

# GOVT 2305.F4 Federal Government

Nathan Crosby

Template

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Web: **Moodle**

Office: Social Sciences M

Class Room: Social Sciences 8

Office Hours: **Teams Only**

Class Time:

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## Course Description

The goal of this class is to discover how the Federal Government affect our everyday lives. We investigate American politics through the framework of "interests, interactions, and institutions." We learn that how policies or decisions that are made are impacted by the institutions that they are surrounded by and by the behavioral decisions of key actors.

Throughout the course of the semester, we will identify different actors in American politics and investigate why those actors conflict at some times and cooperate at others. Our focus will then turn to political institutions and the origins of these institutions. By the end of the semester, you will understand a variety of political challenges facing the United States today.

## Required Materials

- Patterson, Thomas. 2019. *We the People, 12th/13th Edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

## Course Objectives

Successful students:

1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.

5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.
6. Analyze the election process.
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

## **Course Structure**

The primary method of instruction will be lecture, however participation in discussion is also a required component of this course. The professor reserves the right to include other methods of instruction, such as, videos, group activities, and other similar methods that facilitate the learning process.

## **Course Requirements**

### **Readings**

Daily reading assignments are listed in the syllabus. Students are required to complete all reading assignments PRIOR to attending the class for which they are assigned. Keeping up with the reading assignments will be essential for success in this class and will facilitate lecture and discussion. Although the overall theme between daily reading assignments and lecture will be the same, the exact material may not. There will be reading assignments that are not covered in class and class lectures that are not covered in the readings. Students are responsible for all information covered by readings and lectures on the exams.

### **Introduction Paper**

During the first week of the course, you will be required to complete a short introduction paper. The topic of this paper will be discussed during the first meeting of the course and is due by Sunday, INSERT DATE by 11:59 pm on Moodle. This introduction paper is expected to be between 500-700 words long and will encompass 5% of your final grade.

### **Discussion Boards**

Six times during the semester, there will be an discussion boards posted based on a set topic from the syllabus. You are expected to submit a 350-450 word response the prompt and respond to two of your classmates posts in 150-250 words. I expect civility and if you can not be civil you will receive a 0 for all of your discussion boards and banned from posting. These discussions are worth 10% of your overall grade.

### **Quizzes**

Each chapter of the Patterson textbook will include a quiz over the whole chapter after you complete the readings. Your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped at the end of the semester. These

quizzes will total 25% of your final grade.

### **Research Paper**

During the semester you will work on a research paper over a piece of fiction in popular culture and how it can be related to politics of today or to politics at the time of publication. This paper will be discussed more on the first day of class and you will be expected to pick your work of fiction on the third meeting of class. Each piece of fiction can only have one student so be prepared to have multiple options. This paper will be 1500 words double spaced and will be due Sunday, April 18th at Midnight. The following Monday and Wednesday you will be expected to present your paper to the class in a presentation about 10 minutes long. This paper will be graded using the same rubric as your essays for the exams. This paper will 15% of your final grade, including your PowerPoint presentation.

### **Midterm Exam**

There will be one in-class midterm exam that will encompass 15% of your final grade. This exam will consist of multiple choice questions and at least one short answer essay. The date of this exam are listed in the schedule, but are subject to change.

### **Final Exam**

There will be a final exam that will total 30% of your final grade. This exam will be similar to the midterm exams, by consisting of multiple choice questions and at least two short answer essays. One of these essays will be cumulative, but the remainder of the exam will not be cumulative. This exam will be 20% of your final grade.

### **Participation and Attendance**

Finally, attendance is required for this course and will encompass the final 10% of your overall grade. The university allows instructors to withdraw students after they exceed a set number of absences depending the number of weekly meetings. For this course, the number is 4.

