

**AMERICAN PUBLIC POLICY--COURSE SYLLABUS
FALL 2007 – THREE CREDIT HOURS**

Instructor: Professor Jenny Mobley
E-mail: JLM001@shsu.edu

Office Location: AB1, 319A
Telephone: 936.294.4021 or 936.294.4571
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30-1:30 or by appointment

POL 261.17 in AB1 Rm 317 – Meets T/TH 9:30-10:50
POL 261.19 in SHB Rm 133 – Meets T/TH 11:00-12:20
POL 261.22 in AB1 Rm 302 – Meets T/TH 2:00-3:20
POL 261.23 in AB1 Rm 310 – Meets T/TH 3:30-4:50

Final Examination, Tuesday, 12/11, 8:00 a.m.
Final Examination, Thursday, 12/13, 11:00 a.m.
Final Examination, Thursday, 12/13, 2:00 p.m.
Final Examination, Tuesday, 12/11, 2:00 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course deals with the origin, development, and Constitution of the American governmental system, citizenship and civil rights, suffrage, the national party system, the national executive, organization of congress, national judiciary, federal-state relations, and the Constitution of the State of Texas. This course meets the legislative requirement for a course on the Constitutions of the United States and Texas. There are no prerequisite course(s) for this class.

The class format will contain a mixture of lecture and student participation. The student will be encouraged to arrive at his own opinions through the process of sincere and vigorous debate combined with educated analysis.

Please note, during class discussions we will NOT assume that there is a “correct” view on a specific topic but many which should be given consideration. Thus, let’s follow this caveat: “Treat others as you would like to be treated.” Everyone is welcome and expected to speak out--but also to listen to their neighbor’s point of view. Further, remember, political opinions based and voiced in the “heat of the moment” are neither convincing nor productive to the learning process.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- This course is designed to acquaint the student with the institutional arrangements within the U.S. and Texas political systems of government, their mechanisms and the essential basic and fundamental expectations of American citizens.
- The premise for this information is to challenge the student to query the nature and purpose of government. Accordingly, it is the hope of the instructor that as this progression develops throughout the semester; you will draw your own conclusions, appreciate, as well as understand, the relationship of the American citizen and their government. This new awareness should expose the impact government legislation has on you and your global neighbors and will motivate you to get involved in the process.

TEXTBOOK REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE – It is **each** student’s responsibility to obtain his own copy of the text at the **beginning** of the semester.

Janda, Kenneth, et al. *The Challenge of Democracy*. Texas 9th Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Your presence in class is required by Texas taxpayers. Attendance will be taken. Students are expected to attend class punctually, to have the reading assignment completed, & be prepared to participate in class discussion.

- **You will be allowed two "free" absences.**
- **Each absence after those 2 will result in a 3 point reduction in your total final grade average! Students with 5 or more unexcused absences will fail the course—no exceptions.** It is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor with **written documentation**, concerning any absence, late arrival, or to make arrangements concerning exams. **When in doubt write me an e-mail.**

What constitutes unexcused and excused absences?

- 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. **Be advised, work-related excuses are not considered legitimate.** Students leaving class early **without prior clearance will be counted absent and unexcused.**
- Excused absences include official active participation in university functions, illness, and attendance of a funeral or religious holy days. Holy day absences are treated like other excused absences. Provide me documentation *in writing* of the absence before or after the absence and arrange to make up any missed work within two weeks of the absence.

E-MAIL ETIQUETTE: All e-mail correspondence must be sent to me at JLM001@shsu.edu . E-mails must contain the full name of the student and must also designate the class (days/time) in which the student is enrolled. Do not address me as “HEY!” Appropriate verbiage is expected. If these items are not included within the e-mail, the e-mail will not be answered.

GRADING PLAN & EXAMS: Exams for this class will require a Scantron and questions will be inclusive of multiple choice, true/false or matching format.

- **You will need 2 number two lead pencils, a good eraser and a Scantron (form 882-E, only) for each exam.**
- *Be advised, torn or wrinkled exams jam the grading machine causing errors in grading.* Please do not present a “mangled or bent” test answer sheet.
- Students should be prepared promptly at the beginning of class for an exam. No one will be allowed to leave the classroom *during* an exam—leaving will result in a zero for that exam—no exceptions!
- Make up exams will be given **at the instructor’s discretion** and only to students who can provide formal documentation of the above excused absence requirements. Make up exams are usually in an essay format, typically 3 questions worth 100 points total. You are required to inform me as to why an exam will be missed and failure to provide appropriate and **very prompt** documentation for why an exam was missed will result in a zero for that exam. There will be no re-grading or dropping of grades.
- **Under no circumstances will the FINAL EXAM be given earlier than the university’s scheduled time frame.**

STANDARD GRADING: 90=A; 80=B; 70=C; 60=D; 0-59=F.

- There will be a total of four (4) exams, each worth 100 points. All are of equal weight in determining the course grade.
- Exam questions will be objective and drawn from **both the text and class lectures. You need to take notes.**
- The **final will be comprehensive.**
- **THERE WILL BE NO EXTRA CREDIT** offered for this course, so please do not ask me.
- Check your syllabus, but exam dates will still be confirmed in class. Since we will have test dates in plenty of time before an exam; ALL students are expected to be in attendance for that day.

TAKE NOTES and **STUDY** hard from the beginning, **WATCH YOUR ABSENCES**, and all will be well in your world.

