

## Course Syllabus



# Political Science 2310: Principles of American Government

## 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

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

## Learning Outcomes

### General Education Core Curriculum (Code 070)

Students will analyze governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.

#### • Core Objectives:

- Critical Thinking:
  - Students will demonstrate creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
- Communication:
  - Students will effectively develop, interpret and express ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
- Social Responsibility:
  - Students will demonstrate intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
- Personal Responsibility:
  - Students will relate choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

### Additional Departmental 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.

## **Required Texts**


**There is a Texas State Political Science Custom e-Book required for this class.**

It is on the McGraw-Hill Connect platform. You will receive an email explaining how to access McGraw-Hill Connect. ([Contact your instructor \(https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/pages/contact-your-instructor-slash-odel\)](https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/pages/contact-your-instructor-slash-odel) if you have not received access instructions within your first week of enrollment in the course.)

Our custom e-Book includes the textbook as well as guided reading activities to help you learn the material. When you click on a chapter to read, Connect will open a new window labeled LearnSmart. It will have the chapter text along with highlights and an interactivity system. Think memrise or duolingo but with an accompanying textbook. When you start reading the assigned chapters, every so often, LearnSmart will alert you to begin answering questions about what you've read. Once you've answered those questions, you begin reading again. This is called adaptive learning, a guided method of reading that helps you review as you read. These reading activities are included in your grade.

Here is a video explanation on how LearnSmart works: [McGraw-Hill - LearnSmart - Adaptive Learning Technology](https://youtu.be/flG9RylwdhI)  (<https://youtu.be/flG9RylwdhI>)

Our e-Book Connect site also includes Topic quizzes. These are for after you've mastered the assigned Topic chapters.

For more detailed information on how Connect works, McGraw-Hill has information at [MGH Student Success Academy](https://createwp.customer.mheducation.com/wordpress-mu/success-academy-student/#.X5wyjohKiUk).  (<https://createwp.customer.mheducation.com/wordpress-mu/success-academy-student/#.X5wyjohKiUk>)

In addition, once you register and log into Connect, a demo will be offered.

## Our Textbook:

### “American and Texas Politics - POSI 2310”

- Edition: 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Author: Sherri Mora and William Ruger
- Publisher: McGraw-Hill
- Date: 2017
- ISBN: (subject to change)

A. It is **required** that you email Professor Mora through the [Contact Your Instructor/ODEL](https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/pages/contact-your-instructor-slash-odel) (<https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/pages/contact-your-instructor-slash-odel>) tab to receive instructions on purchasing the course textbook. The ISBN changes over time, so you must email Professor Mora to make sure you receive the right code. If you purchase from our University bookstore or elsewhere, you will not receive the correct book.

B. The cost is \$75.

C. **Register for your McGraw-Hill account using your formal (Texas State) name and your Texas State email address. If you do not, your grades cannot be uploaded to Canvas.**

D. If you're having trouble registering, get help at [MGH Student Success Academy](https://createwp.customer.mheducation.com/wordpress-mu/success-academy-student/#.X5wyjohKiUk)  (<https://createwp.customer.mheducation.com/wordpress-mu/success-academy-student/#.X5wyjohKiUk>) or call here: 1-800-331-5094 – Texas State unique contact. Please be sure to get a case number for your reference.

E. You are **NOT** required to purchase a paper version of this text; however, you may do so from the publisher for \$30 shipped to your home.

**NOTE: This is a custom Texas State product, and therefore only the access code purchased directly through your instructor course link will work. If you purchase a Connect access card from an outside vendor (Amazon.com, Chegg.com, etc.) it will not work with this Connect course and you will still have to purchase the correct access to complete required assignments and assessments. Student homework assignments and assessment quizzes are submitted directly via this online format associated with the e-book, therefore, it is IMPERATIVE that you purchase the exact product, provided through your instructor's course link, as noted above to obtain the correct access.**

## Course Schedule

### Before You Begin

Read and sign the [Course Pacing Guide](#)

(<https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/files/134230985/download?wrap=1>). 

([https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/files/134230985/download?download\\_frd=1](https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/files/134230985/download?download_frd=1)) and submit it via Modules

## Topic One: Theoretical Foundation, The Constitution & Federalism

- *Topic Outline*
  - Introduction to the American Political System
  - Theoretical Foundations
  - Articles of Confederation to the Founding
  - Constitutions: Federal and State
  - Federalism Defined and Compared
  - The Evolution of Federalism
  - Topic Review
- *Reading:*
  - e-Book: US Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 6 as well as TX Chapter 2
  - Additional readings from links within Canvas course content
- *Assignments and Assessments:*
  - Canvas Course Content Topic One quiz
  - e-Book chapter reading activities
  - e-Book Topic One quiz

## Topic Two: Branches of U.S. Government

- *Topic Outline*
  - The Legislative Branch
  - The Executive Branch
  - The Judiciary
  - Topic Review
- *Reading:*
  - e-Book: US Chapters 11, 12, and 14
  - Additional readings from links within Canvas course content
- *Assignments and Assessments:*
  - Canvas Course Content Topic Two quiz
  - e-Book chapter reading activities
  - e-Book Topic Two quiz

**Midcourse Exam - To be taken on-campus or at an approved proctoring center only after completing Topics One through Two.**

## Topic Three: Political Culture, Public Opinion, Media, Interest Groups, Parties, Voting & Elections

- *Topic Outline*
  - American Political Culture - Voting & Elections
  - Public Opinion and Socialization