### **Grading Policy**

Grading Scale is as follows:

A = 100-90

B = 89-80

C = 79-70

D = 69-60

F = 59 and below

Any curve will only ever make it easier to obtain a certain letter grade, and not lower the students final grade. The grade will count the assessments using the following proportions:

- 5% Introduction Paper
- 10% Attendance
- 10% Discussion Boards
- 25% Quizzes
- 15% Research Paper
- 15% Midterm Exam
- 20% Final Exam

## Course Policies

### During Class

I understand that the electronic recording of notes will be important for class and so computers will be allowed in class. Please refrain from using computers for anything but activities related to the class. Phones are prohibited as they are rarely useful for anything in the course. Eating and drinking are allowed in class but please refrain from it affecting the course. Try not to eat your lunch in class as the classes are typically active.

### Attendance Policy

Texarkana College's absentee policy allows instructors to withdraw a student from a course due to excessive absences. If a student leaves and returns during class or leaves the class before the class is over, they **may** be considered absent. Three tardies constitute one absence.

Faculty members **are not** obligated to provide opportunities for students to make-up missed assignments and tests as a result of a student's absence from class.

*Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the class every day. A roll sheet will be passed out to all students to sign. If a student is caught signing for another student, they will be treated as if they did not attend the lecture meeting as well as the student they attempted to sign for. If a student is late or missed class, it is their responsibility to notify me. A student is allowed a maximum of 4 absences (which constitutes 2 classes per week. Any more than 4 absences could result in the student being dropped from the course by the professor.*

A student should not stop attending a class without formally withdrawing from the course by the institution's published Last Day for Students to Drop. If a student stops attending after the published Last Day for Students to Drop, the student may receive a grade of "F" in the class. The professor will submit the last date of attendance for students receiving a grade of "F" or "W".

Withdrawal from a course(s) **may** affect a student's current or future financial aid eligibility. Students should consult the Financial Aid Office to learn both short and long term consequences of a withdrawal.

### **Computer Requirement Policy:**

Students are required to have a computer with Internet access for classes. The computer must be an actual computer – smart phones, iPads, Androids, Chromebooks, etc., are not acceptable substitutes because they lack software compatibility necessary to complete all assignments and tests. Financial costs for the necessary equipment and internet access are the responsibility of the student.

Students needing to purchase a computer may do so through the Texarkana College Bookstore. Systems purchased through the bookstore meet or exceed all requirements, are competitively priced, and may be purchased using financial aid funds. If the system is purchased through another source, it is the student's responsibility to ensure the system meets all requirements.

### **Computer systems requirements:**

- Webcam, microphone, and speakers or headphones
- Windows 10 or a recent version of Mac OS (minimum Sierra). Windows 10 S mode is not supported (Contact professor to upgrade from S to regular Windows 10)
- Hardware capable of running Microsoft Teams (free download) and supports multi-media playback
- Support for Chrome or Microsoft Edge – Note: Firefox, Safari, or other browsers may not work on all TC applications
- Able to run Microsoft Office which will be provided free to TC students
- Adobe Reader or another PDF viewer
- Antivirus software such as Windows Defender or another 3rd party anti-virus solution
- The Respondus Lockdown browser is used for taking tests; therefore, the system must be capable of running this software. Most newer systems that meet other specifications should work.

Students should regularly backup content to prevent loss of coursework due to hardware failure. Backup copies of documents and other coursework may be placed on OneDrive cloud storage. OneDrive is included free of charge for all TC students.

A list of Internet service providers can be found on the TC website at: [TC Fall 2020 FAQ](#).

## Alternative Operations during Campus Closure

In the event of an emergency or announced campus closure due to a natural disaster or pandemic, Texarkana College may need to move to altered operations and course delivery methods. During this time, Texarkana College may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include, but are not limited to: online learning management system ([Jenzabar](#) or [Moodle](#)), online conferencing through TEAMS, email messaging, and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor [Texarkana College's website](#) for instructions about continuing courses remotely, instructor email notifications on the method of delivery and course-specific communication, and Texarkana College email notifications for important general information.

