

American Government

GOVT-2305

Summer II 2021 Section R30 CRN-40864 3 Credits 07/12/2021 to 08/09/2021 Modified 07/09/2021

Meeting Times

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, 12:05 PM to 2:00 PM, Remote Zoom

The syllabus is considered a work in progress and subject to change/modification when a need arises. Additionally, factors outside the direct control of Blinn College and the instructor may necessitate schedule adjustments as required to meet course objectives.

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Wade Andrew Shol

Email: wade.shol@blinn.edu

Phone: 9792098290

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday by appointment. The instructor will, to the fullest extent possible, arrange to meet with students at a time that fits their schedule.

Matters can often be handled in the classroom immediately before or after class time and, if necessary, instructor and student can move to a more secure location. Additionally, the instructor is available most times of the day for one-on-one discussion on the phone, over the internet, or by email correspondence.

Students are encouraged to contact the instructor whenever they have a question or problem.

Description

Government 2305 is a study of the organization, functions, and administration of the several branches and agencies of the national government, including a study of the federal constitution. The primary factors considered relate to the three branches of government - judicial, executive, legislative -- major historical documents, the events that shaped the nation, and current events. Emphasis will be placed on the interaction of these subsystems. 48 contact hours. Credit: Three semester hours.

Requisites

Student must be college reading ready according to Texas Success Initiatives Standards (TSI). Please see the Catalog section under Texas Success Initiative.

Core Curriculum Statement

Through the Texas Core Curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge in human cultures and the physical and natural world, develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world, and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning. For details relating to this core course, please see:

<http://www.blinn.edu/academics/core-curriculum.html> (<http://www.blinn.edu/academics/core-curriculum.html>)

Outcomes

- Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.
- Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
- Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.
- Analyze the election process.
- Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
- Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

Materials

WE THE PEOPLE

REQUIRED | *By GINSBERG*

EDITION: 12E

PUBLISHER: NORTON

ISBN: 9780393431261

Additional Items

- Internet access
- Test support materials as determined by instructor.
- Miscellaneous reading materials and office supplies necessary for the successful completion of course assignments.
- Instructor will furnish students with the actual video or a website location for any documentary required in the course.

Note: Students have the choice of submitting course work produced with a word processor or handwritten on lined paper, scanned and faxed to the course site. Grading does not discriminate in favor of one over the other.

Course Requirements

Quizzes: 50 Points

Quizzing will take place online during scheduled class days. Students must complete the quiz during a 30-minute window inside that time period to receive credit. There will be a total of 5 quizzes during the course, with each quiz worth 10 points, or 2% of total grade.

The instructor determines specific content, though it will be relevant to the chapters in the section covered for that part of the course.

While the quizzes mentioned are a known quantity, the instructor may provide additional quizzes for purposes of earning extra credit. On rare occasion, for excused absences, make-up quizzes will be allowed under staff supervision.

Tests: 200 points

Four exams totaling at least 50 questions each will be given online during scheduled class days. These will be designated in the class calendar.

Exams consist of both multiple choice and, most often, true-false. Each test is worth a total of 50 points and students, like the quiz, will have a set period of time to complete the exam. Be advised that once started, the clock starts ticking.

Final Exam: 100 Points

There will be a final exam on the last day of class, which is comprised of 100 multiple choice, true-false, and/or word matching questions.

Though primarily focused on the last section of material covered in the course, the exam will have questions carefully chosen from earlier in the course, making it a qualified comprehensive exam.

The final exam is worth 20% of your grade, which is the equivalent of two regular tests. Do not underestimate that value. A final exam can make all the difference between a current course grade average beforehand and the next higher (or lower) grade.

A categorization of the chapters each test covers is as follows:

Test 1: Chapters 1, 2, 3

Test 2: Chapters 12, 13, 14

Test 3: Chapters 15, 4, 5

Test 4: Chapters 6, 8, 9, 11, 10

Final: Chapters 7, 16, 17, 18, comprehensive

The chapters covered on each test are also shown on the calendar section provided at the end of this syllabus.

