

**POL 261**  
**Principles of American Government – National and State**  
**AB4 Room 220, T/TH 3:30 – 5 pm**  
**3 Credit Hours Spring 2008**

**Professor:** Dr. Dunaway  
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**Office Hours:** T/TH 2-3pm (and by appointment).

**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. There are no prerequisites for this course.

**METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:** Lecture, class discussion, exams, in-class and take-home quizzes.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- To understand the form and function of our government
- To understand the concepts, purpose, and consequences associated with democratic governance
- To link government/institutional structure to political and social outcomes
- To think critically about the motivations and actions of government (or the actors therein)
- To think critically about how current policies and politics might improve

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:** *The Challenge of Democracy with Practicing Texas Politics*. This is a special edition designed specifically for SHSU. This edition combines two books: 1) *The Challenge of Democracy: Government in America, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition* by Kenneth Janda, Jeffrey M. Berry, and Jerry Goldman (2008); and 2) *Practicing Texas Politics, 15<sup>th</sup> Edition* by Lyle C. Brown, Joyce A. Langenegger, Sonia R. Garcia, Ted A. Lewis, and Robert E. Biles (2008) into one volume, and saves the cost of purchasing both.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** Class attendance is required and counts toward your participation grade, which is 10% of your total grade. See general university regulations. Makeup exams are available only at the instructor's discretion and convenience. If you miss an exam you are not guaranteed an opportunity to make it up. Make up exams (when allowed) are cumulative and are given at the end of the semester.

**IMPORTANT NOTES ON E-MAILING THE PROFESSOR:** I DO NOT accept assignments over e-mail. I will delete all e-mails that do not contain your full name and course information (POL 261) in the body or heading of the e-mail. I will only accept e-mails with one of two subject headings: 1) "Request for Appointment;" or 2) "Substantive question regarding the reading or course material." This DOES NOT INCLUDE questions about what to read, when tests are, if we are having class, if there is an assignment, when the exams are, why you missed class, due dates, etc. Substantive questions are about *the course material*. An example might be: I am having trouble understanding the difference between PACs and 527 groups. Can you help with this? If you want to discuss anything else with me, you may: consult the syllabus for information (also posted on blackboard), visit blackboard for updated class announcements and information, see me in class, or make an appointment for an in-person or telephone meeting. If you e-mail me about missing class or an exam (regardless of the reason), I reserve the right to deduct points from your participation grade. Even if you have a legitimate reason for absence and a university-approved excuse, you do not need to inform me via e-mail. You can update me when you

return to class (or in an appointment) and we can make the appropriate decisions then. I am happy to schedule appointments for a phone conversation if my office hours are not compatible with your schedule.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** First, students are required to complete their daily readings prior to class. While overnight comprehension is not expected, the combination of lectures and reading enhances the learning process. It also allows me the opportunity to ask questions and generate class discussion. I require interactive discussion of the readings and lecture material in class. Students are encouraged to offer arguments and to challenge arguments offered in class. If during the semester class participation is not at a level I think is acceptable, I reserve the right to deduct points from the participation portion of students' grades and to incorporate daily quizzes over the reading material. Other assignments will include take home quizzes and news articles for class discussion.

A note on turning in assignments: Since I do not accept assignments via e-mail, I will allow hardcopies to be turned in to my faculty mailbox in AB1 Room 315 if you cannot turn in an assignment in class. Assignments may also be turned in to Mrs. Peggy Ellenberger (also in Room 315) if necessary. Late assignments will be docked 10 points for each day it is late. I will not accept any assignments after our last official day of class under any circumstances.

**GRADING PLAN:** There will be four exams in this course. One exam will be dropped. If you miss an exam, this is counted as your dropped exam. The final exam will not be cumulative. Each exam counts for up to 30 points (90 points total after the drop). The remaining 10 points will come from class participation. Class participation includes all in-class and out-of-class assignments, as well as class attendance. You will lose participation points as you accrue a certain number of absences, but you may earn additional participation points by turning in assignments and bringing in news articles to discuss in class and hand in. Point values for various items will be announced in class. The total number of points possible for the course is 100. 100-90 points=A; 89-80 points=B; 79-70 points=C; 69-60=D; 59 and below=F.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity 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 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. Violation of this policy will result in a grade of 0 on an exam where there is cheating (for example, looking over at another student's exam during the exam, looking at any notes or cribs during the exam, etc.).

**TARDINESS:** In the past I have had problems with students who are "chronically" late to class. This is disruptive to the class and to the other students in particular. If you have scheduled your classes such that it will be impossible to be on time to my class, you should change your schedule. If you need to leave class early for any reason, please notify me before class.

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

<b>Course Outline: Topics</b>			<b>Readings and Assignments</b>
1/17	TH	Introduction and overview.	Syllabus quiz and contract.
1/22	T	Freedom, Order, or Equality?	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 1
1/24	TH	Democracy	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 2
1/29	T	The Constitution	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 3
1/31	TH	Federalism	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 4
2/5	T	Democracy, Federalism, and the Constitution in Texas	<i>Practicing Texas Politics</i> , Ch. 1-3
2/7	TH	Review for exam.	Review for exam.
2/12	T	<b>Exam I</b>	( <i>Challenge of Democracy</i> , Ch. 1-4) ( <i>Texas Politics</i> , Ch. 1-3)
2/14	TH	Congress	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 11
2/19	T	Congress	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 11
2/21	TH	The Presidency	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 12
2/26	T	The Bureaucracy	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 13
2/28	TH	The Courts	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 14
3/4	T	Texas Government Institutions	<i>Practicing Texas Politics</i> , Ch. 7-10
3/6	TH	Catch-up and Review	Review for Exam
3/10-14	T/TH	SPRING BREAK	No Class or Reading
3/18	T	<b>Exam II</b>	( <i>Challenge of Democracy</i> , Ch. 11-14) ( <i>Texas Politics</i> , Ch. 7-10)
3/20	TH	Public Opinion and Political Socialization	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 5
3/25	T	Public Opinion and Political Socialization	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 5
3/27	TH	The Media	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 6
4/1	T	The Media	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 6
4/1	T	Participation and Voting	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 7
4/3	TH	Participation and Voting	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 7
4/8	T	Public Opinion, Participation, Voting, the Media in Texas	<i>Practicing Texas Politics</i> , Chapter 5
4/10	TH	Catch Up and Review	Review for Exam
4/15	TH	<b>Exam III</b>	( <i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Ch. 5-7, 9) ( <i>Texas Politics</i> , Ch. 5)
4/17	T	Political Parties	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 8
4/22	TH	Elections and Campaigns	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 9
4/24	T	Elections and Campaigns	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 9
4/29	TH	Interest Groups	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 10
5/1	T	Interest Groups	<i>Challenge of Democracy</i> Chapter 10
5/6	TH	Parties, Campaigns, Interest Groups in Texas	<i>Practicing Texas Politics</i> , Chapters 4, 5, and 6
5/8	T	Review for Final Exam	Review for Exam
Finals Week		<b>Final Exam</b>	( <i>Challenge of Democracy</i> , Ch. 8-10) ( <i>Texas Politics</i> , Ch. 4-6)

**CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT:** Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link:

<https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>.

Section 5.2.22 defines classroom disturbances. Cellular telephones and pagers must be turned off before the class begins. Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, talking at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy. You may not film or record this class without permission.

**VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM:** Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in 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.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** 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. 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.

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:** 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.