



SYLLABUS

NOTE: THIS SYLLABUS WAS WRITTEN ON SEPTEMBER 3, 2017 WITH THE LATEST UPDATES TO LAMAR UNIVERSITY'S FALL 2017 SCHEDULE IN MIND. CLASS IS EXPECTED TO BE HELD ONLINE THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 5, 2017 AT THIS POINT. IF ANY CHANGES ARE MADE TO THE SCHEDULE OR THE NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY, THE COURSE COMPONENTS, GRADE CALCULATION, AND SCHEDULE ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO THOSE FACTORS.

The Lamar University, a member of The Texas State University System, is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award Associate, Baccalaureate, Masters, and Doctorate degrees (more details at <http://www.lamar.edu>).

Semester	Fall 2017
College	Arts and Sciences
Department	Political Science
Course Number	POLS 2301
Course Title	Introduction to American Government I
Instructor	James P. Nelson, Ph.D. Department of Political Science
Instructor Information	Office Location: SBS 201-D E-mail: james.nelson@lamar.edu Office Phone: (409)880-8529 Office Hours: W 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.; R 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Class Information	Class Location: SBS 109 Class Time/Section: MWF 10:20 a.m.-11:15 a.m./10
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Course Description: This course provides a general overview of political behavior in the United States, which includes citizen participation as well as the behavior of elites in some circumstances. The course will include a discussion of how our current system of government was developed as well as the roles of citizens within that system. The Constitutions of both Texas and the United States will be discussed because of their relevance to citizen participation in politics as well as the other subjects that will be discussed throughout the semester.

Course Prerequisites: Sophomore standing; basic skills competency in reading and writing.

Required Textbooks and Materials:

Krutz, Glen, Sylvie Waskiewicz, et al, *American Government*, OpenStax. 14 July 2016, ISBN-13: 978-1938168178. Upload the text through: <https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government>. This required digital textbook is available to you at no cost.

**** If you are a person who cannot use a digital textbook, you CAN purchase a hard copy of this book from Amazon.com for about \$30. Please make sure you purchase the most current edition as the textbook was edited following the November 2016 elections. ISBN: 1938168178**

Davis, Terri, and James P. Nelson, *The Texas Constitution: The People, History, and Government of the Lone Star State*, 2017. (PDF version of the textbook available in the course, go to Blackboard, "Content" tab.)

Attendance Policy: Your grade will not be directly impacted by your attendance on lecture days, but I strongly recommend that you come to class to enhance your understanding of the course material. Attendance will be taken for record-keeping purposes only. A student may postpone a test if I receive notice from that student regarding the absence before the test begins. Tests may only be postponed for excused school absences, such as representing Lamar at school functions, medical emergencies, illnesses, or religious holidays.

Grading Scale: Your grade in this class will be determined by the average of your grades on three exams, one research-based paper, and one introductory writing assignment. I will determine which letter grade your course average falls into using the following criteria.

90-100%= A

80-89%=B

70-79%=C

60-69%=D

0%-59%=F

Grading and Evaluation: A student's grade will be determined by the weighted average of his/her scores on three multiple-choice exams (25% each, 75% total), one research-based written assignment (20%), and the introductory writing assignment (5%). The details of the introductory writing assignment are on Blackboard. Each examination consists of fifty multiple choice questions. The examinations are not comprehensive in nature.

Research-Based Writing Assignment

Students are required to submit one research-based written assignment during the course of the semester. The required content of the assignment is set forth below. **The written essays must be submitted electronically by the student into the course Safe Assign system. Only Word format is accepted by the system.**

IMPORTANT NOTE: Students are NOT allowed to submit papers they have written for any other course including written assignments and papers submitted in POLS 2302. If a student is retaking POLS 2301 for a grade replacement, the student is NOT allowed to submit a paper previously submitted in any POLS 2301 course or any other course. Submission of a paper previously submitted by you or any other student in any other course will appear in SafeAssign and be considered by the instructor to be plagiarized. A paper submitted in this course – written by the student or any other person - that appears in any other course will result in an assignment score of zero. Your name and work will be submitted into a permanent file marked “plagiarism” and may be used by the instructor or subsequent instructors for evidence of one-time or repeated plagiarism and may be used as evidence of academic dishonesty resulting in expulsion from Lamar University.