*****SYLLABUS ADDENDUM*****

In the essence of space; please note that **the following topics are covered in detail in a “Syllabus Addendum” on Blackboard.** Please make yourself a copy for your files and read it carefully. Thanks!

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1) Academic Dishonesty | 3) Americans with Disabilities Act |
| 2) Visitors in the Classroom | 4) Classroom Rules of Conduct |

Course Assignments: **You will also find a copy of the syllabus on Blackboard for your files.** If you need to know where we are in class or what we will be discussing during a certain week, please check your syllabus. Look for my notes there as well. The syllabus will be our roadmap for the course. *Please note, this syllabus is to serve only as a guide, and may change or have additional reading assignments given at the instructor’s discretion. The instructor reserves the right to alter the course outline in order to control the pace of the class.*

We will be using **Blackboard** a lot for communication; check your account often. Again, class information from me to you will be placed there to help better understand the course. The Blackboard button can be found on the SHSU homepage. Use your university account name and password for access. We will be covering a lot of material this semester and I will be more than happy to clarify any area where you may have a question. If you find you are struggling, come see me as soon as you need help; the end of the semester is generally too late. FYI, many students form study groups or get a “study buddy” to help each other along. Lastly, check out the essays and websites noted along the way in the reading—they add event insight and a history base to the assigned readings.

I welcome you to stop by or drop a note in the e-mail. (JLM001@shsu.edu) I am on campus all day on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I do have classes thru the day but in between I am yours and we are certainly not limited to office hours. However, please don’t wait until right before my class to catch me. If you need me and I am not on campus, and it cannot wait until class, please feel free to write an e-mail; I check them everyday and can get back to you almost always within 24 hours.

I truly look forward to our time together.

COURSE OUTLINE READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Concerning reading assignments, please note that **our text book**, The American Democracy (7th/Alternate/Texas Edition) **consists of two parts**. The first section will cover the American government information and behind it, in the back of the book, is the second text discussing Texas government information; Government & Politics of Texas, A Comparative View.

August 21 – First day of class; Review syllabus

August 23 – Introduction to Politics

Week 1 – August 28 and 30

Reading Assignment: Lecture – Janda, Chapters 1-2 Democracy (types and dilemmas)

Week 2 – September 4 and 6

Reading Assignment: Janda, Chapter 3, The Constitution

Week 3 – September 11 and 13

Reading Assignment: Janda, Chapter 4, Federalism

Week 4 – September 18 and 20

Reading Assignment: Janda, Chapters 7&8 – Discuss Political Participation and Political Socialization

Week 5 – September 25 and 27

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 – EXAM ONE

Reading Assignment for September 27: Janda, Chapters 15&16 – Civil Liberties And Civil Rights

Week 6 – October 2 and 4

Reading Assignment: Janda, Chapter 11 - Congress

Week 7 – October 9 and 11

Reading Assignment: Janda, Chapter 12, The Presidency

Week 8 – October 16 and 18

Reading Assignment: Janda, Chapter 14, The Courts

Week 9 – October 23 and 25

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23 – EXAM TWO

Reading Assignment: Texas Politics, Chapters 1&2 – Environment of Texas Politics and the Texas Constitution

Week 10 – October 30 and November 1

Reading Assignment: Texas Politics, Chapter 7, The Legislature

Week 11 – November 6 and 8 (FYI – Tuesday, 11/6 is election day)

Reading Assignment: Texas Politics, Chapter 10, Laws, Courts and Justice

Week 12 – November 13 and 15

Reading Assignment: Texas Politics, Chapter 8, The Executive

Week 13 – November 20

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20 – EXAM THREE

November 22 is Thanksgiving Break!! No Class

Week 14 – December 4 and 6 (December 6=last day of class)

Reading Assignment: Texas Politics, Chapters 5&6, Politics of Elections and Interest Groups

FINAL EXAMS-December 10 – December 13 Final Grades will be posted by no later than 9:00 a.m. on Monday, 12/17.

Addendum to Student Concerning the Mobley, POL 261 Class Syllabus

The following information is covered on the SHSU web page at: <https://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>

Academic Dishonesty:

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 on 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 (Academic Policy Statement 810213). The penalty of any of the above will result in a zero on that work, could result in the failing of the course and will be accompanied by a letter to the Dean of Students.

Americans with Disabilities Act

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, 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.

*Students requesting accommodations are responsible for initiating this process. The student must go to and request these accommodations in a timely manner with the Counseling Center and obtain certification of the disability.

Classroom Rules of Conduct:

According to Section 5 of the Student Handbook, students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Cellular telephones and pagers must be **turned off** before class begins. Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing or engaging in any form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Not conforming to this directive could result in being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action according to the above SHSU policy.

* THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR COOPERATION OF THE FOLLOWING:

- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN DO NOT WEAR YOUR HAT, CAP, DOO RAG IN MY CLASSROOM. PLEASE REMOVE IT BEFORE ENTERING. WHEN IN DOUBT, REMOVE YOUR HEAD GEAR!
- DO NOT EXPECT ANY TOLERANCE CONCERNING CELL PHONES DURING CLASS. THIS MEANS **TURN OFF THE CELL PHONES** (this does not mean vibrate and does include text messaging!!) IF I SEE A TELEPHONE BEING USED DURING CLASS OR AN EXAM **YOU WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE AND YOU WILL RECEIVE AN 'F' FOR THAT CLASS PERIOD.**

Visitors in the Classroom:

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU ID card to be permitted to 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.

*This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.

Religious Holidays:

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.

