

# PS 4311/5317: SEMINAR IN US GOVERNMENT

Tuesday, 6:00-8:50—Lawrence Hall 303 or online

## Course Syllabus

### Assignments

- Unit Reflections (10 weeks; 3 points each)
- Curriculum Project (40 points)
- Final Exam (30 points)

See page 2 for assignments.

### Important Dates

- Tuesday, April 28: Curriculum Project
- Tuesday, May 12: Final Exam

See page 4 for the schedule.

### Readings

- Dahl, Robert A. 2003. *How Democratic is the American Constitution? Second Edition*. ISBN 978-0300095241
- Fiorina, Morris P. 2010. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America. Third Edition*. ISBN: 978-0205779888
- Mayhew, David. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. ISBN 978-0300105872

Additional required readings are posted on our course Blackboard page, as PDFs or links to websites.

See page 5 for the reading list.



## Course Introduction

- ◆ What are the constitutional foundations of the American political system?
- ◆ How do rules and institutions affect the choices of political actors?
- ◆ Why and how has citizen participation changed over time?

To answer these questions, we will survey the broad literature about American politics, focusing on both classic and contemporary works in the field. Rather than focusing exclusively on contemporary issues, this course will introduce the theory and methodology used to understand US government.

**Professor:** Dr. Amy Moreland

**Email:** amoreland@sulross.edu

**Phone:** 432.837-8162

**Office:** Lawrence Hall 202

**Office Hours:** Tuesday-Thursday, 2-4pm

**www.sulross.blackboard.com**



## Grading

### Assignments

- Reflection 1: Worth 3 points  
*Due February 3 at 6pm CST*
- Reflection 2: Worth 3 points  
*Due February 17 at 6pm CST*
- Reflection 3: Worth 3 points  
*Due February 24 at 6pm CST*
- Reflection 4: Worth 3 points  
*Due March 3 at 6pm CST*
- Reflection 5: Worth 3 points  
*Due March 10 at 6pm CDT*
- Reflection 6: Worth 3 points  
*Due March 24 at 6pm CDT*
- Reflection 7: Worth 3 points  
*Due March 31 at 6pm CDT*
- Reflection 8: Worth 3 points  
*Due April 14 at 6pm CDT*
- Reflection 9: Worth 3 points  
*Due April 21 at 6pm CDT*
- **Curriculum Project:**  
Worth 40 points  
*Due April 28 at 6pm CDT*
- Reflection 10: Worth 3 points  
*Due May 5 at 6pm CDT*
- **Final Exam:** Worth 30 points  
*Due May 12 at 6pm CDT*

### Course Grading

- 90-100 points = A
- 80-89 points = B
- 70-79 points = C
- 60-69 points = D
- Less than 60 points = F

## Course Assignments

Assignment	Description
<p><b>Unit Reflections</b></p> <p>Contribute to online discussions (approximately 750 words per week) about the class readings via the Blackboard discussion forum</p> <p>30% of total course grade</p>	<p>Due on Blackboard by 6:00pm CST/CDT on due date</p> <p>Weekly due dates on page 4 of this syllabus</p> <p>Worth 3 points each</p>
<p><b>Curriculum Project</b></p> <p>Work with other students to develop an American government curriculum, through a teaching project, research project, or policy brief project</p> <p>40% of total course grade</p>	<p>Due on Blackboard by 6:00pm CDT on April 28</p> <p>Worth 40 points</p>
<p><b>Final Exam</b></p> <p>Reflect on course readings and evaluate political problems in a 10-15 page essay.</p> <p>30% of total course grade</p>	<p>2 essay questions</p> <p>Due on Blackboard by 6:00pm CDT on May 12</p> <p>Worth 30 points</p>