- Your essay **must** include a title page containing your name, POLS 2301, Written Assignment (with an essay title), semester, and the date of your submission of the assignment through Safe Assign. (The title page is not included as a numbered page and your essay should meet the page number requirement exclusive of the cover page.)
- The written assignment **MUST** be uploaded as ONE document (title page, essay, works cited should all be in the SAME document). Students can find the link to submit their written assignment by clicking the “Written Assignment” tab in the left-hand column of the course, then clicking “Term Paper Submission.” Students may NOT submit the assignment via email inside or outside the course Blackboard system. Students may not cut and paste essays into the assignment window - the assignment **MUST** be uploaded as a WORD document and **MUST** be in ONE file. Do NOT upload more than one written assignment document. The system will only allow you to select ONE file, so make sure that file is the combined cover page, paper, AND bibliography. Assignments uploaded in any format other than WORD, such as a PDF, RTF, ZIP, etc., will automatically receive an overall assignment score of zero. Assignments submitted only via email will automatically receive a zero as will assignments submitted outside of Safe Assign. In summary, you **MUST** submit your paper:
 1. As one complete paper (no separate submissions of title pages or bibliographies);
 2. In Word format (no zip drives, PDF, RTF or other forms of submission);
 3. As an uploaded document from your computer; with the box checked for your agreement to submit your paper to the Global Reference Database;
 4. **No later than November 17, 2017, at 11:59 p.m.**

You should note that the assignment folder closes precisely at 11:59 p.m. Submissions submitted at 11:59.1 will be rejected by the system, and registered as a late submission.

The written assignment will be used to access the Critical Thinking and Communication Skills Learning Outcome core curriculum requirements of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). A copy of the assessment rubric designed to satisfy THECB requirements is provided by in the Contents section in Blackboard. Once you click on the file marked “Writing Assignment Rubric” in Blackboard, you will be able to review the rubric. The rubric used to grade the assignment is based on a 10-point scale. The posted grade will be rescaled to a 100-point scale.

Write a three-to-five page essay containing the following:

1. An introductory paragraph containing a brief description of three subject areas studied this semester that you found most interesting and/or informative, and a statement about a contemporary political problem or issue related to the course that will be discussed in greater detail later in the paper.
2. Discussion of the three subject areas identified in your introduction. Citations and specific academic information gained from the course **MUST** be provided in both the body of the text and in the bibliography. The three subject areas you discuss **MUST** be from POLS 2301 and cannot be topics studied in POLS 2302 (i.e., congress, presidency, governorship, state legislature). Subject areas should focus on topics listed in the syllabus.
3. Identify, discuss and describe a specific contemporary political problem in one of the three subject areas you identified.
4. Construct and communicate a solution to the problem you identified (above). Make sure to develop and express your solution in the form of an argument that is supported by well-documented and properly cited facts and data. A good paper will have at least **3-5 scholarly sources** in addition to the course textbook(s).

Correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, complete sentences, and CITATION of your sources is required. Textbook readings with page numbers (or chapter headings and subheadings for digital textbooks without page numbers) and textbook citation; lectures (title and presenter); and outside scholarly research must be included in your assignment.

Wikipedia/Encyclopedia/Dictionary/Spark Notes and other similar sources are NOT allowed and will result in an assignment score of zero. Failure to submit the assignment by the deadline will result in a grade of zero for the overall written assignment grade. Citations must be provided in both the body of your essay and in a “Works Cited” section at the conclusion of your essay. Also note that references to court cases must be italicized (*Brown v. Board of Education*) or underlined (Brown v. Board of Education). If you are using internet citations, you MUST include the FULL URL, title, author (if available) and access date.

