

**Great minds have purposes, others have wishes.
-Washington Irving**

**Few will have the greatness to bend history itself;
but each of us can work to change a small
portion of events, and in the total of all those acts
will be written the history of this generation.**

-Robert F. Kennedy

POL 261.18 – 3 Credits

T/TH – 11:00 – 12:20

ROOM 317

PRINCIPLES OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT NATIONAL AND STATE

Professor Judith K. Gooch

Sam Houston State University
Department of Political Science

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POL 261.20 – 3 Credits

T/TH – 12:30 – 1:50

ROOM 310

PRINCIPLES OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT NATIONAL AND STATE

Professor Judith K. Gooch

Sam Houston State University
Department of Political Science

Principles of American Government National and State

Course Syllabus

- Description and Purpose of Course
- Course Objectives
- Required Textbook
- Attendance Policy
- Course Requirements
 - Exams
 - Grading Plan
 - Academic Dishonesty
 - Americans with Disabilities Act
 - Sexual Harassment Policy
 - Religious Holidays
 - Visitors in the Classroom
 - Instructor Evaluations
 - Classroom Rules of Conduct
- Office Hours and Meeting Availability

Course Themes

- Stimulate Thinking About Politics
- Essential Information About American Government
- Framework for Analyzing And Interpreting Politics
- Conflict Among Values And Alternative Models of Democracy
- Conflict Among Values of Freedom and Order AND Values of Freedom and Equality
- Two competing Models of Democratic Government In Making Decisions
 - Majoritarian Principles – Taking Actions Desired By A Majority of Citizens
 - Pluralist Democracy – Interaction of Decision Makers in Government With Groups Concerned About Issues that Affect Them
- Democracy Requires Thoughtful Choices
- Globalization - Democratization

Course Assignments

- General Requirements
- Examinations
- Submission of Material

Course Resources

- Text and Readings
- Web Sites
- Reference Materials

Course Summary Schedule

Description and Purpose of Course

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 Constitution of the United States and Texas. Credit 3.

Course Objective

This course is to introduce the student to basic governmental functionality of American Government at the national level, state level and local level. It is designed to educate the student to be knowledgeable, to understand and participate in the process of government as an American citizen and the importance of that participation outside of the classroom.

Required Textbook

Janda, K., Berry, J.M., Goldman, J., Brown, L.C., Langenegger, J.A., Garcia, S.R., Lewis, T.A. Biles, R.E. (2008). *The Challenge of Democracy*. Boston. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend class regularly, arrive promptly and remain seated until the class period ends. If a student cannot continue to attend the class, it is important that they follow the proper administrative procedures to officially remove themselves from the class rolls. This means that they must first obtain my signature before they may submit the drop form to registration. This will allow us to discuss the circumstances and may allow us to resolve the issue in a satisfactory manner without having to withdraw you from the course.

Although this institution allows an instructor to drop students from the class rolls for poor attendance, I do not intend to drop students for missing class. But, what will occur is after (3) three absences there will be 3 points taken from your test grade for each absence after a total of (3) three absences. If it becomes necessary to withdraw from this course, it is up to you to remove yourself from the official rolls. Failure to do so will result in a grade based upon the average of both completed and uncompleted work. I strongly urge students to avoid polluting their official transcripts with F's earned in courses that they stopped attending but failed to officially drop.

Late attendance to class will occur a 2 point deduction on the next upcoming test grade. This deduction will begin with the fourth class session as beginning a new semester can be difficult. NOTE: Always communication with the professor if there are circumstances and they will be addressed on a case-by-case situation.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to read and outline assigned materials participate in classroom discussions, prepare written assignments, take examinations and engage in the overall objective of the course. A schedule of class meetings, reading assignment, outline assignments and activities for this course is outlined in the syllabus.

Four examinations will given during the course of the semester, chapters and schedule of exam will be announced in class. These examinations are based on material presented in the text and PowerPoint's lectures and focuses on basic national, state and local government principles and theory.

Two research papers will be given at the time listed in the Course Schedule with grading sheet attached to the syllabus. A Media Report will be given at the time listed in the Course Schedule. Three letters will be written to representatives in the federal, state and local government. An Outline will be expected on a weekly basis which will count as 10 points each which will be calculated at the end of the term as an exam grade.

First Paper	4 Pages – 5 References
Second Paper	8 Pages – 8 References
Media Report	2 Pages
3 Letters to Representatives	
Local, State, Federal	1 Page each
Outline Weekly for American Government	

Exams

There will be four exams throughout the semester which does **not** include the Final Exam. The exams will be 50 multiple choice questions. The student must be prepared by extensive study of each chapter. The exam will be taken from the textbook and lecture.

Final Exam	End of Semester Average + Final = Final Grade
25	Matching Questions
25	Fill in the Blank
25	Multiple Choice
25	25 point Essay Question

Grading Plan

First Paper	20%
Second Paper	30%
4 Exams	20%
Outlines	10%
Media Report	10%
3 Letters	10%

Grading:

90 - 100 = A
89 - 80 = B
79 - 70 = C
69 - 60 = D
59 Below = F

Academic Dishonesty

Will not be tolerated. Students who plagiarize any portion of their research assignment may receive a grade of 'F' in the course for their first offense. Additional penalties will be subject to disciplinary action by the University and its official representatives accused of 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. Please review the student handbook to ensure that you understand which actions constitute plagiarism. 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.

