POLS 2311-009

**Government of the United States**

**Spring 2024**

**Nedderman Hall 100**

**11:00am-12:20pm**

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Office Hours: T/TH, 10:00-10:50am and by appointment

Faculty Profile: <https://www.uta.edu/academics/faculty/profile?username=hoangb#About%20Me>

**Description of Course Content:**

This course introduces students to the central processes and institutions of American government. Students will study and analyze fundamental concepts and themes that emanate from questions such as: What are the primary functions of particular branches within the U.S. government? How do ordinary individuals and citizens contribute to the functioning of the American political system? How are political institutions responsive to what constituents want? On the other hand, how are individuals and institutions induced to pursue collective goals when necessary? Students will also learn how the U.S government compares to governments in other countries.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

* Identify and describe key features of the American government and political system, such as how our institutions operate, how the different branches of government constrain one another, and how political values shape the way ordinary citizens and elites act and interact with one another.
* Assess the core components of the American political system and discuss the strengths and deficiencies of this system
* Explain how political scientists conduct analyses of the political system, such as elaborating on how they accurately measure public opinion on an issue.
* Demonstrate through in-class activities and online discussions how the concepts and content in this course can be seen in real world situations or how they might challenge political reality.
* Examine the various ways that the American political system is similar to but also different from other political systems around the world.

**Canvas**: We will make extensive use of our course page in Canvas, available at:

<https://oit.uta.edu/canvas/>

**Required Books:**

***Main Textbook***:Patterson, Thomas. *We the People.* 13th Ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education ISBN-13: 978-1259912405

* ***Other required readings will be available on Canvas.***

Although most of the lecture material will come from the textbook and other required readings, I will occasionally complement lectures with content from other sources.

**Description of Assignments and Examinations:** Students are required to complete weekly online reading quizzes, 2 online midterm exams, and an online final exam. Students will also be assessed for participation in class activities and online Canvas discussions.

*Exams*: Both midterm exams and the final exam will cover assigned reading material as well as material delivered during lectures. The midterm and final exams will not be cumulative, meaning that the material being tested on each exam will be content that was covered after the prior exam. Exams will be composed exclusively of multiple-choice and true/false questions and will be administered on Canvas. Students are required to take all exams and complete them in the allotted period.

*Reading Quizzes*: Reading quizzes will be available on Canvas approximately every week. They will be available on Tuesday and are due the following Tuesday by 11:59pm, unless otherwise specified. These quizzes are intended to help you understand key concepts from the textbook and familiarize you with the type of questions that may appear on the exams. You may discuss the readings and quizzes with other classmates. While twelve quizzes will be administered over the course of the semester, your two lowest quiz grades will not be calculated into your final quiz grade.

*Participation*: The abilities to communicate effectively and to work cooperatively with others are integral to being successful in one’s personal and professional life. Therefore, class participation will allow you to make use of and improve these skills. I will alternate between assigning in-class discussion activities and posting a question on the Canvas discussion page, in which students will engage in an online discussion of that topic. Students will be assessed on both in-class and online discussion activities.

**Discussions:** Some of the subject matter in this class and especially in our online discussions may be controversial and/or elicit different perspectives. Thus, students are expected to express their thoughts in a civil, respectful, and professional manner. I may occasionally push students to further elaborate on a viewpoint or ask others to provide an alternative perspective. However, this does NOT reflect any attempt on my part to persuade students to adopt a particular opinion. Rather I am encouraging students to think critically and consider various sides of an issue.

**Extra-credit assignment**: Students will be given opportunities throughout the semester to complete assignments for extra credit points. Instruction for extra credit assignments and their due dates will be posted on Canvas. Extra credit points will be added to your total score at the end of the semester.

**Attendance:** Although I will not take attendance in class, failure to attend will negatively impact your participation grade. Furthermore, students who do not attend class or who attend class sporadically tend, on average, to do worse on exams and assignments than students who attend class on a regular basis. Students are expected to come to class having read and thought about the material.

**Grade Breakdown:**

**Student grades will be calculated as follows:**

Exam 1: 50 points

Exam 2: 50 points

Final Exam 50 points

Quizzes (12 total; 2 lowest scores dropped) 5 points each (50 points total)

Class Participation: 20 points

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

197-220 points: A

175-196 points: B

153-174 points: C

131-152 points: D

Below 131 points: F

### **Grade Grievances:** Any appeal of a grade in this course must follow the procedures and deadlines for grade-related grievances as published in the current University Catalog.

**Office Hours:** I highly encourage students to visit me during my office hours with questions related to the course material and/or assessments. If you cannot meet with me during the scheduled office hours, please contact me over email so that we can set up a time that works for the both of us during university business hours.

