



LAMAR UNIVERSITY

SYLLABUS

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 (for more information go to <http://www.lamar.edu>).

Course Title:	Introduction to American Government I
Course Number:	POLS 2301
Course Section:	Fall 2017
Department:	Political Science
Course Instructor:	Dr. Thomas E. Sowers II, Associate Professor of Political Science
Office Hours:	MWF 11:30-12:30. By appointment and real-time chat via Blackboard by appointment
Contact Information:	LU email: Thomas.Sowers@lamar.edu Office: Social and Behavioral Sciences Building (SBS) 201L Phone: 409-880-8539

COURSE DESCRIPTION

I. Catalog Description:

The national and Texas constitutions; federalism; political socialization and participation; public opinion and interest groups; parties, voting and elections. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

II. DETAILED DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces students to the institutions, politics, and practices of American government and Texas government. It focuses on the three branches of the national government and state government as well as the major components of the American democratic system including political socialization and participation, public opinion and interest groups, political parties, voting, and elections.

The objectives of the course are to provide students with an intellectual foundation from which to analyze government and governmental activities, engage in political discussion and activities, and to obtain further education in political science, law, and other social sciences. The knowledge gained from this course will encourage and empower students to participate more meaningfully and fully in the American and Texas political experience.

COURSE-LEVEL OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the U. S. Constitution and the ability to identify the powers assigned to Congress, the Presidency, and the Courts based on the separation of powers specified in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Compare the U. S. Constitution and the Texas Constitution and convey understanding of the differences between the powers, structures, and functions of branches of government created by the U.S. Constitution and the Texas Constitution.

3. Know the importance of public opinion in a democracy specifically the United States; identify the key factors that shape individual political opinion; and describe the methods researchers employ to measure public opinion.
4. Convey understanding of the importance, basic elements, and organization of campaigns and elections in the United States.
5. Know the role of political parties and interest groups in American politics and government and how organized interests and parties influence policy.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, students will successfully demonstrate the course-level objectives set forth above as well as the learning outcomes required of core curriculum courses by the State of Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The THECB learning outcomes for core curriculum courses are:

- 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. Critical thinking and communication will be assessed through analysis of your required term paper to 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. This 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. This 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 decorum in the online discussion boards, emails to classmates and your instructor. Personal responsibility and social responsibility will be *formally* assessed based on multiple choice questions embedded in your examinations. Personal Responsibility: Students will demonstrate knowledge of their basic civil liberties and the constitutionality of choices individuals make. This outcome will be assessed on multiple choice examinations throughout the semester. Social Responsibility: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the Fourteenth Amendment and the concept of equal protection and how the amendment is connected to civil rights and the ability of groups to engage in the political process. This outcome will be assessed on multiple choice examinations throughout the semester.

ACADEMIC PREREQUISITES

- Sophomore standing
- Basic competency/skills in reading and writing

TECHNOLOGY PREREQUISITES

Students should feel confident about their ability to navigate through typical online websites and their ability to use common word processing software in order to submit written assignments. Students should also be able to access and navigate digital textbooks and websites.

The minimum technical skills and the system requirements for this course include:

BLACKBOARD (LU Learn)

Students will utilize the Lamar University's Learning Management System (LMS), Blackboard, for online courses. For Blackboard support go to (<https://blackboardsupport.lamar.edu>) for more information.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Course Materials:

Krutz, Glen, Sylvie Waskiewicz, et al, *American Government*, OpenStax, 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.

Champagne, Anthony, and Edward J. Harpham. *Governing Texas, 2nd Ed.* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company). ISBN 978-0-393-93684-1

Students are also strongly encouraged to keep up with current political events through objective internet sites or newspaper reading. **Please note that information provided on the Wikipedia website is open to submission by any and all readers and is not considered to be an objective and accurate source of information. Students citing Wikipedia or any Wiki source in their written term essay will automatically receive a "zero" on the overall assignment in which the citation is made.**

GRADING POLICY AND EVALUATION

Grading Scale: Final grades will be calculated by adding the total number of points earned and applying the following scale:

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

GRADING OF ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS

Please note: The overall course grade point total shown on your Course Blackboard screen is NOT an accurate reflection of your cumulative course grade. The grade point total shown includes your scores on the optional reading quizzes and the quiz scores are not included in the final calculation of your course grade (see 'Reading Quizzes' below).

