Course Goal

The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with both the theory and practice of government in the United States. It will focus on the structure of government at both the state and federal level and the political context within which policy decisions are made.

Course Description

Course Description

A survey of the principles of political science, of the American system of government, and of the origins and development of the constitutions of the United States and Texas. Satisfies the legislative requirements for teacher certification.

Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes

“Learning Outcomes: The Department of Political Science has adopted student learning outcomes for general education courses (POSI 2310 and POSI 2320) and for all undergraduate and graduate degree programs offered in the Department of Political Science. These outcomes are below and also available for your review at http://www.polisci.txstate.edu. Pull down the Student Resources menu and go to “Learning Outcomes.”

Outcome 1:
Students analyze governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.

Outcome 2:
Students will demonstrate creative thinking innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.

Outcome 3:
Students will effectively develop, interpret and express ideas through written, oral and visual communication.

Outcome 4:
Students will relate choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

Outcome 5:
Students will demonstrate intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage in regional, national, and global communities.

How to be successful in this course

Completing this course successfully will require time and effort on your part. Accordingly, I’ve compiled the following list of study practices that I believe will help you to be successful in this course:

- **Realize that you cannot cram this material.** Slow and steady wins the race. Please do not try to complete this course in an unreasonably short period of time. One of your first tasks in this course should be to prepare a schedule and stick to it. (The Course Study Schedule (.pdf) will help you do this.) I suggest you plan to cover no more than one chapter every two weeks. Be careful about stepping away from the course material for an extended period of time.

- **Fully utilize your textbooks online resources.** Recognize that learning is not a spectator sport. Would you expect to watch someone on a sports field and then go and perform at the same level? No. It’s the same with learning something new. Think of your brain as a muscle; you’ve got to build it up and get it in shape by practicing, and you practice.
• **Make a plan.** Self-motivation is necessary for successful completion of this course; no one will be pushing you but you. Use the Course Study Schedule (.pdf) to help you identify target dates and chart a path for progressing through the course, including when you’ll complete each homework, project, chapter test, and exam. You will benefit the most by completing the assignments in the sequence shown on the study schedule. Also, as you plan your submission dates, remember that I have five business days from the date of receipt to grade your projects, midterm exam, and final exam. Life happens; update your schedule as needed.

• **You are not alone.** Though self-paced courses offer tremendous convenience for students, they also leave some students feeling isolated. Remember that I am here to help. If you have questions about the course content or structure, please email me via the Mail tool in the left-hand navigation menu. You can also visit the useful links to reference materials, interactive activities, and videos provided in the lessons. If you're on campus, remember also that you can utilize SLAC for free tutoring. Those of you distant from campus have access to free online tutoring via Smarthinking.

### Meet Your Instructor

**Principles of American Government [2310.010]**

**Instructor: Professor Mora**

![Professor Mora](image)

**Office:** UAC 355F  
**Email:** sm43@txstate.edu  
**Phone:** 512.245.7427

**Curriculum Vitae**

B.A., M.A., Texas State University

**Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science**  
**Undergraduate Program Coordinator**

Sherri Mora is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science. Her areas of interest are American Government, Public Policy-Emphasis, Education and Finance. She earned her A.A. in General Education from Consumes River College and her B.A. in Political Science from Southwest Texas State University. She also received her M.A. in Political Science and M.P.A. from Texas State University. Upon receiving her M.A., Sherri Mora began teaching and currently she teaches Junior and Senior level courses. In 2004, she became the Internship Director for the Public Administration program and still holds that position today. Additionally, in her time at Texas State, she has become the Undergraduate Programs Coordinator for the Political Science and Public Administration programs and served as Academic Advisor from 2004-2007. Sherri Mora has also received numerous awards for excellence in her time as a Lecturer including The...
Howard M Green Award, Award for Academic Excellence in 1999 a nomination for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Service in 2004.

**COURSES TAUGHT**

**POSI 2310 (GOVT 2301) Principles of American Government**
A survey of the principles of political science, of the American system of government, and of the origins and development of the constitutions of the United States and Texas. Satisfies the legislative requirements for teacher certification.