Your written assignment should be typed and double spaced with 12-point font and one-inch margins top, bottom, and side. Political Science as a field has adopted the APSA Manual of Style; however, you are free to use the citation style adopted by your major department or the style used in your English composition courses (MLA or other style). Regardless of citation style, all sources must be properly, thoroughly, and consistently cited. Careful attention to grammar, spelling, and the mechanics of presentation is expected. ***Wikipedia is not a reliable source of information. Any citation of Wikipedia, or other non-scholarly sources in a term paper or other assignment in this course will result in an automatic score of 0 (zero) on the assignment. Scholarly resources would include journal articles, books, and news organization websites. Government documents such as court decisions and agency reports are also acceptable sources.***

Carefully read the Course Management Policies, and “Academic Honesty Statement” for additional guidelines for your written assignments. Any cut and paste, plagiarized, or Wiki cited posts or papers will result in an automatic grade of zero for the overall assignment and possible expulsion from the course and Lamar University. Students have ONLY one chance to upload papers to Safe Assign and the version that is uploaded is the version that will be graded.

Extra Credit

An extra credit term paper may be written by students who would like to raise their grades. The extra credit paper assignment will be due on the first day of finals week and must be five to seven pages in length with at least one source per page. A student receiving a score of 100% on this paper will add five points to his/her final average. Students with lower grades will receive the percentages of five points that correspond to their grades (ex. a student scoring 80% would receive four points). DO NOT USE WIKIPEDIA AS A SOURCE! More details about the assignment will be provided on Blackboard at a later date. No other extra credit opportunities will be offered.

Late Work Policy: Any student who turns in an assignment after the due date will lose 10 points (of 100) per business day (M-F) it is late. In accordance with this policy, any paper turned in 5 business days late or later will not receive a grade above 50% (F). Late extra credit will not be accepted.

General Education/Core Curriculum Student Learning Outcomes (THECB): The following learning outcomes of core curriculum courses are required by the State of Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board:

- Critical Thinking
- Communication Skills
- Personal Responsibility
- Social Responsibility

The THECB learning outcomes for POLS 2301 will be assessed by the following criteria:

Critical Thinking and Communication Skills: Effective critical thinking and written and verbal communication skills are essential to successful completion of the course. In addition to participation in classroom discussions and presentations, critical thinking and communication will be assessed based on one writing assignment per semester that will be evaluated and graded by your instructor based on the approved THECB assessment rubric. Critical Thinking: Students will be able to analyze a political problem and synthesize a solution to the problem. The outcome will be assessed on the writing assignment. Communication Skills: Students will be able to effectively develop and express an argument supported by fact regarding a political problem or question. The outcome will be assessed on the writing assignment.

Personal Responsibility and Social Responsibility: The classroom is a learning environment, and all students are expected to observe basic rules of courtesy, personal discipline, and responsibility. Personal responsibility and social responsibility will be *informally* assessed by class attendance; timely arrival to class; non-use of cell phones, i-pods, ear buds, etc.; not using computers inappropriately in class (engaging in facebooking, surfing the net, etc.); not eating, sleeping, texting, listening to music, carry on private conversations with others or otherwise disrupt the learning environment of the classroom; reading all assigned materials *prior* to class; and completing the Course Evaluation at the conclusion of the semester. Personal responsibility and social responsibility will be *formally* assessed based on multiple choice questions embedded in your examinations. Personal Responsibility: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of how to register to vote and the expectations of citizenship in the United States. This outcome will be assessed on the exams throughout the semester. Social Responsibility: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of political parties and interest group role in the political process and how an individual can effectively engage in these groups to achieve political outcomes. This outcome will be assessed on the exams throughout the semester.

Course Management Policies:

1. Disability Accommodation – Americans with Disabilities Act: Lamar University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is located in the Communications Building, Room 105. Office staff collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

For students: If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact the DRC at [409-880-8347](tel:409-880-8347) or drc@lamar.edu to arrange a confidential appointment with the Director of the DRC to explore possible options regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations. If you are registered with DRC and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, we encourage you to contact your instructor early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course.

It is the policy of Lamar University to comply with the fundamental principles of nondiscrimination and accommodation in academic programs set forth in the implementing regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; these regulations provide that: *No qualified student with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or*

otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any ... postsecondary education program or activity. Rules governing accommodations are available on the University DRC website.

