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**Requirements and/or materials for this class may change in subsequent semesters.  
This a pre-class syllabus preview. Please see the current syllabus in the class once the semester has begun.**

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## **POLS 2311 Course Syllabus**

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### **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS:**

This course aims to acquaint you with the fundamentals of American government and to encourage the critical evaluation of issues related to politics. The course also strives to give you an appreciation of the demands and difficulties of a modern democracy. After completing this course, 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; and (3) demonstrate critical thought about American government and politics.

### **ANTICIPATED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

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

- Define fundamental concepts associated with American politics
- Describe the structure and function of the differing branches of American Government.
- Explain the theoretical and historical underpinnings of the U.S. Constitution.
- Explain how individuals participate in the American political system
- Comprehend the civil rights and civil liberties afforded to American citizens and this historical development
- Identify the influence of mass media, socio-political movements, interest groups, corporations, political parties, campaigns and elections have on American politics.

### **COURSE FEATURES:**

This course is a self-paced, Web-based course. Students in this course will obtain all the course information from their textbook and from materials available on the Internet via the course Web site.

As a self-paced course, students are responsible for keeping up with their course work. Since we will not meet on a regular basis, I will send periodic electronic reminders to help you pace yourself, but the ultimate responsibility of keeping up with the course is yours.

By using the computers in University Computer Labs or the Internet you will have access to the following course features:

- **Lectures:** Lectures from this course have been videotaped and are available in the course via CD-ROMs. For each lecture I have provided background material that should be read in addition to viewing the lecture. This material may also be accessed via the CD-ROMS. Many lecture pages also contain links to additional resources on the Internet.
- **Information Resources:** For each unit, I have provided a variety of information resources that can be found on the Internet and in the library. These resources are to help you explore, in more detail, topics that interest you. Specifically, each unit contains links to Internet resources organized by topic, UTA library resources, various media outlets, and a topical bibliography.

- **Wadsworth Textbook Companion Site:** Wadsworth, the publisher of the course textbook, **Understanding American Government, 8th Edition**, has a companion Web site with many study resources available to you. For each topic, go to the [Understanding American Government Companion Site](#). There is a link to this Textbook Companion Site in the grey navigation bar on the left side of each lecture page. Start by selecting the appropriate chapter from the pull-down menu on the upper left corner of the screen. Once the chapter is selected, the study resources links will correspond to the appropriate content. For each unit, you can access the following study resources:
  - "Review for Tests!" (Chapter Outline, Glossary, Learning Objectives)
  - "Test Yourself!" (Essay Questions, Final Exams, Flash Cards, Tutorial Quiz)
  - "Research!" (Web links)
  - "And More!"
- **Take An Exam:** For each unit, you are required to take an exam. Each exam consists of twenty questions and must be answered in fifteen minutes. You must observe the time limits on these exams. If you go over the time limit, your exam will receive a score of 0. Once you have completed the exam, the computer will grade your exam, and you will be given an opportunity to review the questions you missed.

## COURSE SUPPLIES:

Welch, Susan; John Gruhl, John Coner, Susan M. Rigdon 2004, **Understanding American Government**, 8th Edition, Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co. (Required)

CD-ROMs are required for this course, and can be purchased online from the [UT Arlington Bookstore](#). If you are buying your course materials in person, be sure to request the CD-ROMs from the staff at the counter on the 2nd floor of the Bookstore.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Listserv** - Since we will not meet on a regular basis, I need a way to communicate with each of you. Each student **MUST** have an e-mail account so that we can communicate individually. **You will not be able to access the course on the computer without an e-mail address.** If you do not have an e-mail account, or do not know how to use e-mail, contact Academic Computing Services Help Desk located in the Central Library. Through your e-mail account, I will send messages to the whole class on a listserv.

**All students must subscribe to the listserv by September 13th, 2006 at 5:00 p.m. Central Time. Failure to subscribe to the listserv by this date will result in the students' course grade being lowered one letter grade.**

To subscribe to the listserv (to join the list):

- Send an e-mail message to [listserv@listserv.uta.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.uta.edu)
- In the body of the message, type: subscribe pols2311-uta lastname firstname
- Send the message

For example, if I were to subscribe I would send a message to [listserv@listserv.uta.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.uta.edu). My message would read: Subscribe pols2311-uta Moore Michael. I would then send the message. Do not include footers on your e-mail message or have your e-mail account set up with filters as these may prevent your mail from successfully registering with the listserv.

**Important Note.** Once you have successfully subscribed to the listserv, you will receive a return message telling you that you have been added to the list and a welcome message. If you do not receive these messages, then you have not successfully subscribed and you may, instead, receive an error message. Please read these messages carefully and save the messages indicating that you successfully subscribed. The initial return message also gives you directions for unsubscribing and is proof that you successfully subscribed to the list.

If during the semester, your e-mail address changes, you must resubscribe to the listserv so that I have a means of forwarding class information to you.