**POSI 2320 (GOVT 2302) Functions of American Government**
A study of functions performed in the American system of government, both national and state, with special reference to Texas.

**POSI 3316 Introduction to Public Administration**
The organization and management of the machinery for executing public policies, with particular emphasis upon the Federal bureaucracy.

**POSI 3318 Public Personnel Administration**
A study of public personnel systems in the United States with major concentrations on the national civil service system. Special emphasis is given to current research in the areas of leadership, informal organization, motivation, and small group theory.

**POSI 3328 Public Finance Administration**
Focuses on planning, organization, and implementation of budgeting including fund accounting, auditing, and debt management in the public sector.

**POSI 4322 Public Policy Formulation**
Intensive analysis of theories and processes of both policy formation and policy enforcement in the American administrative system, emphasizing the regulatory function.

**POSI 4380 Internship in Government**
The student will participate in the ongoing work of a selected governmental unit.

**POSI 4381 Internship in Public Administration**
Students in the Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) degree program will participate in the ongoing work of a public or non-profit agency.

**POSI 4397 Research in Public Administration**
This course is designed to assure familiarity with the basic concepts and approaches used in the study of public administration. Students will learn to identify, locate, and employ resources to assist in understanding public administration at all governmental levels.

**POSI 4680 Internship in Government**
The student will participate full time (40 hours per week) in the ongoing work of selected governmental units.

Required Texts

Required Texts


ISBN: 9781308408477 (Printed Product) or 9781259763724 (E-Book)

NOTE: For special pricing, this product may be purchased at any San Marcos Book Store. You may also access the publisher directly from out TRACS site by clicking on “MHCampus” located on the left side menu buttons. Once you open that button, you will “Click here to launch this tool in a new window.” When the new window opens, click “Connect” where you will create an account. Be sure to use your Texas State Bobcat Mail and an easy to remember password. Once you’ve created your account, you may then click “purchase” to obtain access to the e-book or enter the access code provided in the special bookstore text. Student homework assignments are submitted directly via this online format associated with the text, therefore, it is IMPERATIVE that you purchase the exact ISBN or electronic version of “Connect Plus” to obtain the correct access.

Ordering Textbooks

Books can be ordered through the Texas State University Bookstore or an online vendor of the student's choice, such as Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, or Half.com, or from a brick-and-mortar bookstore.

When purchasing required materials for a course, be sure to purchase the correct edition of the material and to verify that the material's International Standard Book Number (ISBN) matches that listed on the course website.

Should you require any assistance in locating course materials, please call the Office of Distance and Extended Learning at 512.245.2322.

Please keep in mind that all materials should be purchased within 30 days of enrollment; after 30 days, materials may no longer be available for your course.

When ordering from the online bookstore:

- Allow plenty of time for textbooks to arrive before class.
- Order early! You will need your textbook for the first week of class.
- NOTE: Please be aware International versions of the text may differ from the Domestic (North American) version required for your course.

Course Schedule

Course Procedure

Unit One: The American Political System

Unit's Required Reading: State of Texas, Chapter 2 and Chapter 6

Introduction to the American Political System

Theoretical Foundations

Additional Reading:

- Required: Introduction to Plato's philosophy https://youtu.be/VDiyQub6vpw

Articles of Confederation to the Founding

Additional Reading:

- Required: Articles of Confederation.
**Required:** James Madison's concerns about the Articles of Confederation in his *Vices of the Political System of the U. States*

**Constitutions: Federal and State**

Additional Reading:

- **Required:** *Themes* in the Connecticut Compromise
- **Required:** Video on constitutional compromises [https://youtu.be/kCCmuftyj8A](https://youtu.be/kCCmuftyj8A)
- **Required:** *U.S. Constitution*
- **Required:** *Federalist Papers* (No. 10, No. 46, No. 51)

**Federalism Defined and Compared**

Additional Reading:

- **Required:** Video on federalism [https://youtu.be/J0gosGXgsI](https://youtu.be/J0gosGXgsI)