2. Academic Honesty Statement

Students are specifically warned against all forms of cheating and plagiarism. The Lamar University Student Handbook states: *Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. Punishable offences include, but are not limited to, cheating on an examination or academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials.* One aspect of the handbook's definition of cheating is, "purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one's own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm". Plagiarism is defined as, "the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another's work or ideas into one's own offered for credit". Students seeking to avoid plagiarism should consult with the course instructor or recent handbooks such as the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Faculty members in the College of Arts and Sciences investigate all cases of suspected plagiarism. Any student who submits plagiarized work in POLS 2301 will fail the course. Students guilty of cheating in POLS 2301 will fail the course as well. These punishments are minimum punishments; a student may be punished more severely if circumstances warrant it. Students are encouraged to discuss the ideas needed for implementing programming assignments, but copying code or allowing another to copy your own source code is an act of plagiarism and will result in a zero grade on the assignments where this occurs.

3. Course Evaluation

Instruction as well as student performance is subject to evaluation. Procedures may be instituted for this purpose near the end of this course.

4. myLamar Portal

Students are asked to obtain a Lamar Electronic Account username and password so they can log into the myLamar website and Blackboard. Students may get information on how to get into the myLamar Web site from the University's homepage (<http://www.lamar.edu>) by clicking on the myLamar link on the left top corner of the screen. Follow the steps to secure your myLamar username and password.

5. Sexual Harassment

In accordance with administrative policy, sexual harassment is reprehensible and will not be tolerated by the university. Behavior in the course must conform to the university policy.

6. Academic Continuity Statement

In the event of an announced campus closure in excess of four days due to a hurricane or other disaster, students are expected to login to Lamar University's website's homepage (www.Lamar.edu) for instructions about continuing courses remotely.

7. Emergency Preparedness

Instructions for specific emergencies, such as severe weather, chemical release, active shooter, or fire can be found at: <http://www.lamar.edu/about-lu/administration/risk-management/index.html>

Here are some simple things you should do in the event an emergency occurs during our class:

1. Always follow the directions of the instructor or emergency personnel.
2. If told to evacuate, do so immediately.
3. If told to shelter-in-place, find a room, in the center of the building with few windows, on the lowest level of the building.
4. If told to lockdown, lock and barricade the door if possible. Turn off the lights and wait for police to arrive.

In case of severe weather:

1. Follow the directions of the instructor or emergency personnel.
2. Seek shelter in an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor, putting as many walls as possible between you and the outside.
3. If you are in a multi-story building, and you cannot get to the lowest floor, pick a hallway in the center of the building.
4. Stay in the center of the room, away from exterior walls, windows, and doors.

In case of violence or an active shooter (CADD):

1. **CALL** - 8-3-1-1 from a campus phone (880-8311 from a cell phone). Note: Calling 911 from either a campus phone or cell phone will contact Beaumont City Police Dispatch rather than University Police.
2. **AVOID**- If possible, self-evacuate to a safe area outside the building. Follow directions of police officers.
3. **DENY**- Barricade the door with desks, chairs, bookcases or any other items. Move to a place inside the room where you are not visible. Turn off the lights and remain quiet. Remain there until told by police it is safe.
4. **DEFEND** - Use chairs, desks, cell phones or whatever is immediately available to distract and/or defend yourself and others from attack.

8. Instructor's Rules of the Class

Cell phone use and use of other electronic devices for activities not related to the lecture are prohibited during class. If you need to use your phone because of a family emergency or other special circumstance, you must leave it on vibrate. Do not record me or your fellow students during class. Recording lectures is not permitted. Also, if you must leave class early or arrive late please discuss your reasons for doing so with me beforehand. If you have to either arrive late or leave early, select a seat near the door in order to avoid distracting other students. Do not bring children to class. During discussions of the limitations of free speech and other controversial subjects some classroom content will not be appropriate for children. The instructor reserves the right to have disruptive students removed from class.

Privacy Notice:

Federal privacy laws (FERPA) apply to universities and colleges. University employees, including instructors, cannot discuss student information with third parties including parents and legal guardians of students. Anyone requesting information about a student should be referred to the Registrar. Instructors will be officially notified in writing by the Registrar's Office about the specific information to be released and the persons authorized to receive the information.

