

Term: Fall 2015

Course Title: American Government

Course Prefix: POSC Course No.: 1113

Section No.: P08

Department of Division of Social Work, Behavioral
and Political Sciences

College of Brailsford College of Arts and
Sciences

Instructor Name: Michael J. Nojeim, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Program Coordinator

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Office Hours: Tues: 1:00 – 3:00, Wed: 12:00-5:00; Thurs: 1:00 – 3:00

Virtual Office Hours: I check my mjnojeim@pvamu.edu email account several times a day.

Course Location: POSC 1123, section P08, CRN 11205: JJPY 341, meets Tues/Thurs from 9:30 – 10:50

Class Meeting Days
& Times:

Catalog Description: Surveys the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution; the structure and powers of the national government including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches; federalism; areas of political participation; the national election process; public policy; civil liberties and civil rights. (GOVT 2305)

Prerequisites: None

Co-requisites: None

Required Text: *American Democracy Now*, 4th edition, 2015, e-book version, by Harrison, Harris and, Deardorff. McGraw-Hill, ISBN: 9781259417443.

Recommended Text/Readings: N/A

Access to Learning PVAMU Library:

Resources: phone: (936) 261-1500;
web: <http://www.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.

Course Outcomes/Objectives

See below for how specific course outcomes align with the Government/Political Science objectives of the PVAMU Core Curriculum.

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

Course outcome aligns with . . .	PVAMU Core Objective
1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the U.S.	CO #1: Critical Thinking
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.	CO #1: Critical Thinking
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in the United States.	CO #1: Critical Thinking
4. Differentiate the structure and powers of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.	CO #1: Critical Thinking
5. Assess the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.	CO #1: Critical Thinking
6. Analyze the election process in the United States.	CO #1: Critical Thinking
7. Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the United States.	CO #5: Social Responsibility
8. Write a research paper on a divisive constitutional issue for the United States.	CO: #2: Communication
9. Write an essay exam on the debates and divisions surrounding a key policy issue in the United States	CO: #2: Communication
10. Properly document a research paper with a reference list and in-text citations.	CO #6: Personal Responsibility

Course Requirements & Evaluation Methods

This course will utilize the following instruments to determine students' proficiency of the learning outcomes:

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 also test students' civic knowledge regarding such things as the role and structure of the government and non-government institutions in the United States.

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 their ability to communicate the strengths and weaknesses of evidence presented in disparate source materials. The second assignment will gauge the student's critical thinking and critical reading skills as students will have to read a contemporary piece of scholarship and analyze the key components and message.

The following grading matrix indicates the relative weights of each instrument used to determine student grades:

Grading Matrix

Instrument	Value (points or percentages)	Total
Exam 1	100	20%
Exam 2	100	20%
Exam 3 (lowest of exams 1-3 dropped)	100	20%
Exam 4	100	20%
Writing Assignment 1 – Short Assignment	100	20%
Writing Assignment 2 – Essay Quiz	100	20%
Total		100%

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.

All exams will be online. You will need to download the Respondus Lockdown Browser to access and take the exam. You can get it for free at <http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/information.pl?ID=975813429>. Once you have downloaded the program to the computer you are using for the exam, open the lockdown browser which will allow you to login to Ecourses. After you open the program you cannot use your computer for anything else. Once you start the exam you must finish before exiting the program or your score will not be recorded.

Submission of Writing Assignments Policy: All written assignments must be typed, in 12-point font, double-spaced and stapled only (if more than one page). All assignments are due in hard copy on their assigned due date. No late assignments will be taken under any circumstances. Students cannot turn in other student's assignments. Only assignments turned in during class will be accepted for grading. Assignments sent via email, slipped under my office door or stuck in my campus mailbox will NOT be accepted for grading. Assignments do not need a cover page, but they do need a title. I will not grade a written assignment unless all these policies are followed. Papers are graded according to the quality of the following criteria: content, organization, writing, and research/reference.

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 on Thursday, September 10.

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 an **amendment that would BAN same-sex marriage**.
3. Choose a side in this debate. Do you favor a constitutional amendment that would BAN same-sex marriage? Why or why not? Explain your position using arguments based on constitutional issues involving civil rights (look at the 14th Amendment), civil liberties (look at the Bill of Rights), the Constitution's full faith and credit clause (Article VI), states' rights (the 10th Amendment), or even human rights.
 - a. Note: you are NOT being asked to argue whether you support same-sex marriage or not, but whether or not you would support an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to ban it.
4. explain how you—and other people—can engage in the political process to influence government toward your point of view on such a proposed amendment; and
5. Conduct research and cite at least three reliable, quality references, in the body of the text and in a works cited section at the end of the paper, 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. Be sure to click on the Author-Date tab!!