**The Evolution of Federalism**

**Unit Two: Federal Policy Making Institutions**

**The Executive Branch**

Additional Reading:

- **Required:** Read the Pros and Cons of the Electoral College [http://www.hks.harvard.edu/case/3pt/electoral.html](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/case/3pt/electoral.html)
- **Required:** Take a look at [Interactive Presidential Election map](https://www.electionproject.org/)
- **Required:** Read this summary of the Executive Branch
- **Required:** Watch this introduction to Presidential Power [https://youtu.be/5I02sK5LoYI](https://youtu.be/5I02sK5LoYI) and [https://youtu.be/fnHb-zyWh14](https://youtu.be/fnHb-zyWh14)
- **Required:** Watch this introduction to How Presidents Govern [https://youtu.be/5vnuFJSMYkY](https://youtu.be/5vnuFJSMYkY)

**Commander-in-Chief**

Additional Reading:

- **Required:** Read the *War Powers Resolution* and the resolutions [Public Law 107-40, Public Law 107-243](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-107publ40/html/PLAW-107publ40.htm)

**The Legislative Branch**

Additional Reading:

- **Required:** Watch this introduction to the bicameral Congress [https://youtu.be/n9defOwVWS8](https://youtu.be/n9defOwVWS8)
- **Required:** Read More on the Legislature

**U.S. House of Representatives**

**Committees**

Additional Reading:

- **Required:** Watch this introduction to Congressional Committees [https://youtu.be/evLR90Dx79M](https://youtu.be/evLR90Dx79M)
- **Required:** Watch this introduction to how a bill becomes a law [https://youtu.be/66f4-NKEYz4](https://youtu.be/66f4-NKEYz4)
Required: Read More on How a Bill Becomes a Law

The Judiciary

Additional Reading:

Required: Read More on the structure of the Judiciary

Required: Watch this Marbury v. Madison retelling (see topic page in course content)

Required: Watch this introduction to the structure of the court system https://youtu.be/IGyx5UEwgtA

Required: Watch this introduction to S.C.O.T.U.S. Procedures https://youtu.be/7sualy8OiKk

Required: Read the NYtimes article "10 Supreme Court Cases Every Teen Should Know"

Required: Watch the following videos on Judicial Review and Judicial Decisions https://youtu.be/mWYFwl93uCM and https://youtu.be/QjLcLquoKC4

Unit Three: Political Participation

Unit's Required Reading: State of Texas, Chapters 7 - 10

American Political Culture

Additional Reading:

Required: Read more about voter turnout

Public Opinion

Additional Reading:

Required: Read more about these research consulting companies that conduct polls Gallup and Roper

Socialization

Additional Reading:

Required: Read More on Political Socialization

The Role of the Media

Additional Reading:

Required: Read more about the state of the media

Two-Party System

Additional Reading:

Required: Read more about the party identification

Minor Parties

Additional Reading:

Required: Take a look at some minor parties

Political Ideology

Additional Reading:

Required: Read more about the Republican Party
**Required:** Read more about the Democratic Party

**Interest Groups**

Additional Reading:

**Required:** Read More: Take a look at some of the interest groups in Washington

**Voting and Elections**

Additional Reading:

**Required:** Read more on being an informed voter

**Unit Four: TX Constitutions & Policy Making Institutions**

Unit's Required Reading: State of Texas, Chapter 2 (re-read) and Chapters 3 - 5; and Big, Hot, Cheap, and Right: What America Can Learn From the Strange Genius of Texas, Author: Erica Grieder Chapter 2: The Texas Model (Link: pages 23-33)

**Texas Politics in Historical Context**

Additional Reading:

**Required:** watch the video on the Texas revolution https://youtu.be/kXA0ZiII20I

**Required:** Look at this timeline of Texas political history

**Texas Constitution**

**The Structure of Texas Government**

**The Executive Branch: The Governor**

Additional Reading:

**Required:** Read more about the Governors’ office

**The Plural Executive**

**The Legislative Branch**

**State Bureaucracy**

**Political Parties in Texas**

Additional Reading:

**Required:** Texas Election Results from 2014

**Special Interests**

Grading
Grading

Each topic (four total) is worth 20%.