**You can find additional details about each assignment on our class Blackboard page.**

## Course and Program Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to critique significant theoretical approaches of political science/ public administration through written work
  - **How will we meet this goal?**  
Units 5-7
  - **How will we assess whether this goal is achieved?** Unit Reflections; Final Exam
2. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate domestic and international political/ administrative policies through written work?
  - **How will we meet this goal?**  
Units 1-4
  - **How will we assess whether this goal is achieved?** Unit Reflections; Curriculum Project
3. Demonstrate the ability to develop arguments about global equity and equality issues in politics through written work and oral communication
  - **How will we meet this goal?**  
Unit 1, Units 9-10
  - **How will we assess whether this goal is achieved?** Unit Reflections
4. Demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate statistical tools for quantitative analysis.
  - **How will we meet this goal?**  
Unit 1-10
  - **How will we assess whether this goal is achieved?** Unit Reflections; Curriculum Project

## Course Policies

### Required Readings

- You are expected to have completed all assigned readings by the beginning of the class day for which they are assigned.

### Disruptions and Classroom Respect

- You are encouraged to openly engage in class discussions, to ask questions, to share ideas, and to express your thoughts. Please be respectful of others by avoiding disruptive behaviors.

### Late Work and Missed Assignments

- If you need to miss an assignment, please inform Dr. Moreland of the situation as soon as possible. Late assignments will only be allowed in the case of an emergency.

### Students with Special Needs

- Any student who because of a disability may require special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary accommodations. If you would like to request an accommodation, please contact the Center for Counseling and Accessibility Services, at (432) 837-8363.

### Religious Observance

- Any student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day will be allowed to make up assignments for that day. Arrangements for missing class due to religious observance must be made with the instructor prior to the absence.

### Academic Integrity

- Any instance of academic misconduct, such as cheating and plagiarizing written assignments, collusion, or misrepresenting facts will be punished according to the university's disciplinary policy.

### Distance Education Resources

- Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRSU email, which require secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

### Communicating with the Professor:

- The best way to contact me is through email at [amoreland@sulross.edu](mailto:amoreland@sulross.edu). I will try to respond as soon as possible. If you do not receive a reply within 24 hours, please resend your email or call my office at 432.837-8162.

# Course Schedule

Unit	Dates	Readings	Assignments
Introduction	January 20	Hibbing and Larimer 2008	Read the syllabus and post introduction to Blackboard.
1. Constitutional Foundations	January 27 February 3	Dahl 2003 (book)	Unit 1 Reflection Due February 3 at 6pm CST
2. Congress	February 10 February 17	Mayhew 1974 (book) Fenno 1977 Carson, Engstrom, & Roberts 2007 McCubbins and Schwartz 1984	Unit 2 Reflection Due February 17 at 6pm CST
3. The Executive	February 24	Neustadt 1990 Cameron 2009 Canes-Wrone, Howell, & Lewis 2008 Wilson 1989	Unit 3 Reflection Due February 24 at 6pm CST
4. The Courts	March 3	Segal and Spaeth 2002 Epstein and Knight 2000 McGuire and Stimson 2004	Unit 4 Reflection Due March 3 at 6pm CST
5. Political Ideas and Opinions	March 10	Hetherington 2006 Zaller and Feldman 1992 Lizotte and Sidman 2009	Unit 5 Reflection Due March 10 at 6pm CDT
6. Political Polarization	March 24	Fiorina 2010 (book)	Unit 6 Reflection Due March 24 at 6pm CDT
7. Parties and Partisanship	March 31	Hoadley 1980 Abramowitz and Saunders 1998 Bartels 2000 Fiorina 2002	Unit 7 Reflection Due March 31 at 6pm CDT
8. Campaigns, Elections, Voting, and Turnout	April 7 April 14	Huber and Arceneaux 2007 Huang and Shaw 2009 Bor 2013 Aldrich 1993 McDonald 2008	Unit 8 Reflection Due April 14 at 6pm CDT
9. Political Participation	April 21	Rosenstone and Hansen 1993 Cao and Brewer 2008 Wattenberg 2011	Unit 9 Reflection Due April 21 at 6pm CDT
Semester Project	April 28	<b>Semester Project Due April 28 at 6pm CDT</b>	
10. Citizen Engagement	May 5	Putnam 1995 Zaller 1998 Dalton 2008	Unit 10 Reflection Due May 5 at 6pm CDT