Additionally, you must change your course e-mail address of record through the [UT Telecampus student information system, TIS](#). For more information, visit [TIS](#) on the UT TeleCampus Web site. Note: Changing the e-mail address through TIS will not redirect messages from the listserv. These are two separate procedures.

**Important Listserv Participation Information. Please read carefully.**

Part of your grade (10%) will be determined by your participation in listserv discussions. During the course I will post topics and questions relating to current events and material discussed in the class. These messages will have a subject heading of "Discussion Topic: (subject)" (e.g. Discussion Topic: War in Iraq) and will be sent from the instructor's e-mail address. You will need to respond to each of these original postings in order to receive credit. Your posting must occur within one week of the original posting and must be signed. Messages sent by the instructor without the "Discussion Topic" heading do not require a response. You should feel free, and I encourage you, to respond to each topic more than once.

In responding to the listserv messages, please adhere to the following guidelines:

**First**, please keep in mind that the messages you send are received by everyone in the course. As such, messages of a personal nature should be taken off-line and sent directly to the other party. Messages should also be written in a polite and respectful manner. Some of our topics will be controversial and people will have differing and conflicting opinions. If someone does not agree with you, please be respectful of their opinion, just as you would expect someone to respect your opinions.

**Second**, please remember that your class will have a large number of students - most likely approaching or exceeding 100. As such, please try to avoid sending messages such as "I agree" or "well said." I encourage you to reply as often as you would like, but please make the contributions meaningful. Short messages that do not contribute to the discussion simply clutter the mailboxes of your classmates.

**Thirdly**, do not change the topic of the discussion thread. If I send a topic related to, for example, "prayer in school," please keep the discussion focused on that topic. By staying focused on the topic everyone will be able to more easily follow the thread of the discussion.

**Finally**, remember that if you want to respond to something sent to you through the listserv, and you want everyone on the list to see it, then you can simply hit the reply button, which directs your message to the listserv address and consequently everyone on the list. This is the equivalent to raising your hand in a classroom and speaking to the entire class.

If you would rather have your instructor see it rather than the whole group, then you need to change the address to [pols2311@uta.edu](mailto:pols2311@uta.edu) or respond through the **E-mail Instructor** button within the course.

- Exams** - During the semester you will take fifteen (15) exams which cover both the lecture and text material. **Fourteen of these exams are unit exams and will count for 55% of your grade. The final exam is comprehensive and will count for 35% of your grade.** The exams must be completed according to the following schedule. You may work at a pace quicker than the dates noted; however, you will not be permitted to take an exam once the due date for that exam has passed.

Activities	Topics
Exams 1-5	Course Intro & Theories of Democracy; Constitution; Federalism; Civil Liberties; Civil Rights;
Exams 6-9	Congress; Presidency, Bureaucracy, and Judiciary
Exams 10-14	Political Parties; Interest Groups; Voting & Participation; Socialization & Public Opinion, Media & Politics
Final Exam	Comprehensive

**Unit Exams:**

You will access the unit exams through your course in Blackboard. When you are ready to take a unit exam, select Testing from the Blackboard navigation menu. Select the unit exam you wish to take. You will be reminded of the Academic Dishonesty Policy. To continue to the test, you will choose the right arrow button at the top of the page. Once on the second page, select the test link. When the test opens, disregard the navigation breadcrumbs in the yellow strip at the top of the test. **You will have fifteen minutes to answer the test questions. You will receive a one-minute warning in a pop-up menu, but otherwise you are responsible for monitoring your exam time by using the taskbar clock or your own timer.** The amount of time spent taking the exam is reported to me. Exams that last longer than 15 minutes will receive a score of zero. After you have completed taking the exam, submit the exam for grading. When monitoring your time, be sure to submit your exam with enough time to allow your exam to be uploaded to our server. At busy times, of the day, this may take several seconds. In other words, do not submit your exam with zero seconds remaining. Follow the prompts after selecting the Submit button to see your results. Record this information for your records. You will also be given an opportunity to review your incorrect answers. Take note of these as you will not be able to review them again.

### **Final Exam:**

The format of the final exam is 140 questions selected equally from the 14 units. **You have ninety (90) minutes to complete this exam.** Once again, you must observe the time limit on the final exam using the task bar clock or your own timer. A final exam that lasts more than 90 minutes will receive a score of zero. You will find the final exam under the Final Exam section.

You should take these exams without the aid of your notes, books, or other aides and are expected to adhere to the University policy on Academic Dishonesty (see below). University Computer Labs are a monitored learning environment and anyone found in violation of the University policy on Academic Dishonesty will be reported to University officials.

Your final grade will be scored 90%-100% A, 80%-89% B, 70% - 79% C, 60% - 69% D, and below 60% is failing. There will be no extra credit opportunities in this course.

You have access to your exam scores as well as your final average under **Gradebook** on the Blackboard navigation menu.