## COVID-19 Online/Virtual Environment Instructional Commitment

The ongoing COVID-19 situation will require that some course materials and instruction are provided through an online and/or virtual format. Even if all or a portion of a class was originally scheduled to meet face to face, social distancing guidelines associated with COVID-19 will limit the number of students who are able to attend face to face classes in person simultaneously. Further, circumstances associated with COVID-19 could cause the college to be forced to shift completely to an online and/or virtual delivery at any time during the semester. **While TC faculty members are committed to providing students the option of face to face instruction if possible, students should be prepared to continue their classes in an online and/or virtual environment if necessary.** Texarkana College is committed to maintaining engaging, high quality instruction regardless of the delivery format.

## Make-up Exams and Missed Assignments

Missed exams will be excused and made-up after the fact in case of illness or personal emergency *only with proper documentation*. Please contact the instructor as soon as possible if an emergency arises that prevents you from taking the exam. If you can not take the exam at the time it's listed, contact the professor AS SOON AS POSSIBLE to reschedule when you can take it. You must have an actual excuse not just a desire to take it at a different time. Exams missed due to university sponsored events or religious holidays may also be excused, provided that the student informs me of the absence *at least two weeks in advance*. Vacation (e.g. leaving early for fall, spring or semester break) and social engagements will *not* be excused. Absolutely *no* excuse will be accepted for late assignments or missed exams, unless they are formally approved by the university. There will be no exceptions to this policy. Additionally, the documentation must explicitly state that the student was unable to attend class on the date in question.

Students must provide proper documentation and make-up the missed assignment (or exam) within two weeks of the originally scheduled date. Failure to do so will result in a zero. Make-up exams may differ significantly in both structure and content from the original exam.

## Academic Integrity and Honesty

Scholastic dishonesty, involving but not limited to cheating on a test, plagiarism, collusion, or falsification of records will make the student liable for disciplinary action after being investigated by the Dean of Students. Proven violations of this nature will result in the student being dropped

from the class with an "F". This policy applies campus wide, including TC Testing Center, as well as off-campus classroom or lab sites, including dual credit campuses. This information can be found in the Student Handbook at <https://texarkanacollege.edu>. Don't cheat. Don't be that guy. Yes, you. You know exactly what I'm talking about.

### **Classroom Conduct**

Activities that are disruptive to class will not be tolerated. Arriving late for class, reading newspapers, speaking while others are speaking, packing prior to the end of class, and cell phones are all highly disruptive. Cell phones, ipods, and other similar devices must be turned off during class. Laptops may be used for note-taking only; use of laptops for purposes other than note-taking will result in the banning of laptops from the classroom.

In addition, students are encouraged to discuss and express opinions on the many issues, some controversial, that are covered in class. Although differing opinions are encouraged, I will not tolerate any attacks of a personal nature or statements that single out students based on their race, gender, religion, age, ethnicity, nationality, or sexual orientation. Any student engaging in disruptive or disrespectful activities will be asked to leave the classroom.

### **Religious Observances**

Texas House Bill 256 regarding religious observances requires that faculty and the university make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Students are advised to notify the course instructor well in advance of the conflict and must make-up the missed assignment within two weeks of the original due date.

### **Disability Act Statement**

Texarkana College complies with all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and makes reasonable accommodations upon request. Please contact Larry Andrews at 903.823.3283, or go by the Recruitment, Advisement, and Retention Department located in the Administration building for personal assistance.

If you have an accommodation letter from their office indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodations, please present it to me so we can discuss the accommodations that you might need for this class. *It is best to request these changes at the beginning if not before the start of class so there is ample time to make the accommodations.*

## Course Schedule

The schedule is tentative and subject to change.

### Week 1, 02/01 - 02/05: Introduction and Political Culture

- Monday - Introduction
- Wednesday - Chapter 1 Patterson
- Chapter 1 Quiz and Introduction Paper are Due Sunday at 11:59pm

### Week 2, 02/08 - 02/12: Constitutional Democracy and Federalism

- Monday - Chapter 2 Patterson
- Wednesday - Chapter 3 Patterson & Research Paper Draft Day
- *Faultlines Chapter 1* (American Exceptionalism) Discussion Forum Due Sunday at 11:59pm
- Chapter 2 and 3 Quizzes Due Sunday at 11:59pm

### Week 3, 02/15 - 02/19: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

- Monday - Chapter 4 Patterson
- Wednesday - Chapter 5 Patterson
- *Faultlines Chapter 3* (Immigration) Discussion Forum Due Sunday at 11:59pm
- Chapter 4 and 5 Quizzes Due Sunday at 11:59pm

### Week 4, 02/22 - 02/26: Public Opinion and Political Parties

- Monday - Chapter 6 Patterson
- Wednesday - Chapter 7 Patterson
- Midterm 1 Essays posted
- Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 Quizzes Due Sunday at 11:59pm

### Week 5, 03/01 - 03/05: Campaigns and Interest Groups

- Monday - Chapter 8 Patterson
- Wednesday - Chapter 9 Patterson
- *Multiple Readings on Moodle* (Race in America) Discussion Forum Due Sunday at 11:59pm
- Chapter 8 and 9 Quiz Due Sunday at 11:59pm



**Week 6, 03/08 - 03/12: MIDTERM**

- Monday - Midterm Review
- Wednesday - **MIDTERM MULTIPLE CHOICE IN CLASS**
- **ESSAYS DUE AT MIDNIGHT ON INSERT DATE AT MIDNIGHT**
- No Quiz Due This Week!

**Week 7, 03/15 - 03/19: SPRING BREAK**

- No Class This Week
- No Quiz Due This Week!

**Week 8, 03/22 - 03/26: The News Media and Congress**

- Monday - Chapter 10 Patterson
- Wednesday - Chapter 11 Patterson
- Chapter 10 and 11 Quizzes Due Sunday at 11:59pm

**Week 9, 03/29 - 04/02: The Presidency and The Bureaucracy**

- Monday - Chapter 12 Patterson
- Wednesday - Chapter 13 Patterson
- Chapter 12 and Chapter 13 Quizzes Due Sunday at 11:59pm

**Week 10, 04/05 - 04/09: The Judiciary & Economic and Environmental Policy**

- Monday - Chapter 14 Patterson
- Wednesday - Chapter 15 Patterson
- *Pending Selection* (Gender in America) Discussion Due Sunday at 11:59pm
- Chapter 14 and Chapter 15 Quizzes Due Sunday at 11:59pm

**Week 11, 04/12 - 04/16: Income, Welfare, Education and Foreign Policy**

- Monday - Chapter 16 Patterson
- Wednesday - Chapter 17 Patterson
- **RESEARCH PAPER DUE AT MIDNIGHT ON SUNDAY, APRIL 18th AT MIDNIGHT**
- Faultlines Chapter 6 (Electoral College) Discussion Due Sunday at 11:59pm
- Chapter 16 and Chapter 17 Quizzes Due Sunday at 11:59pm

**Week 12, 04/19 - 04/23:**

- Monday - Paper Presentations
- Wednesday - Paper Presentations
- Final Exam Essays Open
- Chapter 11 Faultlines (Two- vs. Multi-party Systems) Discussion Due Sunday at 11:59pm
- Chapter 17 Quizzes Due Sunday at 11:59pm

**Week 13, 04/26 - 04/30: Final Review**

- Monday - FINAL REVIEW and remaining Paper Presentations
- Wednesday - FINAL EXAM
- **ESSAYS DUE AT MIDNIGHT ON INSERT DATE AT MIDNIGHT**

**FINAL EXAM, INSERT DATE AND TIME**