**Electronic Devices:** If you decide to be present for class when I am delivering the lecture, please refrain from using your electronic devices to engage in activities that are unrelated to class (emailing, checking Facebook, purchasing items online, playing games, etc.). Additionally, please keep all cell phones on silent for the duration of the class.

**Makeup Exams**: Any make-ups for the first or second midterm exams will be at the time and place of the final exam unless the student has a university-excused absence. (Making up a missed exam during the time of the final exam does NOT excuse you from also taking the final exam). If a student has an approved or university-excused absence, then the make-up for that exam will be scheduled as soon as possible after the regular exam.

**Expectations for Out-of-Class Study**: This is entirely up to you, but plan on spending an average of 3 to 6 hours per week reading and studying the concepts learned from lectures, the textbook, and other required readings.

**Incompletes:** Incompletes will be given only in extraordinary circumstances and at the discretion of the instructor.

**Bad Weather:** Any class cancellations issued by the University as a result of bad weather will result in the scheduled topic or exam being held on the next class day.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Disability Accommodations:** UTArlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA),* and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.* All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of **a letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD).Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting: **The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability).

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) <https://www.uta.edu/caps/> or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

**Non-Discrimination Policy:** *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit*[*uta.edu/eos*](http://www.uta.edu/hr/eos/index.php)*.*

**Title IX Policy:** The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated.*For information regarding Title IX, visit* [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX) or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or [jmhood@uta.edu](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Channabas%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CTemporary%20Internet%20Files%5CContent.Outlook%5C697W32M3%5Cjmhood%40uta.edu).

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code in their courses by having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. **Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University**. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>. Students are encouraged to review these guides on plagiarism [http://libguides.uta.edu/researchprocess/plagiarism](https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Flibguides.uta.edu%2Fresearchprocess%2Fplagiarism&data=02%7C01%7Cteik.lim%40uta.edu%7C196da9f1a3a040158cbb08d5e4d38701%7C5cdc5b43d7be4caa8173729e3b0a62d9%7C0%7C0%7C636666519504536062&sdata=JtmboLEGpBAFS8Hy%2Bd%2BtiQ%2FcEmgi2yrfsk9FijWRqJQ%3D&reserved=0)

 [http://libguides.uta.edu/copyright/plagiarism](https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Flibguides.uta.edu%2Fcopyright%2Fplagiarism&data=02%7C01%7Cteik.lim%40uta.edu%7C196da9f1a3a040158cbb08d5e4d38701%7C5cdc5b43d7be4caa8173729e3b0a62d9%7C0%7C0%7C636666519504546076&sdata=k9dZFTsjHZk8VVjA3dyLLdK2ysRmHkMidviCAPGgLkI%3D&reserved=0)

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <https://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>

***Communicating with the Instructor:***

*I can only read emails from students using their MavMail accounts. Therefore, do not send me emails using non-university accounts, such as Gmail, Yahoo, or Hotmail.* I will try to respond to emails as quickly as possible during normal business hours (Monday-Friday 9am – 5pm), usually within 24 hours. However, please note that emails sent after hours, on weekends, and over University holidays may have a longer response time. Every email you send should have “POLS 2311” or “Government of the U.S.” and the specific question/concern within the subject line. If I think your question or concern cannot be adequately addressed over email, I will ask you to come to my office hours.

**Campus Carry:** Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” are directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students’ anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** for semester-long courses**,** a period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**The Academic Success Center:** The Academic Success Center (ASC) includes a variety of resources and services to help you maximize your learning and succeed as a student at the University of Texas at Arlington. ASC services include supplemental instruction, peer-led team learning, tutoring, mentoring and TRIO SSS. Academic Success Center services are provided at no additional cost to UTA students. For additional information visit: [Academic Success Center](https://www.uta.edu/student-success/course-assistance) (https://www.uta.edu/student-success/course-assistance). To request disability accommodations for tutoring, please complete this [tutoring request form](https://www.uta.edu/student-success/course-assistance/tutoring/request) (https://www.uta.edu/student-success/course-assistance/tutoring/request).