This assignment is due on **Thursday, September, 10**. Your report should be about two pages not counting the bibliography. All papers need 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.

Assignment #2: In-Class Essay-Style Quiz on Thursday, November 19.

Students must read "U.S. Foreign Policy and the Opening to Communist China" and "Race and Suffrage in America: A Compendium of Constitutions, Statutes, and Judicial Decisions from 1865 to 1910." These readings are found in the front of the assigned textbook (latest edition). Students must be prepared to take an essay-style quiz based on these readings on **Thursday, November 19**.

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 day.** 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 – 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.

Course Content: Topics and Readings

16 WEEK CALENDAR

Week One: 08/24/15 - 08/28/15

Chapter (s):

Assignment (s):

Course Introduction; The US Constitution

Chapter 1, People, Politics, and Participation; Chapter 2

Week Two: 08/31/15 – 09/04/15

Chapter (s):

Assignment (s):

Federalism

Chapter 3

NA

Week Three: 09/07/15 – 09/11/15

Chapter (s):

Assignment (s):

The Legislative Branch – Congress

Chapter 12

Assignment #1 is due Thursday, September 10.

Week Four: 09/15/15 – 09/18/15

Chapter (s):

Assignment (s):

Review and Exam 1

Chapters 1, 2, 3, 12.

Exam 1 on Thursday, 9/18

Week Five: 09/21/15-9/25/15

Chapter (s):

Assignment (s):

Civil Liberties

Chapter 4

Writing Assignment #1 due, Thursday 9/25 in class

Week Six: 09/28/15 – 10/02/15

Chapter (s):

Assignment (s):

Civil Rights

Chapter 5

NA

Week Seven: 10/05/15 – 10/09/15

Chapter (s):

Assignment (s):

Political Socialization and Public Opinion; Interest Groups

Chapters 6 – 7

NA

Week Eight: 10/12/15-10/16/15

Chapter (s):

Assignment (s):

Review and Midterm (Exam 2)

Chapters 4 – 7

Exam 2 on Thursday, 10/16

Week Nine: 10/19/15-10/23/15

Chapter (s):

Assignment (s):

The Presidency and the Federal Bureaucracy

Chapters 13 – 14

NA

Week Ten: 10/26/15-10/30/15

Chapter (s):

The Federal Judiciary

Chapter 15

Assignment (s):	NA
Week Eleven: 11/02/15-11/06/15	Review and Exam 3
Chapter (s):	Chapters 13 – 15
Assignment (s):	Exam 3 on Thursday, 11/07
Week Twelve: 11/09/15-11/13/15	Political Parties; Elections, Campaigns, and Voting
Chapter (s):	Chapter 8; Chapter 9
Assignment (s):	NA
Week Thirteen: 11/16/15-11/20/15	Domestic Policy
Chapter (s):	Chapter 17
Assignment (s):	Assignment #2: Essay Quiz: Thursday, November 19
Week Fourteen: 11/23/15-11/27/15	Foreign Policy and National Security
Chapter (s):	Chapter 18
Assignment (s):	Thanksgiving Holiday Break: Nov. 26 – 29.
Week Fifteen: 11/30/15-12/04/15	Review and Final Exam Period Begins
Chapter (s):	Chapters 8, 9, 17, 18.
Assignment (s):	
Week Sixteen: 12/07/15-12/11/15	Final Exam Period Concludes.

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. If you miss more than three classes before the mid-term, your mid-term grade will be reduced by a full a letter. **If you miss more than three classes after the mid-term, your final course grade will be reduced by a full letter.**

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 | -56K modem or network access |
| -Internet provider with SLIP or PPP | -8X or greater CD-ROM |
| -64MB RAM | -Hard drive with 40MB available space |
| -15" monitor, 800x600, color or 16 bit | -Sound card w/speakers |
| -Microphone and recording software | -Keyboard & mouse |
| -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 | -A working knowledge of the Internet |
| -Proficiency in Microsoft Word | -Proficiency in the Acrobat PDF Reader |
| -Basic knowledge of Windows or Mac O.S. | |

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. **The most effective way to communicate with me is through my PVAMU email account: mjnojeim@pvamu.edu.**