Exams will be scheduled and announced in the classroom. Students may not leave the classroom before completing the exam. Students who wish to leave and return will not be allowed to complete the exam. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing will receive a grade of 'F' in the course. Students should review the policy on cheating in the student handbook to ensure that they understand what constitutes inappropriate behavior. If a student is unable to attend a regularly scheduled exam, makeup exams will be held by appointment and require prior coordination. Makeup exams will consist of 8-10 essay questions from the examination material that the student missed. No student may take more than one makeup exam without prior permission from the instructor.

Americans with Disabilities Act

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individual 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.

Sam Houston State University 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, then the student is encouraged to register with the Sam Houston State University 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.

Sexual Harassment Policy

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

Religious Holidays

Section 5.911 (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

Visitors in the Classroom

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official Sam Houston State University identification card to be permitted into 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.

Instructor Evaluations

At the end of the course, the student will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form. The evaluation is an important tool for the university and the instructor to assess the classroom experience. A positive overall review of the course/instructor should be taken seriously for future planning of the material presented.

Classroom Rules of Conduct

The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link:

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

Section 5.2.22 defines classroom disturbances. Cell phones and pagers should be in the OFF mode. Two points will be taken from an exam grade for any cell phones disturbing the class.

Office Hours and Meeting Availability

The student is welcome to talk with the instructor during the semester if he/she has questions by appointment, or the following office hours in Room 318C:

Tuesday and Thursday

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Phone: (832) 573-5920

Email: Judith_gooch@yahoo.com

Course Assignments

General Requirements

Class involvement is an essential part of this course. In-class students are expected to come to class prepared, having read the required reading and ready to contribute actively to discussions on the topic of the day. Class attendance and tardiness will be considered in determining the final grade. Attendance will be taken each class session and unexcused absences can affect your grade. Please keep in touch with the instructor of any difficulties that you may have with the assigned material and ask for any clarification that you may need.

Weekly text chapter and supplementary reading and outline assignments are given in the Course Schedule. In addition to the required readings, students will be expected to read every day coverage on government developments and issues that appear in the mainstream press and on internet blogs, and to be prepared to draw on this material in class discussions.

MLA Format is to be used on all research papers and media report. See Attached Sheet for guidelines.

Examinations

Four exams will be given throughout the semester covering 3 – 4 Chapters with 50 multiple choice questions. Exams will be announced during classroom discussions. Final exam is given during the last week of the semester. See guidelines given previously.

Submission of Material

All submission of material to the instructor must be presented on the day due. A 50% penalty will be assessed for all late submissions. Exception: sickness with a doctor's excuse. All dates for submission of material is noted on the Course Schedule.

Course Resources

Text and Readings

Janda, K., Berry, J.M., Goldman, J., Brown, L.C., Langenegger, J.A., Garcia, S.R., Lewis, T.A. Biles, R.E. (2008). *The Challenge of Democracy*. Boston. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Web Sites

<http://www.questia.com>

<http://www.tx.us>

<http://www.google.com>

<http://www.shsu.edu>

Reference Materials

State Legislative Sourcebook: *A Resource Guide to Legislative Information in the Fifty States* From: Government Research Service

The Book of the States From: The Council of State Governments

World Book Encyclopedia, Encyclopedia Americana

Schedule 2007-2008

American Government *

August 21 and August 23 Freedom, Order, or Equality?	Chapter 1
August 28 and August 30 Majoritarian or Pluralist Democracy	Chapter 2
September 4 and September 6 The Constitution	Chapter 3
Federalism	Chapter 4
First Paper Due September 6 – Founding Fathers	
September 11 and September 13 Public Opinion and Political Socialization Pages 141-155 Only	Chapter 5
The Media Media Report Due September 20 Discussion on Report in Class	Chapter 6
September 18 and September 20 Political Parties Pages 226-250	Chapter 8
Nominations, Elections, and Campaigns Pages 289-294	Chapter 9
September 25 and September 27 Interest Groups	Chapter 10
October 2 and October 4 Congress	Chapter 11
The Presidency Draft of Letters Due October 4 To Representatives	Chapter 12
October 9 and October 11 The Bureaucracy	Chapter 13

October 16 and October 18
The Courts Chapter 14
Second Paper Due

October 23 and October 25
Order and Civil Liberties Chapter 15
Equality and Civil Rights Chapter 16

* Outline for each Chapter Due Each Tuesday

Texas Government *

October 30 and November 1
The Environment of Texas Politics Chapter 1
Federalism and the Texas Constitution Chapter 2

November 6 and November 8
Local Governments Chapter 3

November 13 and November 15
Political Parties Chapter 4
The Politics of Elections Chapter 5
The Politics of Interest Groups Chapter 6

November 20
Letters Due - Mailed

November 27 and November 29
The Legislature Chapter 7
The Executive Chapter 8

December 4 and December 6
Laws, Courts, and Justice Chapter 10

Final Exam TBA
Review Sheet

* NO Outlines Due