Important University Dates:

August 28	First Class Day
September 4	Labor Day Holiday (No Classes)
September 13	12 th Class Day (census) – Last day for full refund on dropped (not withdrawn) courses
September 25	Final non-payment purge
September 29	Last day to drop or withdraw without academic penalty
November 3	Last day to drop or withdraw with academic penalty
November 23-24	Thanksgiving Holiday (No Classes)
December 4	Last Class Day
December 5 – 12	Final Examinations

Course Schedule - POLS 2301 – Fall 2017

Week 1

August 28: Class cancelled – Hurricane Harvey

August 30: Class cancelled – Hurricane Harvey

September 1: Class cancelled – Hurricane Harvey

Week 2

September 4: Labor Day – No Class

September 6: Open Stax: Chapter 1: American Government and Civic Engagement

September 8: Open Stax: Chapter 1: American Government and Civic Engagement; Introductory Writing Assignment due at 11:59 p.m.

Week 3

September 11: Davis and Nelson (Texas readings): Chapter 1: Early Explorations, Settlements, and Disputes over Texas Land

September 13: Davis and Nelson (Texas readings): Chapter 2: Migration and Immigration to Texas

September 15: Davis and Nelson (Texas readings): Chapter 2: Migration and Immigration to Texas

Week 4

September 18: Davis and Nelson (Texas readings): Chapter 2: Migration and Immigration to Texas

September 20: Open Stax: Chapter 2: The Constitution and its Origins

September 22: Open Stax: Chapter 2: The Constitution and its Origins

Week 5

September 25: Open Stax: Chapter 2: The Constitution and its Origins, Federalist 10 and 51

September 27: Open Stax: Chapter 2: The Constitution and its Origins, Federalist 10 and 51

September 29: Davis and Nelson (Texas readings): Chapter 3: Groundwork for Understanding the Current Texas Constitution (1876): The Constitutions of Texas, Political Culture, and the People of Texas

Week 6

October 2: Davis and Nelson (Texas readings): Chapter 3: Groundwork for Understanding the Current Texas Constitution (1876): The Constitutions of Texas, Political Culture, and the People of Texas

October 4: Exam One (all previous class material)

October 6: Open Stax: Chapter 3: American Federalism

Week 7

October 9: Open Stax: Chapter 3: American Federalism

October 11: Open Stax: Chapter 3: American Federalism

October 13: Open Stax: Chapter 14: State and Local Government

Week 8

October 16: Open Stax: Chapter 14: State and Local Government

October 18: Open Stax: Chapter 14: State and Local Government

October 20: Davis and Nelson (Texas readings): Chapter 4: The American Federal System and its Significance to Understanding Texas Government

Week 9

October 23: Davis and Nelson (Texas readings): Chapter 4: The American Federal System and its Significance to Understanding Texas Government

October 25: Open Stax: Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion

October 27: Open Stax: Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion

Week 10

October 30: Open Stax: Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion

November 1: Exam Two (all previous class material after Exam One)

November 3: Open Stax: Chapter 8: The Media

Week 11

November 6: Open Stax: Chapter 8: The Media

November 8: Open Stax: Chapter 9: Political Parties

November 10: Open Stax: Chapter 9: Political Parties

Week 12

November 13: Open Stax: Chapter 10: Interest Groups and Lobbying

November 15: Open Stax: Chapter 10: Interest Groups and Lobbying

November 17: Open Stax: Chapter 10: Interest Groups and Lobbying

Required Writing Assignment due at 11:59 p.m.

Week 13

November 20: Open Stax: Chapter 7: Voting and Elections

November 22: Open Stax: Chapter 7: Voting and Elections

November 24: Thanksgiving Holiday – class cancelled

Week 14

November 27: Davis and Nelson (Texas readings): Chapter 5: Elections, Political Parties, and Lobbying in Texas

November 29: Davis and Nelson (Texas readings): Chapter 5: Elections, Political Parties, and Lobbying in Texas

December 1: Exam Three (all previous class material after Exam Two)

Week 15

December 4: Class is Optional - Instructor Available for Extra Credit Consultation

December 6: Harvey Days – Activity To Be Announced

December 8: Harvey Days – Activity To Be Announced

Week 16

December 11: Extra Credit due

CHANGE STATEMENT:

This syllabus may change with prior notice from the instructor.