### **3. Course Assessment:**

After you have finished taking all the unit exams, you should complete a course evaluation form. Your comments on this form are anonymous. This assessment will only be available until the final exam completion date. Please make plans to do the assessment before that time - your opinion is important!

### **INSTRUCTOR'S POLICIES:**

**Contacting Me:** Even though I will not meet with you in a traditional classroom, I want you to know that I am available to answer your questions or to talk to you about the course. You may reach me in a variety of ways. For example, you may e-mail from each of the course web pages. I will make every effort to get an answer to your question within 48 hours. You should also feel free to stop by my office for a visit or give me a call on the phone 817.272.7422 during normal business hours.

**Incompletes:** This is a self-paced computer course and all course work must be completed by **the end of the course**. No incompletes will be given except on the basis of a doctor's certification that you are medically unable to complete the course.

### **Technical Difficulties:**

Technical difficulties are no excuse for not completing the course on schedule. While technical difficulties are rare, they do occur. Plan your work schedule to allow you sufficient time to complete all course requirements. Please do not wait until the due date to complete your work.

## Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form at The University of Texas at Arlington. **All** persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

“Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, **cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.**” (Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Part One, Chapter VI, Section 3, Subsection 3.2., Subdivision 3.22).

I reserve the right, at any time, to require a student to take or re-take any or all exams in a proctored environment. If I deem this necessary, the student is responsible for making the proctoring arrangements, subject to my approval. This policy applies to any and all assignments required in this course.

**Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA):** If you are a student who requires accommodations in compliance with the ADA, please consult with me at the beginning of the semester. Student services at UTA include the Office for Students with Disabilities (located in the lower level of the University Center) which is responsible for verifying and implementing accommodations to ensure equal opportunity in all programs and activities.

**Miscellaneous:** You are responsible for being aware of current University deadlines and policies as detailed in the University Calendar and the current Undergraduate Catalog.

If you have any questions regarding any of these policies, please contact me.

## CLASS SCHEDULE:

Below you will find an outline of topics and the required readings. It is strongly recommended that you consider the topics in this order so that you may finish your tests within the time frames indicated in the syllabus. (Simply follow the grid of topics from the upper left hand corner on the *Course Topics* page of the course).

**Exams must be completed by the dates indicated.** You are free to work at a quicker pace than noted in the schedule, but you must adhere to these minimum deadlines. Do not wait until just before the due date to complete your exams since you will find it difficult to complete the coursework. My advice is to start early in the semester and work at a steady pace. You will find this course much more enjoyable if you make it part of your regular schedule.

### Course Topics; Required Readings; and Topic Requirements

Course Topics	Required Readings	Topic Requirements
<b>Course Introduction &amp; Theories of Democracy</b>	Read Chapter 1 View Topic Lectures on CD-ROM #1	Take Exam 1
<b>Constitution</b>	Read Chapter 2, Appendix A, Appendix B View Topic Lectures on CD-ROM #1	Take Exam 2
<b>Federalism</b>	Read Chapter 3, Appendix C,	Take Exam 3

	Appendix D View Topic Lectures on CD-ROM #1	
<b>Civil Liberties</b>	Read Chapter 14 View Topic Lectures on CD-ROM #1	Take Exam 4
<b>Civil Rights</b>	Read Chapter 15 View Topic Lectures on CD-ROM #1	Take Exam 5
<b>Congress</b>	Read Chapter 10 View Topic Lectures on CD-ROM #2	Take Exam 6
<b>Presidency</b>	Read Chapter 11 View Topic Lectures on CD-ROM #2	Take Exam 7
<b>Bureaucracy</b>	Read Chapter 12 View Topic Lectures on CD-ROM #2	Take Exam 8
<b>Judiciary</b>	Read Chapter 13 View Topic Lectures on CD-ROM #2	Take Exam 9
<b>Political Parties</b>	Read Chapter 7 View Topic Lectures on CD-ROM #3	Take Exam 10
<b>Interest Groups</b>	Read Chapter 6 View Topic Lectures on CD-ROM #3	Take Exam 11
<b>Voting and Participation</b>	Read Chapter 8 View Topic Lectures on CD-ROM #3	Take Exam 12
<b>Socialization and Public Opinion</b>	Read Chapter 4 View Topic Lectures on CD-ROM #3	Take Exam 13
<b>Media and Politics</b>	Read Chapter 5 View Topic Lectures on CD-ROM #3	Take Exam 14

<b>Course Summary</b>	
<b>Comprehensive Final Exam</b>	Take the Final Exam
<b>Course Assessment</b>	Complete the Course Evaluation Form
<p>Access to all course materials will expire at the end of the class.  You should plan to complete your evaluation surveys before that time.</p>	

Last day to drop with automatic "W" — **See University Calendar**

### TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Technical Support is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year: [UT TeleCampus Technical Support](#).