Within each topic, there is a short answer written assignment (5%), a primary source analysis (5%), and a quiz (10%). Students may submit no more than two assignments each week.

This breaks down as follows:

Topic 1: 20%
  
  Short Answer Assignment: 5%
  Primary Source Analysis: 5%
  Quiz: 10%

Topic 2: 20%
  
  Short Answer Assignment: 5%
  Primary Source Analysis: 5%
  Quiz: 10%

Topic 3: 20%
  
  Short Answer Assignment: 5%
  Primary Source Analysis: 5%
  Quiz: 10%

Topic 4: 20%
  
  Short Answer Assignment: 5%
  Primary Source Analysis: 5%
  Quiz: 10%

Outside of the Topics, there will be a Mid-Term and Final.

  Mid-Term: 10% (to be taken on campus in Testing Center)
  Final Exam: 10% (to be taken on campus in Testing Center)

There will be NO final curve. Students will earn their grade. 89.5% and above (A), 79.5-89.4% (B), 69.5-79.4% (C), 59.5-69.4% (D), below 59.5% (F).

Communication Policy

Communication Policy

According to "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education," faculty-student contact is very important.

Accordingly, I encourage you to contact me if you have any concerns, questions, or problems. You are welcome to e-mail me by using the Mail tool in the left navigation bar. (It is important to keep all mail related to this course contained within this TRACS site.)

My policy is that during non-holiday breaks or announced away times, any email I receive between Monday morning and Friday at noon will receive a reply within 48 hours. Emails received between Friday at noon and Sunday night will receive a reply on the next business day.
Free Tutoring Resources

A variety of free tutoring resources are available for students enrolled in correspondence courses.

All correspondence students have access to several hours of free online tutoring from Smarthinking for subjects ranging from grammar and writing to mathematics and Spanish. Free online tutoring for writing-related assignments is also available from the Texas State Writing Center.

For information on accessing these resources, please visit the Office of Distance and Extended Learning's Free Tutoring page.

Currently-enrolled, degree-seeking students able to visit the Texas State campus are eligible for free in-person tutoring from the Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC) on the fourth floor of Alkek Library.

TRACS Technical Support

Texas State's Information Technology Assistance Center (ITAC) provides phone and LiveChat technical support for TRACS 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

To take advantage of these services, visit ITAC online or call 512.245.ITAC (4822).

Note also that a number of online TRACS tutorials are available from TRACS Facts.

Before beginning this online course, it is recommended that you review the minimum hardware and software requirements and other important information available on the ITS Course Information page.

Using Wikipedia

As a tool for scholarly research, Wikipedia can be either a grade-killer or a valuable friend, depending on who you ask and what you hope to accomplish using it. What is fairly certain is that your professor won't let you cite it in a scholarly research paper.

There are a few common reasons why you can't site Wikipedia:

- Wikipedia is a general encyclopedia. At the collegiate or university level, your professors are looking for more than general rudimentary material. General encyclopedias usually give baseline information, the type of common knowledge that isn't usually cited. Academic subject-specific encyclopedias will often provide more scholarly and citeable information.
- There is often no way to know who is editing the entries in Wikipedia or what his or her level of expertise is.
- You cannot be sure that the content is “permanent” (although you can look at the revision history on the History page).
- You cannot be sure that the content meets standards of academic rigor. One of Wikipedia’s main principles is that it strives for a neutral point of view (which it abbreviates to NPOV). This standard states that all articles should strive to “represent…all significant views on each topic fairly, proportionately, and without bias.” The problem is that in any knowledge endeavor, much less a collaborative and ad hoc venture like Wikipedia, deciding what's neutral and having something reviewed for NPOV can be controversial undertakings and too uncertain to meet standards of academic rigor. However, having such a debate take place publicly on Wikipedia makes for interesting talk-page reading and for a good pros-and-cons debate.

Two other Wikipedia policies relevant to academic rigor are its verifiability and “no original research” policies.

