>

All cell phones and other devices that would disrupt class should be shut off.

Sexual Harassment:

Sam Houston State University has a sexual harassment policy. A copy may be obtained from the Director of Human Resources on campus.

TOPICS

1. Three Models of Government
2. The Texas Constitution- Texas chapters, Chapter 2
3. The Writing of the U.S. Constitution-U.S. chapters, Chapter 3
4. Political Party Development in the United States- U.S. chapters, Chapter 8
5. Political Parties in Texas- Texas chapters, Chapter 4
6. The Presidency –U.S. chapters, Chapter 12
7. Structural Features of the Texas State Legislature-Texas chapters, Chapters 7
8. Structural Features of the U.S. Congress- U.S. chapters, Chapter 11
9. Stages of Bill Becoming a Law in Congress- U.S. chapters, Chapter 11