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Office Hours:

Brazosport College

GOVT 2305 Federal Government

Section 40

Fall 2020

3 credit hours

## **Course Description**

This course provides a basic introduction to American Politics and government. The course will examine the institutions and processes of American government as well as political factors that influence them. We will focus our analysis on four major areas: The American System, Civil Rights and Liberties, People and Politics and Political Institutions.

## **Core Curriculum Objectives and Assessments**

As part of the Brazosport College Core Curriculum, this course provides students the opportunity to achieve the following core curriculum objectives:

- 1.Critical Thinking: Including innovation, creative thinking, inquiry and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
- 2.Communication Skills: Including effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
- 3.Social Responsibility: Including intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
- 4.Personal Responsibility: Including the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision making.

Objectives will be assessed according to the Brazosport College Core Assessment Plan through the sampling and evaluation of student work

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

The aim of this course is to make students understand structure, functioning and key concepts of American politics. At the end of the semester students are expected to have well rounded knowledge on:

- The nature of government and its theoretical foundations
- Relate American political thought to global political thought
- Identify and explain structures and functions of government prescribed by the Constitution
- Asses the relationship between individuals and the state with emphasis on political rights and liberties
- Analyze the American political process, including the development of ideologies, voting behavior and other forms of political participation.

- Evaluate the relationship between the governing process and public policy.
- Utilize the knowledge gained to become engaged with the American political process.

### **Required Book**

American Government and Politics Today: The Essentials, Enhanced , 19th Edition  
Barbara A. Bardes; Mack C. Shelley II; Steffen W. Schmidt

ISBN: 9780357700037 – Cengage Unlimited – One semester Printed Access Code \$119.99

9780357028513- Just MindTap

Required course materials are available at the Brazosport College bookstore, on campus or online at <http://www.brazosport.edu/bookstore>. A student of this institution is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from the college bookstore. The same textbook is/may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

### **Course Management System**

Students can access course material by clicking on the Virtual Campus/D2L button at the bottom of the BC webpage or type <https://online.brazosport.edu> into your internet web browser. Students who have difficulty logging in for the first time or have other technical issues such as browser problems can contact the Brazosport College Information Technology Center by emailing [helpdesk@brazosport.edu](mailto:helpdesk@brazosport.edu) or by phoning the IT Helpdesk at 979-230-3266.

### **Course Procedures**

Students should follow national and state political news stories on a regular basis. The student is responsible for all materials presented in class and in the textbook, including illustrations. This will be an “information intensive” subject. A variety of communication means will be used, including instructor presentation, video, assigned readings, paper assignment and quizzes. Students will be expected to engage the ideas and material through appropriate class preparation and participation. The class will discuss a variety of simple and complex questions. The students will take written examinations.

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Exams:**

There will be three midterm exams (15 percent each) and one final exam (25 percent). If a student takes all 3 midterm exams, the two highest scores will be used in calculating course grade. Every student must take the final exam.

Final exam will be cumulative. The exams will be based on materials covered in class and your textbook. We will not cover every chapter line by line. It is the students’ responsibility to read each chapter thoroughly and take extensive notes. The exams could be a combination of multiple choice, true-false, matching. The students must download Lockdown Browser to take the exams.

To take a makeup exam, the students MUST present a legal documentation for their absences and MUST inform the instructor at least 48 hours in advance, excluding emergency situations. Even emergency situations need to be documented. A hospital note, doctors note, a death announcement on a newspaper are some examples to legal documentations. A family trip, “feeling under the weather” without a doctor’s note, grandparents’ death without proof are some of the unaccepted examples. The students must present their documentation within 5 business days.

FINAL EXAM WILL BE AVAILABLE ON DECEMBER 7, MONDAY 9.00AM-9.00PM (IF YOU CAN NOT TAKE THE EXAM ON MONDAY)

DECEMBER 8, TUESDAY 9.00AM-9.00PM. STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO TAKE BOTH FINAL EXAMS BUT JUST ONE!! IF YOU TAKE BOTH, THE ONE THAT YOU TAKE FIRST WILL BE COUNTED TOWARDS THE GRADE.

