

Revised August 17, 2006

POLS 2311: Government of the United States

Course Goals, Learning Outcomes/Objectives Statement

GOALS OF POLS UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

<http://www.uta.edu/catalog/departments/liberalarts/politicalscience>:

To maximize students' capacities to analyze and interpret political events and governmental processes. In addition to acquiring general knowledge about government and political behavior, students also learn the analytical skills relevant to particular political systems (their own and others'), and to problems of most immediate consequence and concern to them.

THE FOUR MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT'S CURRICULUM ARE <http://www.uta.edu/catalog/departments/liberalarts/politicalscience>:

To provide an orientation to national, state, and local government and to stimulate interest in participation in the public sector;

To illustrate the linkage between private or individual values and public policy;

To provide descriptive generalizations as well as to stimulate critical evaluations of various political systems, ideologies, and policy processes; and

To develop in students a cosmopolitan perspective (with respect to both cross-cultural and comparative United States studies) of political phenomena.

These objectives are accomplished by exposing students to diverse methodologies, theories, and approaches to political phenomena; providing basic analytical skills and knowledge for conducting political research; and conveying an ability to recognize the value basis for public sector policies.

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION OF POLS 2311 COURSE

<http://www.uta.edu/catalog/departments/liberalarts/politicalscience>:

POLS 2311. GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES (3-0) 3 hours credit. (GOVT 2305). The constitution and government of the United States. The organization, procedures, and duties of the branches of the government, together with their accomplishments and defects.

All POLS 2311 faculty would include this on their syllabi:

POLS 2311 COURSE GOALS:

Students will:

- 1. Demonstrate a well-rounded knowledge of American government and politics.*
- 2. Demonstrate an understanding of how political scientists analyze and interpret the foundations, institutions, processes, and actors that constitute American government and politics.*
- 3. Demonstrate critical thought about American government and politics.*

All POLS 2311 faculty must have learning objectives/outcomes on their syllabi. One might choose among the following or create one's own:

POLS 2311 LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to be able to:

- Define fundamental concepts associated with American politics in writing or in through appropriate responses on exams. [Blooms: Knowledge level.]
- Describe the structure and function of the differing branches of American Government. [Blooms: Knowledge level.]
- Explain the theoretical and historical underpinnings of the U.S. Constitution. [Blooms: Comprehension level.]
- Demonstrate understanding of the theory and practice of American politics through a discussion of such in writing or by providing appropriate responses on assignments/exams. [Blooms: Application level.]
- Explain as well as demonstrate how individuals can make a difference in their local community and the nation as a whole. [Blooms: Application level.]
- Identify/discuss the evolving history and character of civil rights and civil liberties in America. [Blooms: Analysis level. NOTE: Might also be at the synthesis or evaluation level depending upon the instructor's approach.]
- Identify/discuss the influence of mass media, socio-political movements, interest groups, corporations, political parties, campaigns and elections have on American politics. [Blooms: Analysis level. NOTE: Might also be at the synthesis or evaluation level depending upon the instructor's approach.]
- Identify/discuss the nature of several American domestic and foreign policies as well as the assumptions upon which they are based. [Blooms: Analysis level. NOTE: Might also be at the synthesis or evaluation level depending upon the instructor's approach.]

To these ends, POLS 2311 students will:

- 1) Read texts that focus on the foundations, institutions, processes, and actors that constitute American government and politics.
- 2) Employ the appropriate interpretive, critical, and empirical frameworks and methods in order to analyze, interpret, and synthesize material relevant to the study of American government and politics. These approaches and methods will be left to the professional judgment and pedagogical philosophy of the individual instructor.
- 3) Be tested with regard to recall (remembering terms, facts), comprehension (understanding meanings), application (using information in different situations), analysis (to ascertain the key elements of a theory, structure, institution, process, or event), synthesis (to generalize or create new ideas from existing sources), and evaluation (to discriminate and assess the value of evidence). (The types of testing employed will be left to the discretion of the individual instructor. Testing can range from traditional exams to group projects to simulations to case studies.)

Being able to define, to describe, and/or to apply federalism is a possible learning objective. Here is an example of measures of student learning outcomes using a variety of multiple choice questions, mapped to the different levels of Bloom's taxonomy:

Available to faculty upon request

NOTES:

1) Helpful information on how to write your own additional student learning outcomes/objectives, including further examples of Bloom's taxonomy, can be had at: [http://www.skidmore.edu/administration/assessment/How to Write Learning Objectives.htm](http://www.skidmore.edu/administration/assessment/How_to_Write_Learning_Objectives.htm) .

2) Please note that the University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is targeting the higher order thinking skills (application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation). It is acknowledged that not all courses may lend themselves to all levels of higher order thinking, however, instructors are encouraged to write their student learning outcomes/objectives with these different levels of higher order thinking in mind where appropriate. Given that several sections of our POLS 2311 classes will be participating as one of the pilot projects in the QEP (starting in fall 2007), this is especially important for all instructors of POLS 2311 to keep in mind.