Exam Notes

Students are expected to read the assigned material. Use of another textbook version/edition other than the one officially approved for the course is at your own risk. There is a vast number of different textbooks and editions floating around the industry. Pick your poison wisely.

A study guide in support of each exam will be distributed in advance to assist in the organization and compiling of notes. The primary medium for all testing content will be centered on the textbook chapters and supporting study guides. The study guides broadly cover chapter content.

Lectures and support videos will be used to provide additional emphasis of specific material. Just enough time and content is allocated in each video to keep your attention.

Notes are allowed during a test. No electronic devices may be used during the examination. This is not a training lesson on student ability to increase their smartphone operating speed. It is, however, a developing process of note-taking skills.

Depending on the number of questions, you will always have at least 60 minutes for each regular exam. Sharing of answers or information with other students is not allowed during the test. Group-think is reserved for the project portion of the course.

Nobody should leave their room once they start a quiz or exam, except in an emergency and only with the specific permission of the instructor or a designated supervisor. You do not want to waste time once you begin by getting distracted over other matters. One international student last school year, for example, received a call from her immigration lawyer during an exam and got stuck on the phone. They lost all track of time and, as a result, she failed to complete the exam.

Any activities that show cheating took place will result in a non-replaceable grade of 0 (zero) for that test. Stiffer penalties are generously awarded for repeat offenders. I will ensure you are not disappointed. Any proctored exam, particularly the final, are to be done in a formal setting on the day scheduled. More information on that will be provided once the course begins.

Apart from the final exam, a student discouraged with their course average or a specific exam grade may discuss the possibility of completing extra credit work with the instructor. I do this all the time and have many willing participants. This will primarily involve writing a scholarly paper, usually 3-5 pages double-spaced, which is averaged with the relevant exam grade.

Additionally, the instructor may elect to include extra credit with each exam. It will be the student's prerogative if they take advantage of the opportunity.

Homework: 50 Points

There will be five homework assignments worth 10 points each. Students will be given an assignment for the course starting the first week of class. Depending on the specific assignment and if it is being offered during your particular semester, the possibility exists it may be completed in groups of two or more. Instructor approval should be sought in advance if students seek to explore any other group concept. Homework assignments are due on the date announced by the instructor.

While spelling and grammatical errors may not be strictly enforced, it will lower your grade if enough mistakes are made to minimize quality and understanding of written work. The instructor reserves the right to deduct significant points if writing is flawed in such a way that it destroys the ability to comprehend student content.

Project: 100 points

A polling project will be conducted by members of the class. Students will be broken into groups of two or more people for purposes of creating the poll. In some cases, and with instructor permission, students may go their own way, but only if they understand the disadvantages of not having another person to assist in the heavy lifting.

Instructions and an outline will be issued during the first few weeks of the course.

Project examples from previous work will be provided throughout the semester to give students ideas of great works past.

Extra Credit Policy

- While the quizzes mentioned are a known quantity, the instructor may also provide quizzes for the purpose of earning extra credit.
- Apart from the final exam, a student that may be discouraged with their course average and exam grades at any time during the semester is welcome to speak with the instructor about the possibility of extra credit work. This is most likely to be in the form of a scholarly paper that would be averaged with the relevant exam grade. On occasion, depending on the point needs, a short essay may suffice.
- Additionally, the instructor may elect to include an extra credit essay with each exam. It will be at the student's discretion if they choose to take advantage of the opportunity.
- Numerous opportunities may arise throughout the course that allow students an opportunity to earn extra credit outside the class. The instructor will inform students when they become available. Students are encouraged to bring ideas to the instructor's attention, if they learn of any outside activity that may have relevance to the course. Everyone is personally responsible for taking advantage of these activities.