College policy requires that a final examination be given in each course at the end of the each semester. Any final examination which is to be given prior to or after the college final examination period must be approved by the Dean of Instruction.

### **MindTap Assignments:**

What is MindTap:

MindTap enables you to make the most of your time by learning your way—wherever, whenever. MindTap keeps all your course resources in one, convenient place. Track your scores so you always know where you stand. Use the integrated digital textbook to highlight key text passages and take notes. You can create your own custom flashcards and study guides.

MindTap is integrated in D2L. MindTap is an online learning solution designed with the intention to stimulate your engagement. You will access MindTap by logging into D2L, click on the course, GOVT 2305 then click on “Content” icon. Then click on “Table of Contents”. You will see the MindTap. Click on MindTap and follow the registration instructions. You may purchase a printed version of the stated textbook book from bookstore. The book comes with the access code to MindTap, which is required for the class. Alternately, you may skip the hard copy and purchase MindTap directly from the publisher. With MindTap, you will get a complete electronic version of the book. This is a cost-saving option in either case, click on the link to MindTap from within the course, and follow the prompts. You may access these materials free of charge on a temporary basis. You must buy MindTap, it is not optional. You cannot pass this course without completing MindTap assignments.

Here is a useful link

<https://www.cengage.com/training/mindtap?audience=Student#video>

Once you are in MindTap you will be able to do the readings online as well as from your textbook. Every week there is a topic and a chapter that will be covered. You must keep up with the readings.

Once you activate MindTap, you’ll gain free access to the MindTap Mobile App. With this app, you can read and practice anyplace, anytime giving you complete flexibility, and helping you increase your success in this course.

<https://www.cengage.com/mindtap/mobileapp>

If you need additional guidance, please visit

[www.cengage.com/start-strong](http://www.cengage.com/start-strong)

If you have TECHNICAL ISSUES, click on your name in the right-hand corner of MindTap. Click on SYSTEM CHECK and then if you still have issues, visit <http://techcheck.cengage.com> where you can check to see if they're experiencing any service interruptions. To contact Technical Support, please visit <http://cengage.com/support> to initiate a case or call 800-354-9706. Unfortunately, I can't help you with technical issues, you must contact Cengage Technical support.

### **Wrap it up quizzes (15 percent)**

Quizzes (one per chapter) for every chapter, students must take a short quiz of multiple-choice questions that test students' knowledge of the readings. Once the student clicks on a quiz, s/he will have **25 minutes to complete it**. So, make a good arrangement of your time. Each quiz will be available until the Sunday midnight of the week that we cover that chapter. You can find due dates for all assignments on the syllabus. If a student misses a quiz, there will not be a make-up quiz. Each quiz will ONLY be available in certain time period. If a student fails to complete a quiz in the allocated time, there will be no makeup for that week's quiz.

There will be 13 quizzes available. The lowest 3 grades will be dropped. Students will be graded over 10 quizzes.

### **Watch and Consider (15 percent)**

Each week students will watch a video and take a brief assessment to check their understanding. The videos will be about real life events, current political debates. There will be 13 "Watch and Consider" videos and assessments.

There will be 13 assessments available. The lowest 3 grades will be dropped. Students will be graded over 10 assessments. Each assessment will be available until the Sunday midnight of the week that we cover that chapter. You can find due dates for all assignments on the syllabus

For each assignment students only have one attempt. So, make sure you read the chapter before you start the assignments.

Note: In MindTap, you will find some more very useful assignments that can prepare you for the exams. You can study by test prep quizzes, and focus activities. These two types of assignments will not be counted towards grade. Any assignment that will be counted towards grade will have an orange ball icon under it that reads "counted towards grade."

