

Lamar University  
Introduction to American Government (2301)  
Dr. Thomas E. Sowers, II  
Summer 2007  
Section 03

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### Course Description

This course, in conjunction with course 2302, is designed to introduce students to the American political system at both the federal and state level. The course is divided into four sections. The first section of the class is devoted to the development and impact of the American political culture. The second section focuses on the development of the Constitution and the evolution of the Constitution over time. The third section looks at interest groups and political parties. By tying the people to the government these groups play an important role in the political process. The final section of the class looks at public opinion, the media and elections.

### Course Requirements

**Midterm Exams:** There are three midterm exams that are worth 20% (200 points each) of the class grade. The exams are multiple choice with between 40 and 50 questions.

**Final Exam:** The final exam is worth 40% (400 points) of the class grade and will be cumulative, but with the majority of the material coming from the last section of the class.

### Course Rules

**Make-Up Exams:** Make-up exams will be given if students provide **prior** notification and a valid excuse for missing the exam. Make-up exams will only be given without prior notification in extreme circumstances. Students may only make up one exam. Students missing more than one exam should withdraw from the course. The format of the make-up exam may vary from the original exam.

**Cheating:** Cheating will not be tolerated. Students caught cheating will receive an F in the class. Cheating includes signing another student's name on the attendance sheet.

**Classroom Behavior:** Be respectful during lecture and discussion. Turn cell phones off during class. Any student whose cell rings during an exam receives a zero for the exam. Students may be asked to leave if they are deemed disruptive to the classroom environment.

**Absences:** Students missing more than 6 class periods will receive an F for the course. I reserve the right to reward students with stellar attendance.

**Extra Credit:** I do not offer extra credit on an individual basis but occasionally will offer extra credit for the entire class.

### Required Text

Ginsberg, Benjamin, Theodore J. Lowi, and Margaret Weir. 2005. *We the People: An Introduction to American Government, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton Company.

## Grade Scale

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| A | 900 – 1000 |
| B | 800 – 899  |
| C | 700 – 799  |
| D | 600 – 699  |
| F | 0 – 599    |

By signing the attendance sheet, I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand all the rules presented on this syllabus. The instructor reserves the right to alter any dates on the course schedule as warranted.

| Date  | Topic                      | Reading                  |
|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 6 /4  | American Political Culture | Chapter 1                |
| 6 /5  | American Political Culture | Chapter 1                |
| 6 /6  | Race and Ethnicity         | Chapter 5 (pp. 162-182)  |
| 6 /7  | Women's Suffrage           | Chapter 5 (pp. 162-182)  |
| 6 /8  | Texas Political Culture    | Chapter 19               |
| 6 /11 | <b>Exam I</b>              |                          |
| 6 /12 | Colonial Period            | Chapter 2 & A3-25        |
| 6 /13 | Constitutional Convention  | Chapter 2 & A3-25        |
| 6 /14 | No Class                   |                          |
| 6 /15 | No Class                   |                          |
| 6 /18 | Constitution               | Chapter 2 & A3-25        |
| 6 /19 | Federalism                 | Chapter 3                |
| 6 /20 | Federalism                 | Chapter 3                |
| 6 /21 | Texas Constitution         | Chapters 20 & 26         |
| 6 /22 | <b>Exam II</b>             |                          |
| 6 /25 | Interest Groups            | Chapter 11               |
| 6 /26 | Texas Interest Groups      | Chapter 22               |
| 6 /27 | Political Parties          | Chapter 9                |
| 6 /28 | Texas Political Parties    | Chapter 21 (pp. 860-873) |
| 6 /29 | <b>Exam III</b>            |                          |
| 7 /2  | Public Opinion             | Chapter 6                |
| 7 /3  | Elections                  | Chapter 10               |
| 7 /4  | <b>No Class</b>            |                          |
| 7 /5  | Voting & Participation     | Chapter 8                |
| 7 /6  | The Media                  | Chapter 7                |
| 7 /9  | <b>Final Exam - 9:35</b>   |                          |