Tips for Using Wikipedia Effectively

https://tracs.txstate.edu/portal/tool/4977b1e7-8e43-4701-9db5-2bf33a65da8e/printFriendly
Use Wikipedia to get a general overview, and follow the references it provides as far as they can take you.

Look at the Discussion tab to see if the article you’re reading is part of a WikiProject, meaning that a group of people who care about the subject area are working in concert on its content. They may not be experts on the subject, but signing onto a WikiProject implies a writer has more than a casual interest in it.

If it is part of a WikiProject, see if it has been rated. Articles in WikiProjects go through a type of peer review. This is not the same type of peer review your professor talks about regarding scholarly research, but even such a limited review does at least imply that someone from the WikiProject has looked at the article at some point and assigned a quality rating to it. In any case, to be fairly sure that a Wikipedia article expresses what laypeople might need to know to consider themselves reasonably informed, look for a rating of B/A or above.

Additional Resources

You may wish to consult any or all of the following for additional help in finding and evaluating sources:

- [Wikipedia assignments]
- Wikipedia’s Neutral Point of View guideline
- Wikipedia on verifiability
- Wikipedia on original research (example)
- Wikipedia: Peer review
- The Seven Steps of the Research Process. A resource designed to answer questions about evaluating sources of information.
- Critically Analyzing Information Sources. This resource lists some of the critical questions you should ask when you consider the appropriateness of a particular book, article, media resource, or Web site for your research.
- Distinguishing Scholarly from Nonscholarly Periodicals: A Checklist of Criteria. This resource shows how to evaluate periodicals by looking at their format, intended audience, and appearance.
- Evaluating Web Sites: Criteria and Tools. This resource lists ways to analyze the Web sites you find.
- Evaluating Resources and Evaluating Web Resources. These resources, available on the Introduction to Research page at the Cornell University Library Web site, provide additional information.
- Five Criteria for Evaluating Web Sites. This resource offers a table of suggestions.

<https://digitalliteracy.cornell.edu/tutorial/dpl3222.html>

Correspondence Course Information

As a correspondence studies student, it is your responsibility to be familiar with correspondence-related policies and services. To this end, I encourage you to review the Correspondence Course Information (.pdf) page as well as the Correspondence Studies Student Handbook.

Students with Special Needs

The Office of Distance and Extended Learning is committed to helping students with disabilities achieve their educational goals.

A disability is not a barrier to correspondence study, and we strive to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals in coursework and test taking.
Students who require special accommodations need to provide verification of their disability to the Office of Disability Services, Suite 5-5.1 LBJ Student Center, 512.245.3451 (voice/TTY).

Students should then notify the Office of Distance and Extended Learning of any disability-related accommodation needs as soon as possible to avoid a delay in accommodations.

Academic Integrity

The Texas State Academic Honor Code applies to all Texas State students, including correspondence students. The Honor Code serves as an affirmation that the University demands the highest standard of integrity in all actions related to the academic community. As stated in the Texas State Student Handbook, Violation of the Honor Code includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials.

Academic work means the preparation of an essay, thesis, report, problem, assignment, or other projects, which are to be submitted for purposes of grade determination. Cheating means engaging in any of the following activities:

- copying from another student’s test paper, laboratory report, other report or computer files, data listing, or programs;
- using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- collaborating, without authorization, with another person during an examination or in preparing academic work;
- knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the content of an unadministered test;
- substituting for another student—or permitting another person to substitute for oneself—in taking an exam or preparing academic work;
- bribing another person to obtain an unadministered test or information about an unadministered test;
- purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one’s own work, any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm. This section does not apply to the typing of the rough or final versions of an assignment by a professional typist.

Plagiarism means the appropriation of another’s work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one’s own written work offered for credit. Collusion means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit. Abuse of resource materials means the mutilation, destruction, concealment, theft, or alteration of materials provided to assist students in the mastery of course materials.

Please cite all unoriginal material through the use of standard bibliographical practice. [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/] Incidents of academic dishonesty as outlined by the University will be reported to the administration for disciplinary action. In addition, students will receive a 0 for the assignment or assignments without the opportunity to redo the work.