Here is a link for MindTap (Cengage) videos on Federal Government

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcFM0VUmi-f8BvRMaiWae4g/playlists>

### **Paper Assignment (15 percent)**

Students expected to write a minimum 750-word paper. Students are expected to select a current political (not historical) issue or problem, a topic. Students are expected to draw personal conclusion based on their analysis of the problem or the issue by presenting evidence and comparing different viewpoints. The

paper needs to be written in New Times Roman, 12 Font, double space format. Students are expected to have no typographical errors, misspelled words, and grammatical errors. In text citation as well as a bibliography (e.g., a “work cited” or “End Notes” page) using an appropriate method approved by the Instructor is necessary.

**Submission guidelines:** All written work must be types in Times New Roman, 12pt. font, double spaced . All assignments must be submitted on time. No extensions will be allowed (with the exception of extraordinary cases in which prior instructor’s consent is required at least 48 hours **before the deadline for the assignment**). Students who do not submit their work on time will be penalized. 5 points for each day they fail to submit their work. Work that is submitted three days or more after the deadline will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. The due date of assignments is **clearly marked in this syllabus** and it is **STUDENT’S RESPOSNSIBILITY** to know the due dates of the assignments.

Papers will be submitted via D2L through Dropbox.

**WRITING CENTER:** The Brazosport College Writing Center provides tutoring by appointment. Located within the Student Success Center (E200 - second floor of the main building above the counseling and registration office), the BC Writing Center can assist with brainstorming, organizing and developing paragraphs, understanding professors’ directions, learning about MLA or other styles, learning how to avoid plagiarism, improving mechanics, and using Microsoft Word. For more information give them a call at 979-230-3184

### **Communication**

Students are responsible for regularly checking their college-mail and D2L emails for announcements. Please use your student email to communicate with me.

Your email inquiries will be answered in a timely fashion, if they adhere to certain basic rules of courtesy and professionalism. Emails I receive with no salutation or the salutation, “hey”, won’t get an answer. A minimal “Hi, Prof. Sisman” or a more formal, “Dear Prof. Sisman” is expected to start a good communication.

Allow me at least 24 hours to respond to your email. Emails sent on the weekend may not get a reply until Monday morning. **You should use your official BC email account when contacting with the instructor.**

### **Grade Scale**

A	89.5 - 100
B	79.5 – 89.4
C	69.5 – 79.4
D	59.5 – 69.4
F	below 59.4

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

BC is committed to providing equal education opportunities to every student. BC offers services for individuals with special needs and capabilities including counseling, tutoring, equipment, and software to

assist students with special needs. Please contact Phil Robertson, Special Populations Counselor, 979-230-3236 for further information.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

BC assumes that students eligible to perform on the college level are familiar with the ordinary rules governing proper conduct including academic honesty. The principle of academic honesty is that all work presented by you is yours alone. Academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion shall be treated appropriately. Please refer to the BC Student Guide for more information, this is available online at <http://www.brazosport.edu>, click on the link found on the left side of the homepage.

Academic dishonesty violates both the policies of this course and the Student Code of Conduct. In this class, any occurrence of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Dean of Student Services for prompt adjudication, and may, at a minimum, result in \_\_\_\_F\_\_\_\_ in this course. Sanctions may be imposed beyond your grade in this course by the Dean of Student Services

**Title IX Statement:** Please include the following statement in your syllabus.

Brazosport College faculty and staff are committed to supporting students and upholding the College District's non-discrimination policy. Under Title IX and Brazosport College's policy FFDA (Local), discrimination based on sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression is prohibited. If you experience an incident of discrimination, we encourage you to report it. While you may talk to a faculty or staff member at BC, please understand that they are "Responsible Employees" and must report what you tell them to college officials. You can also contact the Title IX Coordinators directly by using the contact information below. Additional information is found on the Sexual Misconduct webpage at [www.brazosport.edu/sexualmisconduct](http://www.brazosport.edu/sexualmisconduct).