I. Examinations:	80% (4 at 20% each)
II. Written Assignment:	15%
III. Convention Participation	5%
	100%

I. Examinations: 80% total course grade (4 examinations counting 20% each)

There are three content-area multiple choice examinations and one comprehensive final examination in the course. Each examination including the comprehensive final exam consists of fifty multiple choice questions and counts 20% of your overall course grade. The first three examinations cover only the material

in the respective course section and are not comprehensive in nature (although some material may overlap sections). The final examination is comprehensive and covers all required materials in the course.

II. Constitutional Convention Simulation: Written Assignment 15% of total course grade & Participation 5%

The simulation is worth 15% of the class grade. The grade consists of two assignments. The first assignment will be to write a position paper for the state you represent. The written assignment is worth 10%. The second part will be the participation in the simulation (5%). Students are expected to attend and participate. More details on the simulation will be available prior to the simulation.

Correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, complete sentences, and CITATION of your sources (textbook readings with page numbers and textbook citation; lectures or video instruction; and outside scholarly research) must be included in your assignment. Wikipedia/Encyclopedia/Dictionary/Spark Notes and other similar sources are NOT allowed and use will result in a score of zero on the assignment. 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).

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, Dictionary.com, E-Encyclopedia, Spark Notes or anything similar in a term paper, discussion forum, or other assignment in this course will result in an automatic score of 0 (zero) on the assignment.***

Carefully read the Course Management Policies, "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.

Extra Credit:

There will not be extra credit offered in this course. Students should not request extra credit or other types of special treatment as doing so could result in a five-point deduction in the overall course grade.

CALCULATING COURSE GRADES

Total Course Points = 100

Exams = 80 points (4 exams at 20 points each)

Written Assignment = 20 points

Reading Quizzes are NOT part of your course grade = 0 points

Calculating Exam Points:

Exam 1 % grade * .20 = _____ points out of 20 points

Exam 2 % grade * .20 = _____ points out of 20 points

Exam 3 % grade * .20 = _____ points out of 20 points

Final Exam % grade * .20 = _____ points out of 20 points

MAX TOTAL POINTS for ALL Exams = 80 points

Calculating Written Assignment Points:

Written Assignment points (as recorded on Blackboard) *.15_____ points out of 15 total points

Calculating Convention Participation Points:

Convention points (as recorded on Blackboard) *.05_____ points out of 5 total points

Calculating Course Grade:

_____ Total Points for all Exams (total possible score = 80) +
_____ Written Assignment Points (total possible score = 15) +
_____ Convention Points (total possible score = 5) =
_____ Total Course Points (Max possible points 100)

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is expected and required. Missing more than six days during the course of the semester will result in an F for the course. Students repeated arriving late to class will be counted absent.

MAKE-UP EXAMS

Make-up exams will be given if students provide **prior** notification and a valid excuse for missing the exam. Make-up exams will only be given without prior notification in extreme circumstances. Make-up exams must be completed within a week of the exam date or within a week of the students return to school for prolonged absences. The format of the makeup exam may vary from the original exam. Make-up exams will be administered on 12/1.

Late Arrival for Exams: Students arriving to take an exam after any student has completed the exam will not be permitted to take the exam. If the student provides an acceptable excuse the student may be allowed to take a make-up exam as described above.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Always be respectful during lecture and discussion. Please turn cell phones off in class. If a student's cell phone rings during an exam, the student receives a zero on that exam. Students may be asked to leave if they are deemed disruptive to the classroom environment.

COURSE EVALUATION

Instruction as well as student performance is subject to evaluation. Procedures for evaluation will be provided near the end of this course via email from the university. Please respond to each evaluation link provided.

MYLAMAR PORTAL

Students are asked to obtain a Lamar Electronic Account username and password so they can log onto the myLamar website. Students may get information on how to get into the myLamar website 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.

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Students may access the Student Handbook online at <http://students.lamar.edu/student-handbook.html>.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND SERVICES

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

For students with disabilities, this course will comply with all accommodations prescribed by the Lamar University Disability Resource Center (DRC). **It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the instructor has been informed of all prescribed accommodations.** Lamar University's Disability Resource Center offers a variety of services designed to provide for students with disabilities and can be contacted at (409) 880-8347 or emailed at DRC@lamar.edu.

The Disability Resource Center offers a variety of services designed to assure students with disabilities equal access to the university's activities, programs and services. Some of the services provided include academic accommodations, assistive equipment, communication access service providers, note-takers, physical access and priority registration. Documentation of a disability from a professional in the field is required to receive services.