**Final Exam due on Blackboard at 6pm CDT on Tuesday, May 12.**

**Reading List (In Chronological Order)**

- Hibbing, John R. and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. "The American Public's View of Congress." *The Forum* 6 (3): Article 6.  
Available at: <http://www.bepress.com/forum/vol6/iss3/art6>
- Dahl, Robert A. 2003. *How Democratic is the American Constitution? Second Edition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Mayhew, David. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection. Second edition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Fenno, Richard F., Jr. 1977. "U.S. House Members in their Constituencies: An Exploration." *American Political Science Review* 71: 883-917.
- Carson, Jamie L., Erik Engstrom and Jason Roberts. 2007. "Candidate Quality, the Personal Vote, and the Incumbency Advantage in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 101: 289-301.
- McCubbins, Mathew and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science* 28: 165-179.
- Neustadt, Richard E. 1960. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan*. New York: Macmillan. Chapter 3.
- Cameron, Charles. 2009. "The Presidential Veto." In *The Oxford Handbook of the American Presidency*, ed. William G. Howell and George C. Edwards III. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 16.
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice, William Howell, and David Lewis. 2008. "Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Reevaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis." *Journal of Politics* 70: 1-16.
- Wilson, James Q. 1989. *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. New York: BasicBooks. Chapters 17 and 18.
- Segal, Jeffrey A. and Harold J. Spaeth. 2002. *The Supreme Court & the Attitudinal Model Revisited*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Epstein, Lee and Jack Knight. 2000. "Toward a Strategic Revolution in Judicial Politics: A Look Back, A Look Ahead." *Political Research Quarterly* 53 (3): 625-661
- McGuire, Kevin T. and James A. Stimson. 2004. "The Least Dangerous Branch Revisited: New Evidence on Supreme Court Responsiveness to Public Preferences." *Journal of Politics* 66: 1018-1035.
- Hetherington, Marc. 2006. *Why Trust Matters: Declining Political Trust and the Demise of American Liberalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 7, 8.
- Zaller, John and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences." *American Journal of Political Science* 36: 579-616.
- Lizotte, Mary-Kate and Andrew H. Sidman. 2009. "Explaining the Gender Gap in Political Knowledge." *Politics and Gender* 5: 127-151.
- Fiorina, Morris P. 2010. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America. Third edition*. New York: Pearson Longman.
- Hoadley, John F. 1980. "The Emergence of Political Parties in Congress, 1789 - 1803." *American Political Science Review* 74: 757-779.
- Bartels, Larry M. 2000. "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996." *American Journal of Political Science* 44: 35-50.
- Fiorina, Morris P. 2002. "Parties and Partisanship: A 40 Year Retrospective." *Political Behavior* 24: 93-115.
- Huber, Gregory A. and Kevin Arceneaux. 2007. "Identifying the Persuasive Effects of Presidential Advertising." *American Journal of Political Science* 51: 957-977.
- Huang, Taofang and Daron Shaw. 2009. "Beyond the Battlegrounds? Electoral College Strategies in the 2008 Presidential Election." *Journal of Political Marketing* 8: 272-291.
- Bor, Stephanie. 2013. "Using Social Network Sites to Improve Communication Between Political Campaigns and Citizens in the 2012 Election." *American Behavioral Scientist* published online 7 June 2013.
- Aldrich, John H. 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 37: 246-278.
- McDonald, Michael P. 2008. "The Return of the Voter: Voter Turnout in the 2008 Presidential Election." *The Forum* 6 (4).
- Rosenstone, Steven J. and John Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. London: Longman Press. Chapters 1-2.
- Wattenberg, Martin P. 2011. *Is Voting for Young People?* New York: Pearson Longman, Chapters 5 and 8.
- Cao, Xiaoxia and Paul R. Brewer. 2008. "Political Comedy Shows & Public Participation." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 20 (1): 90-99.
- Putnam, Robert. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1): 65-78.
- Zaller, John R. 1998. "Monica Lewinsky's Contribution to Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 31 (2): 182-189.
- Dalton, Russell J. 2008. *The Good Citizen: How a Younger Generation is Reshaping American Politics. Revised First Edition*. Washington, DC: CQ Press, Chapters 2 and 3.