- Media Hype
- Political Parties & Interest Groups
- The Unelected
- Topic Review
- *Reading:*
  - e-Book: US Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 as well as TX Chapter 10
  - Additional readings from links within Canvas course content
- *Assignments and Assessments:*
  - Canvas Course Content Topic Three quiz
  - e-Book chapter reading activities
  - e-Book Topic Three quiz

## **Topic Four: Texas Constitution, Branches of Government, Political Parties, Voting & Elections**

- *Topic Outline*
  - Texas Politics in Historical Context
  - Texas Constitution
  - The Structure of Texas Government
  - Topic Review
- *Reading:*
  - e-Book: TX Chapters 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9
  - Additional readings from links within Canvas course content
- *Assignments and Assessments:*
  - Canvas Course Content Topic Four quiz
  - e-Book chapter reading activities
  - e-Book Topic Four quiz

**Final Exam - To be taken on-campus or at an approved proctoring center only after completing Topics One through Four.**

## **Grading**

Within each topic (there are 4 topics total), there are e-book assignments, an e-book quiz, and a Canvas quiz.

This breaks down as follows:

- *Assessments:*
  - **e-Book Reading Assessments in Connect (LearnSmart):** There will be 4 e-book reading activities assigned for each topic to be completed via the e-book link provided to you. These activities are designed to improve student comprehension and overall performance and are averaged to account for 20% of your course grade.

- **e-Book Topic Quizzes in Connect:** There will be 4 e-book quiz assessments connected to the e-book reading and activities assigned for each topic. These also are accessed via the e-book link provided to you. The 4 e-book assessments will be averaged at the end of the semester and will account for 20% of your course grade.
- **Canvas Topic Quizzes:** There are 4 Canvas quiz assessments, one for each topic, in Modules. These cover the Canvas course content as well as the additional readings linked throughout. These 4 Canvas course content assessments will be averaged at the end of the semester and will account for 20% of your course grade.
- **Exams:**
  - There will be 2 exams (multiple choice and/or true/false questions) administered during the course, a midcourse and a comprehensive final exam. They will each account for 20% of your course grade. Both exams are on Canvas and must be proctored at an approved testing center. You will not have access to either exams until a testing proctor enters a password.
    - Midcourse: 20%
    - Final Exam: 20%

There will be **NO final curve**. Students will earn their grade.


Students will not be allowed to take the final exam until all assignments have been turned in. Once the final exam is taken, a student will not be allowed to hand in further work.


Students are required to score 60% or better on the final exam in order to pass the course.

89.5% and above (A), 79.5-89.4% (B), 69.5-79.4% (C), 59.5-69.4% (D), below 59.5% (F).

## 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 Pacing Guide](https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/files/134230985/download?wrap=1) (<https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/files/134230985/download?wrap=1>)  ([https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/files/134230985/download?download\\_frd=1](https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/files/134230985/download?download_frd=1)) 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 play a sport and then go and perform at the same level? No. It's the same with online courses. Think of your brain as a muscle; you've got to build it up and get it into shape by practicing.

- **Make a plan.** Self-motivation is necessary for successful completion of this course; no one will be pushing you but you. Use the [Course Pacing Guide](https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/files/134230985/download?wrap=1) (<https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/files/134230985/download?wrap=1>)  ([https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/files/134230985/download?download\\_frd=1](https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/files/134230985/download?download_frd=1)) 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, midcourse 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 [Contact Your Instructor/ODEL](https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/pages/contact-your-instructor-slash-odel) (<https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/pages/contact-your-instructor-slash-odel>). 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 use the [Math Lab](http://www.correspondence.txstate.edu/students/tutoring/math-lab-and-slac.html) (<http://www.correspondence.txstate.edu/students/tutoring/math-lab-and-slac.html>) *(if needed)*, [SLAC](https://www.txstate.edu/slac/) (<https://www.txstate.edu/slac/>), and the [Writing Center](http://www.writingcenter.txstate.edu/) (<http://www.writingcenter.txstate.edu/>). [Find other free tutoring resources here](https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/pages/free-tutoring-resources) (<https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/pages/free-tutoring-resources>).
- **You have ODEL.** Please feel free to visit, call, or email the Office of Distance and Extended Learning for additional help. Our year-round office hours are: Monday – Friday, 8am – 5pm.
  - **Visit ODEL:** Academic Services Building – North, 302. Conveniently located above the Math Lab and Writing Center
  - **Email:** [corrstudy@txstate.edu](mailto:corrstudy@txstate.edu) (<mailto:corrstudy@txstate.edu>)
  - **Call:** 512-245-2322 or 800-511-8656
- **Free Tutoring Resources.**

A variety of free tutoring resources are available for students enrolled in correspondence courses. You may access tutoring through Tutor.com by clicking on Tutor.com: 24/7 Online Tutoring in the left menu of this course. Then just respond to the questions to start tutoring. If you need help with writing specifically, then choose Writing as your topic.

Free online tutoring for writing-related assignments is also available from the University Writing Center. For information on accessing these resources, please visit the Office of Distance and Extended Learning's [Free Tutoring](http://www.correspondence.txstate.edu/students/tutoring.html) (<http://www.correspondence.txstate.edu/students/tutoring.html>) 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 \(SLAC\)](http://www.txstate.edu/slac/) (<http://www.txstate.edu/slac/>) on the fourth floor of Alkek Library

## PDF Version of the Syllabus

Here is a [PDF version of the syllabus](#)

(<https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/files/138910033/download?wrap=1>) 

([https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/files/138910033/download?download\\_frd=1](https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/1415484/files/138910033/download?download_frd=1)) for your convenience.