

Political Science 261.09 CID 8175, 3 credit hours
American Government
Summer II 2008
Dr. Waggener

Course Location/Time: AB1 317, 12 – 1:50

Office Location: AB1 319B

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Office Hours: M – F 9 – 10:00 or by appointment

Course Description

This course addresses: the origin, development, and operation of the US national government and the Texas state government; civil liberties and civil rights; elections and voting; political parties and interest groups; and the three branches of government.

Course Objectives

This course has 3 primary objectives:

1. Students will gain factual knowledge of the structural and philosophical foundations of American government and Texas Government.
2. Students will learn how to find and use resources for answering questions and solving problems.
3. Students will be introduced to current political ideas, issues, and events in American politics. Special attention will be given to political ideas, issues, and events that students in the class deem relevant to their political lives.

Class Format

The class format will be a mixture of lecture and student participation. During class discussions, we will not assume that there is a “correct” position on a particular political issue, but rather that there are multiple positions all of which must be considered. Thus students are strongly encouraged to arrive at their own political opinions. However, students must arrive at their opinions through active debate and informed reasoning. “Off the cuff” political opinions are not credible or productive to class learning.

Text

Larry Berman and Bruce Allen Murphy, *Approaching Democracy* (2nd edition, portfolio edition)

Exams

There are 2 multiple-choice exams. Each exam is weighted equally. There is no comprehensive final exam in this course. Exams will be based on material from lectures and the text.

Grading

Final course grades will be based on the following grading scale: 100 – 90=A, 89-80=B, 79-70=C, 69-60=D, 59-0=F

Make-Up Exams

Make-up exams will be granted to students who can provide formal documentation of a medical or family emergency. If a student fails to provide this documentation, he or she will receive a zero on the exam. Please note that visitation slips issued by the University Health Center are not considered formal documentation, unless the slip clearly indicates that the student was too ill to attend class. Make-up exams will be short answer exams.

Extra Credit

Under **NO** circumstances will extra credit be offered in this course.

Scored Scantron Sheets

Students must keep their scored scantron sheets. A student cannot challenge their grade unless he or she has copies of all scantron sheets.

Class Attendance

Regular and punctual class attendance is expected of each student enrolled in this course.

Class Policies

Please see <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus> for class policies regarding:

Academic Dishonesty, Classroom Rules of Conduct, Student Absences on Religious Holy Days, Students with Disabilities Policy, and Visitors in the Classroom. Please see <http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html> for classroom rules of conduct.

Class Schedule

Please note that the class schedule is tentative and may be subject to change.

The Philosophical and Structural Foundations of American Government

July 8 – 11	Chapter 3: Federalism
July 14 – 18	Chapter 13: Civil Liberties Chapter 14: Civil Rights
July 21	Exam 1

Linking Citizens with Government

July 22 - 24 Chapter 10: Participation, Voting, and Elections

Institutions of Government

July 28 - 29 Chapter 5: The Presidency

July 30 – 31 Chapter 6: The Judiciary

August 4 - 6 Chapter 4: Congress

Readings on Texas Government and Politics

August 7 Exam 2