Kelli Forde Spiers, Director, Student Life and Title IX Coordinator

Office J-117D; 979-230-3355; [kelli.fordespiers@brazosport.edu](mailto:kelli.fordespiers@brazosport.edu)

Mareille Rolon, HR Coordinator and Deputy Title IX Coordinator

Office C-114; 979-230-3303; [mareille.rolon@brazosport.edu](mailto:mareille.rolon@brazosport.edu)

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students are expected to fully participate in the course. The following criteria are intended to assist you in being successful in this course.

- a. Time Management
- b. Understanding the Syllabus Requirements
- c. Utilizing Online Components (such as D2L)
- d. Communicating with the Instructor
- e. Completing Course Work

## **OTHER STUDENT SERVICES INFORMATION**

This list is provided to assist students in locating available services. Information about the BC Library is available at <http://www.brazosport.edu/~lib/Information.htm> or by calling 230-3310. Tutoring for Math, Reading, Writing, Biology, Chemistry, and other subjects is available in the LAC, 230-3253. To contact the Communications & Fine Arts Division call 230-3224. The Student Services area provides the following services: Counseling and Advising, 230-3040; Financial Aid, 230-3294; and Student Activities, 230-3355.

### **Campus Closure Statement:**

Brazosport College is committed to the health and safety of all students, staff, and faculty and adheres to all federal and state guidelines. The College intends to stay open for the duration of the semester, and provide access to classes and support services on campus in the safest way possible. The College will also comply with lawful orders given by applicable authorities, including the Governor of Texas, up to and including campus closure. It is possible that on campus activities may be moved online and/or postpone if such orders are given.

## **Course Outline**

### **PART1: The American System**

Week 1- (August 24-30)- The Democratic Republic

Read the syllabus thoroughly and listen my explanations

Read: Chapter 1

Assignment (Due 08/30/2020 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 1
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 1

Week 2- (August 31-September 6)- The Constitution

Read: Chapter 2

Assignment (Due 09/06/2020 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 2
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 2

Week 3- (September 7- 13)- Federalism

Read: Chapter 3

Assignment (Due 09/13/2020 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 3
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 3

### **PART2: Civil Rights and Liberties**

Week 4- (September 14-20)- Civil Liberties

Read Chapter: 4

Assignment (Due 09/20/2020 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 4
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 4

### **MIDTERM 1-SEPTEMBER 18**

Week 5- (September 21-27)- Civil Rights

Read Chapter: 5

Assignment (Due 09/27/2020 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 5
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 5

### **Part 3: People and Politics**

Week 6- (September 28-October 4)- Public Opinion and Political Socialization

Read Chapter: 6

Assignment (Due 10/04/2020 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 6
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 6

Week 7- (October 5-11)- Interest Groups

Read Chapter: 7

Assignment (Due 10/11/2020 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 7
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 7



Week 8- (October 12-18)- Political Parties

Read Chapter: 8

Assignment (Due 10/18/2020 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 8
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 8

### **Midterm 2- October 16**

Week 9 -(October 19-25)- Campaigns and Elections

Read Chapter: 9

Assignment (Due 10/25/2020 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 9
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 9

Week 10- (October 26-November 1)

Read Chapter: 10- The Media

Assignment (Due 11/1/2020 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 10
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 10

## **Part 4: Political Institutions**

Week 11- (November 2-8)- The Congress

Read Chapter: 11

Assignment (Due 11 /8/2020 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 11
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 11

### **Midterm 3- November 6**

Week 12- (November 9-15)- The President

Read Chapter: 12

Assignment (Due 11/15/2020 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 12
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 12

Week 13- (November 16-22)

Read Chapter: 13- The Executive Branch

Assignment (Due 11/22/2020 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter

**Week 14- (November 23-29)-THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Paper due date- 30 November**

Week 15- (November 30-December 6)

Read Chapter: 14- The Courts

Assignment (Due 12/06/2020 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter