

Term: Spring 2013

Course Title: American Government I

Course Prefix: POSC

Course No.: 1113

Section No.:

Department of | Division of Social Work,  
Behavioral and Political  
Sciences

College of | Brailsford College of Arts and  
Sciences

Instructor Name:

Office Location:

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936-261-3229

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Office Hours:

Virtual Office Hours:

Course Location:

Class Meeting Days

& Times:

Catalog Description:

This is a survey course about the national and Texas state constitutions, federalism, civil liberties and the relationship between government and linkage institutions such as public opinion, the media, campaigns, voting and elections.

Prerequisites:

None

Co-requisites:

None

Required Text:

*American Democracy Now, Texas Edition (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)*, by Brigid Callahan Harrison, Jean Wahl Harris, Susan J. Tolchin and Gary M. Halter. Custom-published edition for Prairie View A/M University, McGraw-Hill. The text can be found at the Bookstore or online at:

[http://www.mhprofessional.com/mhhe\\_product.php?isbn=0077565622&cat=108](http://www.mhprofessional.com/mhhe_product.php?isbn=0077565622&cat=108)

Recommended Text/Readings: | N/A

Access to Learning  
Resources:

PVAMU Library:

phone: (936) 261-1500;

web: <http://www.tamu.edu/pvamu/library/>

University Bookstore:

phone: (936) 261-1990;

web: <https://www.bkstr.com/Home/10001-10734-1?demoKey=d>

Course Goals or Overview:

The goal of this course is to stimulate students' thinking and understanding of the American political system, especially constitutions, non-government linkage institutions, and certain public policy issues.

Learning Outcomes/Objectives

At the end of this course, the student will be able to:

Course learning outcome aligns with . . .	Program Learning Objective	Core Objective
Define key terms in government, such as politics, federalism, and political culture	PLO #2: knowledge of political science concepts, principles, etc.	
Identify and differentiate the components of the U.S. and Texas Constitutions	PLO #1: knowledge of inst'ns pertaining to government	CO #1: Critical thinking
Identify and differentiate the various types and roles of interest groups	PLO #1: knowledge of inst'ns pertaining to government	CO #1: Critical thinking
Identify the competing rights and freedoms in	PLO #3: critical thinking skills on	CO #1: Critical thinking

the U.S. Bill of Rights	political issues	
Trace the evolution and the changing role of political parties in American politics	PLO #1: knowledge of inst'ns pertaining to government	CO #1: Critical thinking
List the roles elections and voting play in American politics	PLO #1: knowledge of inst'ns pertaining to government	CO #1: Critical thinking
Understand the major functions of the media in American politics	PLO #1: knowledge of inst'ns pertaining to government	CO #1: Critical thinking
Write a paper on a divisive constitutional Issue	PLO #4: demonstrates research and writing skills	CO: #2: Communication
Write an essay exam on the debates and divisions surrounding a key policy issue	PLO #3: critical thinking skills on political issues	CO: #2: Communication
Understand how to participate in national/local discourse through interest groups, voting, etc.	PLO #1: knowledge of inst'ns pertaining to government	CO #5: Social responsibility
Properly document a research paper as to bibliography and in-text citations	PLO #4: demonstrates research and writing skills	CO #6: Personal responsibility

### Course Requirements & Evaluation Methods

This course will utilize the following instruments to determine student grades and proficiency of the learning outcomes for the course:

**Exams** – There will be four multiple choice tests consisting of 50 questions each. The critical thinking and social responsibility core objectives will be stressed on these exams. Exam questions will test students' civic knowledge regarding participation in non-government linkage institutions, such as interest groups and political parties and also whether students can differentiate between important theories and concepts of government, such as elite theory vs. pluralist theory or separation of powers vs. checks and balances.

**Writing Assignments** – There will be two writing assignments, the first of which will be used for assessment purposes. The critical thinking, communication, social responsibility and personal responsibility core objectives will be emphasized. The short research paper will be used to assess students' ability to properly conduct, deploy and then cite research sources as well as a their ability to weigh the strengths and weaknesses of evidence presented in disparate source materials.

### Grading Matrix

Instrument	Value (points or percentages)	Total
Exam 1	100	25%
Exam 2	100	25%
Exam 3 (lowest of exams 1-3 dropped)	100	25%
Exam 4	100	25%
Writing Assign 1 – paper on same-sex marriage	100	12.5%
Writing Assignment 2 – in-class essay quiz	100	12.5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

### Grade Determination

A=90-100 B=80-89 C=70-79 D=60-69 F=Below 60

### Course Procedures

**Exam Policy:** Once an exam or quiz begins, you may not leave the room. Exams should be taken as scheduled. No makeup examinations will be allowed except under documented emergencies (See Student Handbook and description below). The lowest score between exams 1-3 will be dropped. You cannot drop the final exam grade. Exams are **NOT** cumulative. Exams will contain 50 multiple choice questions. If appropriate, students must bring their own scantron and pencil on exam days and no hats—for women or men—are allowed on exam days. I will not grade your exam unless all these policies are followed.

**Submission of Writing Assignments Policy:** Writing assignments are due in class in hard copy form on their assigned due date. No late assignments will be taken under any circumstances. All papers must have a title, but not a separate title page, which is a waste of paper. They must be typed, double-spaced, in 12 point font and stapled only (no folders). Assignments that are sent via email, slipped under my office door or stuck in my campus

mailbox will not be accepted for grading. Unstapled assignments will not be accepted for grading. Students cannot turn in another student's assignment. Only assignments turned in during class will be accepted for grading. Papers are graded according to the following four criteria: 1) content; 2) organization; 3) quality of writing; and 4) quality of research sources and reference citation formats.

### **Political Science Program Policy on Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious academic crime and the Political Science Program has a strict, rigorous enforcement policy for students who commit plagiarism. In general, plagiarism is using another person's words and/or ideas as if they were your own. Plagiarism, which is formally defined in the University Rules and Procedures section of this syllabus, can come in many forms, such as directly quoting a source without quotation marks, directly quoting a source without giving a reference citation, paraphrasing a source without giving a reference citation and so forth. It is incumbent on students to seek help from the instructor or other University resources to avoid even the appearance of plagiarism in their work. Any student caught committing ANY type of plagiarism in a Political Science course will receive one OR MORE of the following punishments, depending on the severity of the offense and in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct:

1. Grade Penalty (an F for the assignment and/or an F for the course);
2. Letter of Reprimand
3. Probation
4. Suspension
5. Dismissal
6. Expulsion

Students must consult the University's Code of Conduct for other forms of academic dishonesty and the attendant punishments.

### **Assignment #1: Due IN CLASS ONLY on Thursday, February 7.**

This assignment requires you to consider the debate surrounding same-sex marriage. Some favor amending the U.S. constitution to BAN same-sex marriage, while others oppose such an amendment. For this assignment, you must write a short paper in which you:

1. Explain completely the process for amending the U.S. Constitution.
2. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of such an amendment.
3. Choose a side in this debate. Do you favor a constitutional amendment that would BAN same-sex marriage? Do you oppose such an amendment? Explain your position using arguments based on constitutional issues involving civil rights (look at the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment), civil liberties (look at the Bill of Rights), the Constitution's full faith and credit clause, states' rights, or even human rights.
4. Conduct research and cite at least three reliable, quality references from the media and/or the Internet. One of the citations MUST come from the assigned text, and NONE may be from ANY encyclopedia, including Wikipedia. You must have at least three in-text citations (in the body of the paper) based on the three reliable sources you use. You must also have a properly formatted works cited section at the end of the paper. The paper's in-text citations AND works cited section must conform to the format found in the examples from this website: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

This assignment is **due IN class on Thursday, February 7**. Your report should be about two pages of text (not counting the works cited section). This assignment is due in class in hard copy form on its assigned due date. No late assignments will be taken under any circumstances. All papers must have a title, but not a separate title page, which is a waste of paper. The report must be typed, double-spaced, in 12 point font and stapled only (no folders). Assignments that are sent via email, slipped under my office door or stuck in my campus mailbox will not be accepted for grading. Unstapled assignments will not be accepted for grading. Students cannot turn in another student's assignment. Only assignments turned in during class will be accepted for grading. Papers are graded according to the following four criteria: 1) content; 2) organization; 3) quality of writing; and 4) quality of research sources and reference citation formats.

### **Assignment #2: In-Class Essay-Style Quiz on Thursday, April 25.**

Students must read "Race and Suffrage in America: A Compendium of Constitutions, Statutes and Judicial Decisions from 1865-1910," and "The Korean War: A Turning Point in U.S. Foreign Policy." These readings are in the front of the assigned textbook (latest edition). Students must be prepared to take an essay-style quiz in class and based on these readings on **Thursday, April 25**.

**Electronic Communication:** Notes and other course materials may be posted on Ecourses, which is available at <http://ecourses.pvamu.edu>. Note the frequently asked questions links in the left margin of this link. You are

expected to use this website as a resource for the class. The University also maintains an email account for you. Periodically, I may send you class notices or other information. **I expect you to check your Prairie View A&M email account at least once a week.** If you have problems accessing your account, please call (936) 261-2525. Not having access to your Panther Email is not an excuse for missing important information. **My PV email – [mjnojeim@pvamu.edu](mailto:mjnojeim@pvamu.edu) – is by far the best way to communicate with me.**

**Make-up Policy:** You will only be allowed to make up an exam or assignment if you have a valid, documented excuse. Valid excuses include illness, school or business trips, or family crisis. Beyond documented valid excuses, there will be no makeup assignments or late assignments accepted. **If granted a make-up, you have a period of four (4) class days to schedule a make-up assignment or exam. After that point, the grade becomes a zero.** You must provide written documentation for why you need to make up an assignment (such as a note from a university official, doctor, police officer or coach). Student athletes must notify me **BEFORE** they attend an event to represent the school and **MUST** be proactive in getting their assignments completed. **Email will not be accepted as notification.** Make up exams may be an essay/short answer test or a modified version of the original exam. Extra credit of any form cannot be made up.

**Grade Groveling Policy:** Students concerned about their grades should endeavor to attend all class sessions and complete all work to the best of their ability. Students **earn** high grades, based on demonstrating mastery of the subject matter and not based on what they want or need for their overall GPA. Therefore, no grade groveling will be entertained and no “do-overs” allowed.

**Formatting Documents:** Microsoft Word is the standard word processing tool used at PVAMU. If you’re using other word processors, be sure to use the “save as” tool and save the document in either the Microsoft Word, Rich-Text, or plain text format. All writing assignments must use acceptable citation style and document all sources. **No assignments will be accepted via email under any circumstances.**

## Course Content: Topics and Readings

### 16 WEEK CALENDAR

<b>Week One: 01/14/13 - 01/18/13</b> Chapter(s): Assignment(s):	<b>Course Introduction</b> Chapter 1, People, Politics, and Participation NA
<b>Week Two: 01/21/13 – 01/25/13</b> Chapter (s): Assignment (s):	<b>Introduction to Texas Gov’t and Political Culture</b> Chapter 19 <b>M.L. King, Jr. Holiday, no class Monday, January 21.</b>
<b>Week Three: 01/28/13 – 02/01/13</b> Chapter (s): Assignment (s):	<b>The US Constitution</b> Chapter 2 NA
<b>Week Four: 02/04/13 – 02/08/13</b> Chapter (s): Assignment (s):	<b>The Texas Constitution</b> Chapter 20 ( <i>your professor may provide this chapter</i> ). Assignment #1 (see above): due in class on <b>Thursday, Feb. 7.</b>
<b>Week Five: 02/11/13 – 02/15/13</b> Chapter (s): Assignment (s):	<b>Review and Exam 1</b> Chapter 1, 2, 19, 20. Exam 1
<b>Week Six: 02/18/13 – 2/22/13</b> Chapter (s): Assignment (s):	<b>Federalism</b> Chapter 3 NA
<b>Week Seven: 02/25/13 – 03/01/13</b> Chapter (s): Assignment (s):	<b>Local Government in Texas</b> Chapter 27 NA
<b>Week Eight: 03/04/13 – 03/08/13</b> Chapter (s):	<b>Review and Midterm (Exam 2)</b> Chapters 3 and 27

Assignment (s):	Exam 2
<b>Week Nine: 03/11/13 – 03/15/13</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>
<b>Week Ten: 03/18/13 – 03/22/13</b>	<b>Civil Liberties</b>
Chapter (s):	Chapter 4
Assignment(s):	N/A
<b>Week Eleven: 03/25/13 – 03/29/13</b>	<b>Political Socialization, Media, and Public Opinion</b>
Chapter	Chapter 6, 10
Assignment	N/A
<b>Week Twelve: 04/01/13 – 04/05/13</b>	<b>Review and Exam 3</b>
Chapter (s)	Chapter 4, 6, and 10
Assignment (s):	Exam 3
<b>Week Thirteen: 04/08/13 - 4/13/13</b>	<b>Interest Groups</b>
Chapter (s):	Chapter 7
Assignment (s):	N/A
<b>Week Fourteen: 04/15/13-04/19/13</b>	<b>Political Parties</b>
Chapter (s):	Chapter 8
Assignment (s):	NA
<b>Week Fifteen: 04/22/13 – 04/26/13</b>	<b>Elections, Campaigns, and Voting</b>
Chapter (s):	Chapter 9
Assignment(s):	Assignment #2; in-class essay quiz on April 25
<b>Week Sixteen: 04/29/13 – 05/03/13</b>	<b>Last day of class (review) and final exam period begins</b>

#### **University Rules and Procedures**

**Disability statement (See Student Handbook):** Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in class should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal laws, a student requesting special accommodations must provide documentation of their disability to the SSD coordinator. Please contact 936-261-3585 if you have questions.

**Academic misconduct (See Student Handbook):** You are expected to practice academic honesty in every aspect of this course and all other courses. Make sure you are familiar with your Student Handbook, especially the section on academic misconduct. Students who engage in academic misconduct are subject to university disciplinary procedures.

#### **Forms of academic dishonesty:**

1. Cheating: deception in which a student misrepresents that he/she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he/she has not mastered; giving or receiving aid unauthorized by the instructor on assignments or examinations.
2. Academic misconduct: tampering with grades or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of a scheduled test.
3. Fabrication: use of invented information or falsified research.
4. Plagiarism: unacknowledged quotation and/or paraphrase of someone else's words, ideas, or data as one's own in work submitted for credit. Failure to identify information or essays from the Internet and submitting them as one's own work also constitutes plagiarism.

**Nonacademic misconduct (See Student Handbook):** The University respects the rights of instructors to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires campus conditions that do not impede their exercise. Campus behavior that interferes with either (1) the instructor's ability to conduct the class, (2) the inability of other students to profit from the instructional program, or (3) campus behavior that interferes with the rights of others will not be tolerated. An individual engaging in such disruptive behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Such incidents will be adjudicated by the Dean of Students under nonacademic procedures.

**Sexual misconduct (See Student Handbook):** Sexual harassment of students and employers at Prairie View A&M University is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Any member of the university community violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

**Attendance Policy:** Prairie View A&M University requires regular class attendance. Excessive absences will result in lowered grades. Excessive absenteeism, whether excused or unexcused, may result in a student's course grade being reduced or in assignment of a grade of "F". Absences are accumulated beginning with the first day of class. For this class, if you miss more than three classes before the mid-term, your mid-term grade will be reduced by a full letter. **And if you miss more than three classes after the mid-term, your final course grade will be reduced by a full letter. No exceptions.**

**YOU CANNOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE MORE THAN NINE (9) MINUTES LATE!** If you are TEN (10) or more minutes late, by the instructor's watch, you cannot come to class that day. If you try to violate this rule, you will be expelled from class for that day. Failure to comply with these rules will mean a five-point reduction in your overall class average for each infraction.

**Student Academic Appeals Process:** Authority and responsibility for assigning grades to students rests with the faculty. However, in those instances where students believe that miscommunication, errors, or unfairness of any kind may have adversely affected the instructor's assessment of their academic performance, the student has a right to appeal by the procedure listed in the Undergraduate Catalog and by doing so within thirty days of receiving the grade or experiencing any other problematic academic event that prompted the complaint.

### **Technical Considerations for Online and Web-Assist Courses**

#### **Minimum Hardware and Software Requirements:**

- Pentium with Windows XP or PowerMac with OS 9
- Internet provider with SLIP or PPP
- 64MB RAM
- 15" monitor, 800x600, color or 16 bit
- Microphone and recording software
- Netscape Communicator ver. 4.61 or Microsoft Internet Explorer ver. 5.0 /plug-ins
- Participants should have a basic proficiency of the following computer skills:
  - Sending and receiving email
  - Proficiency in Microsoft Word
  - Basic knowledge of Windows or Mac O.S.
  - 56K modem or network access
  - 8X or greater CD-ROM
  - Hard drive with 40MB available space
  - Sound card w/speakers
  - Keyboard & mouse
  - A working knowledge of the Internet
  - Proficiency in the Acrobat PDF Reader

**Netiquette (online etiquette):** students are expected to participate in all discussions and virtual classroom chats when directed to do so. Students are to be respectful and courteous to others in the discussions. Foul or abusive language will not be tolerated. When referring to information from books, websites or articles, please use APA standards to reference sources.

**Technical Support:** Students should call the Prairie View A&M University Helpdesk at 936-261-2525 for technical issues with accessing your online course. The helpdesk is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week. For other technical questions regarding your online course, call the Office of Distance Learning at 936-261-3290 or 936-261-3282

**Communication Expectations and Standards:** All emails or discussion postings will receive a response from the instructor within 48 hours. You can send email anytime that is convenient to you, but I check my email messages continuously during the day throughout the work-week (Monday through Friday). I will respond to email messages during the work-week by the close of business (5:00 pm) on the day following my receipt of them. Emails that I receive on Friday will be responded to by the close of business on the following Monday.

In your email communication, please notify me of your NAME, Course, and Course Time, so that I can quickly respond. Do not send me messages through Ecourses! Send me messages through my PVAMU email account: [mjnojeim@pvamu.edu](mailto:mjnojeim@pvamu.edu).