Students with disabilities should notify the director of DRC prior to registration in any university program. The director will arrange a meeting with the student to determine reasonable academic adjustments/accommodations. The Disability Resource Center is located in room 105 of the Communication Building. Students may write to P.O. Box 10087, Beaumont, Texas 77710, call 409.880.8347, fax 409.880.2225 or e-mail DRC@lamar.edu. Additional information is available at the DRC website, <http://www.lamar.edu/disability-resource-center/>.

VETERANS AND ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY

I recognize the complexities of being a member of the military community and also a student. If you are a member of the military community, please inform me if you are in need of special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, complications with GI Bill disbursement, and other unforeseen military and veteran related developments can complicate your academic life. If you make me aware of a complication, I will do everything I can to assist you or put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. I encourage veterans to stay in contact with the Veterans Affairs Office (VA@lamar.edu), and active duty military to stay in contact with the Center for Military Services (military@lamar.edu). These offices have Dedicated Military Officers who can further assist you with questions and complications that may arise as you pursue your education.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Technical Support can be located at <http://students.lamar.edu/it-services-and-support/index.html>.

Phone: 409-880-2222

Email: servicedesk@lamar.edu

Hours of Operation (CST):

Monday - Thursday 7:30 a.m.-12:00 a.m.

Friday 7:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Sunday 3:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.

For Blackboard technical support go to <https://blackboardsupport.lamar.edu>.

Phone: 866-585-1738

Phone and chat are available 24/7/365

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Academic Support can be located at <http://students.lamar.edu/academic-support/index.html>.

There are many areas (i. e. Advising, Writing Center, etc.) of academic support. Each area provides their own specific contact information and days and hours of operation.

STUDENT SERVICES

Information on Student services can be located at <http://students.lamar.edu/student-services/index.html>. There are many resources (i. e. Course schedules, important phone numbers, etc.) available. Each area provides their own specific contact information and days and hours of operation.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Lamar University expects all students to engage in academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic experiences 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. Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against a student 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.

Plagiarism shall mean the appropriation of another's work or idea and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work or idea into one's own work offered for credit.

Collusion shall mean the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit.

Abuse of resource materials shall mean the mutilation, destruction, concealment, theft or alteration of materials provided to assist students in the mastery of course materials.

Academic work shall mean the preparation of an essay, report, problem, assignment, creative work or other project that the student submits as a course requirement or for a grade.

Students are specifically warned against all forms of plagiarism, which include "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" (82). Students seeking to avoid plagiarism should consult either the course instructor or the most recent addition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* or the most recent addition of the *APA Style Guide*, depending on your College requirements for writing research papers. The course instructor will complete a thorough and impartial investigation of any instance of academic dishonesty. A student found guilty of academic dishonesty will be notified in writing by the instructor of the violation, the penalty, and the student's right to appeal the determination of dishonesty and/or the sanction imposed. Penalties for academic dishonesty in this course will result in either a lowered letter grade or failure of the course as determined by the instructor. The penalty may vary by instructor. Students who submit plagiarized work in POLS 2301 will automatically fail the course. For complete policy: go to <https://students.lamar.edu/academic-support/academic-policies.html>.

Do NOT cheat in this course! Students caught cheating will receive an F in the course.

COPYRIGHT POLICY STATEMENT

Copyright is defined as the ownership and control of the intellectual property in original works of authorship which are subject to copyright law. As an institution of higher learning that values intellectual integrity, Lamar University prohibits the distribution of published materials (print or electronic) in violation of copyright law.

The reproduction, recording, distribution, or publication (on-line or otherwise) of abbreviated, transcribed, or taped versions of my lectures is not permitted without my consent. Typically, consent will only be given to students who have provided documentation from the Lamar University Disability Resource Center that this is a necessary accommodation. Recording of lectures or class presentations is solely authorized for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class. Permission to allow the recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording. The recording may not be reproduced or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments and if this occurs, legal action can and will be pursued. Students who have an accommodation requiring the taping of lectures will be required to meet with the instructor BEFORE taping can begin AND must sign a waiver.

LAMAR UNIVERSITY PRIVACY POLICY STATEMENT

Student records maintained by Lamar University comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended (PL93-380). Detailed information should be accessed through this link:
<https://sacs.lamar.edu/catalog/PrefMaterial/V.GenAcademicPol.htm#edurights>.

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 (<http://www.lamar.edu>) for instructions about continuing courses remotely.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Be sure to update your MyLamar Account with the most current information.

Many types of emergencies can occur on campus instructions for specific emergencies such as severe weather, active shooter, or fire can be found at
<http://www.lamar.edu/about-lu/administration/risk-management/index.html>.

