

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 261**  
Dr. Jim Carter – Spring 2008

**TEXTS:** Janda, Berry, Goldman, Brown, *The Challenge of Democracy*  
Langenegger, Garcia, Lewis, Biles, *Practicing Texas Politics*

This course is designed to acquaint students with the fundamental concepts and the institutional arrangements of the American and Texas political systems. The course is also designed to stimulate students to question the nature and purpose of government in general and the American and Texas systems in particular. Consequently, it is hoped that during the semester you will develop an understanding of this important influence in your life and reach some conclusions regarding your relationship to government and the nature of the impact you expect it to have on the world around you.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:**

1. There will be four major exams during the semester. This number includes the final. The first three “regular” exams will constitute 60% of the course grade. Consequently, each “regular” exam will be worth 20% of the course grade. Each of these exams will cover only the material addressed since the previous exam was administered. The final exam will be worth 30% of the grade in the course. The “final” will be mildly comprehensive.
2. A true learning experience requires interaction. Consequently 5% of the course grade will depend upon class participation. Each student is expected to perform their reading assignments before attending class and to be prepared to ask and answer questions during each class meeting.
3. Each student will also be expected to prepare a critique and an analysis of an outside reading devoted to politics. The book to be critiqued must be approved by the professor. The critique and analysis must be typed and will not be more or less than three (3) pages in length. The critique will be worth 5% of the course grade.
4. While there is nothing sacred about class attendance, roll will be taken at each class meeting. A student’s grade will be subject to adjustment following three absences. This does not mean, however, that you have three free absences! Further, being subject to adjustment on grade does not mean that your grade will be automatically adjusted after 3 absences, but simply that you have forfeited most of the privileges of any special, concerned consideration in the grading process.
5. Extra credit: to be explained in class.
6. Make-ups are the responsibility of the student. If an exam is missed, it is the student’s responsibility to call that fact to the attention of the instructor and to make arrangements for a make-up. Otherwise, at the end of the semester the instructor will record a zero for the grade found to be missing.
7. *No* final examinations will be given early for any reason.
8. **PLAGIARISM** – A writer can be said to be guilty of plagiarism when he or she uses the work of another author without acknowledgment in the text and in the bibliography. We all rely heavily on the work of others as we go about our own research and writing. If information of a common, general nature obtained through background reading is incorporated into a paper in our own words, plagiarism is not involved. On the other hand, it is crucial that you be candid when presenting specific facts, interpretations, or analyses of

data which are not your own. Identify your sources and/or supporting evidence. If parts of another writer's material are used directly, either paraphrased or directly quoted, without acknowledgment, you are guilty of plagiarism. There are degrees of plagiarism. Complete plagiarism involves submitting a paper, essay, review, etc., that is entirely the work of another person. Substantial plagiarism exists when there has been fairly extensive copying of phrases and/or complete sentences. The reproduction of a lengthy passage without acknowledgment, even though a few words may be changed in each sentence, also constitutes substantial plagiarism. Minor plagiarism exists when one presents the writing in a sentence or two as one's own, when it is not. I do not view plagiarism lightly. It is a serious academic offense, and will be treated as such. The penalty for minor plagiarism is normally a reduction in the grade assigned for the assignment in question. Substantial plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment in question. Repeated instances of substantial plagiarism will result in a grade of F in the course. Complete plagiarism will automatically result in a grade of F in the course.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** See Academic policy Statement 800401. Any attendance policy in this class will be in accordance with that statement.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** See Academic Policy Statement 810213. Any actions taken with regard to academic dishonesty in this course will be in accordance with that statement.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:** SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. Note: no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AND HOLY DAYS:** See University Policy 8161001. Any needs related to students religious requirements will be considered within the requirements of that statement.

**INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION:** Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

**CLASSROOM CONDUCT:** The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link: <https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>.

Any actions taken with regard to student conduct will be in accordance with that statement of policy.

## **TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:**

- I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT  
JBGB – Ch. 1-2; BLGLB – Ch. 1
- II. THE FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN POLITICS, THEORY AND PRACTICE  
JBGB – Ch. 3-4; BLGLB – Ch. 2
- III. AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION  
JBGB – Ch. 5-6; BLGLB – Ch. 3
- IV. VOTING AND ELECTIONS  
JBGB – Ch. 7 and 9; BLGLB – Ch. 5
- V. AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES  
JBGB – Ch. 8 and 10; BLGLB – Ch. 4
- VI. MEDIA POLITICS  
JBGB – Ch. 6
- VII. THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH  
JBGB – Ch. 11; BLGLB – Ch. 7
- VIII. THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH  
JBGB – Ch. 12; BLGLB – Ch. 8
- IX. THE BUREAUCRACY  
JBGB – Ch. 13; BLGLB - Ch. 9
- X. THE JUDICIARY  
JBGB – Ch. 14; BLGLB – Ch. 10