**Schedule of Topics**

**Syllabus Changes**: As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course.

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| **Date** | **Topic** | **Readings** |
| **Week 1** |
| Jan 16 (T) | Introduction, syllabus, discuss class expectations | **Online Quiz:** ***Quiz 1* released**  |
| Jan 18 (TH) | What is Politics? | **Textbook**: Chapter 1  |
| **Week 2** |
| Jan 23 (T) & 25 (TH) | The American Founding and the Constitution | **Textbook**: 1. Chapter 2
2. The U.S. Constitution
3. *The Federalist 10*

**Online Quiz:** ***Quiz 1* due 1/23 (T)*****Quiz 2* released**  |
| **Week 3** |
| Jan 30 (T) & Feb 1 (TH) | Federalism | **Textbook**: Chapter 3 **Online Quiz:** ***Quiz 2* due 1/30 (T)*****Quiz 3* released**  |
| **Week 4** |
| Feb 6 (T) & 8 (TH) | Civil Liberties | **Textbook:** 1. Chapter 4

**Canvas:**1. Miles Herszenhorn and Claire Yuan, “ ‘I Am Sorry’: Harvard President Gay Addresses Backlash Over Congressional Testimony on Antisemitism” *The Crimson,* December 8, 2023

**Online Quiz:** ***Quiz 3* due 2/6 (T)*****Quiz 4* released**  |
| **Week 5** |
| Feb 13 (T) | Exam Review | Review Ch 1-4***Quiz 4* due 2/13 (T)** |
| Feb 15 (TH) | **Exam #1**  | **Covers Ch 1-4** |
| **Week 6** |
| Feb 20 (T) & 22 (TH) | Civil Rights | **Textbook:** Chapter 5**Online Quiz:** ***Quiz 5* released** |
| **Week 7** |
| Feb 27 (T) & 29 (TH) | Public Opinion and Political Socialization  | **Textbook:** 1. Chapter 6

**Canvas:** 1. Megan Brenan, “Americans Divided Over U.S. Involvement in Middle East.” *Gallup*, January 5, 2024

**Online Quiz:** ***Quiz 5* due 2/27 (T)*****Quiz 6* released**  |
| **Week 8** |
| March 5 (T) | Political Participation | **Textbook:** 1. Chapter 7

**Canvas:**German Lopez, “A new study finds voter ID laws don’t reduce voter fraud - or voter turnout” *Vox,* Feb 21, 2019**Online Quiz:** ***Quiz 6 due* 3/5 (T)*****Quiz 7* released**  |
| March 7 (TH) | Political Parties, Candidates and Campaigns | **Textbook:** 1. Chapter 8

Canvas: Jamelle Bouie, “The Electoral College Is the Greatest Threat to Our Democracy” *New York Times Opinion*, Feb 28, 2019Ross Douthat, A Case for the Electoral College,” *New York Times Opinion*, March 23, 2019 |
| **Week 9** |
| Mar 12 & 14 | No Classes! | Spring Break |
| **Week 10** |
| March 19 (T)  | Political Parties, Candidates and Campaigns (cont’d) | **Textbook and Canvas:**Same as assigned readings for 3/7/24**Online Quiz:** ***Quiz 7* due 3/19*****Quiz 8* released** |
| Mar 21 (TH) | Interest Groups | **Textbook:** Chapter 9 |
| **Week 11** |
| March 26 (T) | Exam #2 Review | *Quiz 8* due 3/26 (T) |
| March 28 (TH) | **Midterm Exam #2** | **Covers Chapters 5-8** (Topic on Interest Groups is not covered in this exam) |
| **Week 12** |
| Apr 2 (T) & Apr 4 (TH) | Congress | **Textbook:** 1. Chapter 11

**Canvas:**1. Rebecca Leppert and Drew Desilver. “118th Congress has a record number of women,” *Pew Research Center*, January 3, 2023

Online Quiz: *Quiz 9* released  |
| **Week 13** |
| Apr 9 (T) & 11 (TH) | The Presidency | **Textbook:** 1. Chapter 12

**Canvas**: 1. Kathryn Watson, “Can a president pardon himself?” *CBS News*, June 18, 2023

**Online Quiz:** ***Quiz 9* due 4/9*****Quiz 10* released**  |
| **Week 14** |
| Apr 16 (T) & 18 (TH) | The Bureaucracy | **Textbook:** Chapter 13**Online Quiz:** ***Quiz 10 due* 4/16 (T)*****Quiz 11* released**  |
| **Week 15** |
| Apr 23 (T) & 25 (TH)  | The Federal Judicial System | **Textbook:** 1. Chapter 14

Canvas: “Should Supreme Court justices have term limits? | Pro/Con” *The Philadelphia Inquirer,* Sept 24, 2020**Online Quiz**: ***Quiz 11* due 4/23 (T)*****Quiz 12* released** |
| **Week 16** |
| Apr 30 (T) | Final Exam Review | **Covers Chs. 9, 11-14*****Quiz 12* due 4/30 (T)** |
| **Final Exam Period** |
| May 2 - 8, 2023 | **Final Exam** | **Day: May 7, 2024 (Tuesday)****Time: 11:00am – 1:30 pm** **Location: online via Canvas** |

**Emergency Phone Numbers**: In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911. Non-emergency number 817-272-3381