These procedures may or may not apply to you:

Severe Weather:

- Follow the directions of the instructor or emergency personnel
- Seek shelter in an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor, putting as many walls as possible between you and the outside
- 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
- Stay in the center of the room, away from exterior walls, windows, and doors

Violence / Active Shooter (CADD):

- **CALL**- 9-1-1
- **AVOID**- If possible, self-evacuate to a safe area outside the building. Follow directions of police officers.
- **DENY**- Barricade the door with desk, chairs, bookcases or any 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's safe.
- **DEFEND**- Use chairs, desks, cell phones or whatever is immediately available to distract and/or defend yourself and others from attack.

ACCESSIBILITY POLICIES

Lamar University

<http://www.lamar.edu/about-lu/accessibility.html>

Blackboard

<http://www.blackboard.com/accessibility.aspx>

Firefox

<https://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/accessibility-features-firefox-make-firefox-and-we>

Microsoft

<https://www.microsoft.com/enable/microsoft/mission.aspx>

Adobe Flash

<http://www.adobe.com/accessibility/products/flash.html>

Adobe Connect

<http://www.adobe.com/accessibility/products/adobeconnect.html>

Adobe Reader

<http://www.adobe.com/accessibility/products/reader.html>

Java

<http://www.oracle.com/us/corporate/accessibility/policies/index.html>

ProctorU

<http://blog.proctoru.com/?p=345>

PRIVACY POLICIES

Consistent with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Lamar University will not release personally identifiable student information to third parties (including parents, legal guardians and other family members) without written authorization from the student.

Although anyone using www.lamar.edu should not have a legal expectation of privacy, Lamar University will not share information with other parties or gather information from other private data providers. Unless specifically required, pursuant to a written request filed under the Texas Public Information Act, Government Code, Chapter 552, Lamar University generally will not release information gathered through its web site. Information and comments collected from web forms are subject to public disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act, Government Code, Chapter 552. Non-governmental email addresses are not subject to disclosure unless the affected member of the public affirmatively consents to the disclosure of his or her email address.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading
Aug. 28	Introduction	
Aug. 30	American Political Culture	OS - Chapter 1
Sept. 1	American Political Culture	OS - Chapter 1
Sept. 4	Labor Day - No Class	
Sept. 6	American Political Culture	OS - Chapter 1
Sept. 8	Race and Ethnicity	OS - Chapter 5
Sept. 11	Race and Ethnicity	OS - Chapter 5
Sept. 13	Women's Suffrage	OS - Chapter 5
Sept. 15	Texas Political Culture	
Sept. 18	Texas Political Culture	
Sept. 20	Exam I	
Sept. 22	Articles of Confederation	OS - Chapter 2 & Appendix A&B
Sept. 25	Constitutional Convention	OS - Chapter 2 & Appendix A&B
Sept. 27	Constitution	OS - Chapter 2 & Appendix A&B
Sept. 29	Constitution	OS - Chapter 2 & Appendix A&B
Oct. 2	Federalism	OS - Chapter 3
Oct. 4	Federalism	OS - Chapter 3
Oct. 6	Texas Constitution	GT - 1
Oct. 9	State Politics	GT - 10
Oct. 11	Exam II	
Oct. 13	Interest Groups	OS - Chapters 10
Oct. 16	Interest Groups	OS - Chapters 10
Oct. 18	Texas Interest Groups	GT- 6
Oct. 20	Political Parties	OS - Chapter 9
Oct. 23	Political Parties	OS - Chapter 9
Oct. 25	Texas Political Parties	GT -4
Oct. 27	Exam III	
Oct. 30	Constitutional Convention	
Nov. 1	Constitutional Convention	
Nov. 3	Public Opinion	OS - Chapter 6
Nov. 6	Public Opinion	OS - Chapter 6
Nov. 8	Voting and Elections	OS - Chapter 7
Nov. 10	Voting and Elections	OS - Chapter 7
Nov. 13	Voting and Elections	OS - Chapter 7
Nov. 15	Voting and Elections	OS - Chapter 7
Nov. 17	Texas Elections	GT -5
Nov. 20	The Media	OS - Chapter 8
Nov. 22	Thanksgiving	
Nov. 24	Thanksgiving	

Nov.	27	The Media	OS - Chapter 8
Nov.	29	The Media	OS - Chapter 8
Dec.	1	Make-Up Exam Day	
Dec.	4	Review Day	
Dec.	8	Final Exam - 8:00am	