✓ Evaluation

Criteria

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Points earned are totaled on all the assignments and compared to the table below- there is a maximum of 500 points (excluding bonuses):

450 points and over- Grade of 'A' and four (4) grade points

400-449 points- Grade of 'B' and three (3) grade points

350-399 points- Grade of 'C' and two (2) grade points

300-349 points- Grade of 'D' and one (1) grade point

Less than 299 points- Grade of 'F' and zero (0) grade points

Breakdown

While there is no "individual" grade on any one assignment for purposes of calculating the final tally, a percentage score will be provided on each graded exam, homework assignment, quiz, and project. This is for the specific purpose of providing the student a general idea on how they ranked on the common grading scale.

Points are earned throughout the course and will be compared to the table above at the end of the term to determine the student's grade. Do keep in mind that, while grades are rounded up at the .5 mark or greater, anything less remains in the lower grade category.

For example, an 89.5% would be the equivalent of an 'A' after rounding up to a 90%.

If there are extenuating, documented circumstances, a grade of "I" may be assigned, following current Blinn policies.

If a student withdraws (drops) from class a grade of "Q", "QP", or "QF" will be given, depending on the date of the student's withdrawal and their current grade.

Note: There may be occasions when points will be added to a student's grade to reward actions above expectations. Points will never be taken away.

Blinn College Policies

All policies, guidelines, and procedures in the [Blinn College Catalog \(http://catalog.blinn.edu/\)](http://catalog.blinn.edu/), [Blinn College Board Policies \(http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/1204\)](http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/1204), and the [Blinn College Administrative Regulations \(https://www.blinn.edu/administrative-regulations/\)](https://www.blinn.edu/administrative-regulations/) are applicable to this course.

[Specific information on civility, attendance, add/drop, scholastic integrity, students with disabilities, final grade appeal, alternative retailers, campus carry and proctoring arrangements and cost. \(http://www.blinn.edu/syllabus-policies/\)](http://www.blinn.edu/syllabus-policies/)

Notice of any action taken under these protocol and procedures, by Blinn College or its employees, may be delivered by hand, through the U.S. Postal Service, or electronically to the student's Blinn Buc e-mail account. Notice shall be deemed received upon actual receipt, on deposit in the U.S. Mail, or upon entering the information processing system used by Blinn College for Blinn Buc e-mail accounts, whichever first occurs.

Information about the changes Blinn has made to the May Minimester, Summer I, and Summer II semesters: [Back with Blinn \(https://www.blinn.edu/back-with-blinn/index.html\)](https://www.blinn.edu/back-with-blinn/index.html).

* Course Policies

Please read: May Minimester, Summer I, and Summer II 2021 General Classroom Procedures. (<http://www.blinn.edu/back-with-blinn/course-policies.html>)

Absences

Students are expected to complete their work and exams in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor concerning any absences.

In light of the current pandemic, liberal attendance policies have been adopted to accommodate those who may become ill or if they have a relative that requires their

assistance for the same reason. Please check the Blinn College website for further information on this matter.

The instructor will work with any student who is having a difficult time dealing with the medical climate that, to some, seems to have overwhelmed their normal routine to a point that time management is unrealistic. To say the current environment is not normal is an understatement. Please reach out to the instructor for any issue that may arise. Everything possible will be and is being done to assist all students who experience a challenge related to the current environment.

Course Work

The instructor will provide specific information on how homework assignments are to be completed and the deadline for their completion. It is the student's responsibility to keep themselves mindful of all approaching dates related to class events.

As you can see by the Schedule section below, there will be firm due dates for each section of course material. However, the instructor reserves the right to change dates based on evolving matters that can arise during the course of the semester.

When you see the due date for a test, that date is also the end of that section. The next section will become available following the exam, not before.

Any associated material related to a section that is not completed by the test date will be assigned a grade of 0 (zero). Once a section has expired, further work associated with that section will not be allowed unless specifically authorized by the instructor.

Late Assignments

All homework assignments are to be submitted online. Those deadlines are no different than what is given in a traditional classroom environment. Please do not get sucked into the online procrastination vortex. It becomes a hard habit to break.

Additionally, just like assignments in the real world, there are due dates according to work schedules. You do not have the right to tell your boss the job will get done when you feel like it. Due dates exist for a legitimate reason.

All assignment due dates are based on when posted and announced by the Instructor. You will always be given plenty of time to complete. Homework schedules will be posted in the course calendar at least a week in advance of the due date.

Consequences for substandard performance are experienced in the real world and will be enforced in the classroom. Therefore, 'if' the instructor accepts late work, it will receive a grade of no higher than B. Please do not belabor this point.

It is fair to assume work done well and in a timely manner should get a higher grade than work that does not meet the deadline.

Distance Education Etiquette: Words of Advice

These suggestions come from experience:

Food or drinks while working on the course can be disastrous. Your workstation should be clear of any potential booby-traps and spilled beverages are just one of many.

Do not put yourself in a position where a cellular phone and/or pager can be a distraction. Once you decide to start course work, just as you would in the classroom, turn the phone off before entering cyberspace (which is the equivalent of a traditional classroom).

Laptops and desktops may be used for exam note-taking preparation. However, handwritten notes are more efficient and beneficial to exam taking. Electronic devices are not allowed during exams.

Computers can be a distraction, like smartphones, when you catch yourself using it for extra-curricular activities not directly associated with course subject matter. Good handwriting is becoming a lost art. Become a lost artist, not a tool. Put down the gadget and practice good penmanship.

Be advised, any unauthorized recording, use of recordings, document sharing, or transfer of material to unauthorized sources outside the course environment may be considered a violation of classroom etiquette policy, as well as legal violation of intellectual property rights. Think twice, for example, before dumping course material on websites seeking to capitalize on the information you willingly provide. If that site is profiting from your contribution, then they may be in violation of copyright and patent protection laws.

Blinn College does not tolerate cheating, plagiarism or collusion. Procedures for dealing with these acts are outlined in the Scholastic Dishonesty Policy.

Schedule

When	Topic	Notes

When	Topic	Week One	Meeting Details	Weekly
		Monday, July 12, 2021	Summer II 2021 Starts, Course Introduction and Welcome Aboard!	11
		Tuesday, July 13, 2021	Chapter 1: American Political Culture	
		Wednesday, July 14, 2021	Chapter 2: The Founding and the Constitution, Homework 1 Due	
		Thursday, July 15, 2021	Chapter 3: Federalism, Project Topic Due	
		Friday, July 16, 2021	Chapter 12: Congress, Quiz 1	
		Week Two		Weekly
		Monday, July 19, 2021	Chapter 13: The Presidency, Test 1	11
		Tuesday, July 20, 2021	Chapter 14: Bureaucracy in a Democracy, Homework 2 Due	
		Wednesday, July 21, 2021	Chapter 15: The Federal Courts, Quiz 2	
		Thursday, July 22, 2021	Chapter 4: Civil Liberties, Project Partners Identified	
		Friday, July 23, 2021	Chapter 5: Civil Rights, Test 2	
		Week Three		Weekly
		Monday, July 26, 2021	Chapter 6: Public Opinion, Homework 3 Due	11
		Tuesday, July 27, 2021	Chapter 9: Political Parties, Quiz 3	
		Wednesday, July 28, 2021	Chapter 11: Groups and Interests, Test 3	
		Thursday, July 29, 2021	Chapter 8: Political Participation and Voting, Quiz 4	
		Friday, July 30, 2021	Last Day to Drop. Chapter 10: Campaigns and Elections, Homework 4 Due	
		Week Four		Weekly
		Monday, August 02, 2021	Chapter 7: The Media, Test 4	
		Tuesday, August 03, 2021	Chapter 17: Social Policy	
		Wednesday, August 04, 2021	Chapter 16: Government and the Economy, Homework 5 Due	11
		Thursday, August 05, 2021	Chapter 18: Foreign Policy and Democracy, Project Due	
		Friday, August 06, 2021	Last Day of Summer II Classes, Chapter 18: Foreign Policy and Democracy, Quiz 5	
		Week Five		Weekly
		Monday, August 09, 2021	Final Exam	
		Tuesday, August 10, 2021	Course Grades Due	04
		Wednesday, August 11, 2021	Student Advising	

When	Topic	Notes	Total Contract Hours	48