

# UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO



## INTRODUCTION TO POLITICS Political Science 2310 Fall 2023

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Department of Political Science

Office Hours: Monday 0845-0945am (Mountain Time Zone) over zoom and by appt.

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### Catalogue Description

An overview of the concepts, principles, and practices of politics as background for the study of American and Texas political institutions. The course may employ an international, comparative, or theoretical focus. Prerequisite: Freshman standing. Of note, this course is entirely asynchronous and conducted remotely.

### Course Content

This is an introductory course in the study of politics, with an emphasis on understanding politics within the context of **global awareness**. We will break the subject down into political behavior within various domestic settings (comparative politics) and relations among countries (international relations). The course will require **critical thinking** in learning fundamental political concepts and issues through the focus on institutions, culture, ideas, and political economy with attention on their global transformations. We will also closely view the politics of various countries drawn from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. The goal for the semester is to give you grounding in the study of politics, increase your powers of analysis and argument, and further your ability to enhance **problem-solving**.

At the end of this course, you will:

- 1) have a knowledge base regarding politics and government in general;
- 2) be able to analyze political activity scientifically in the world today; and
- 3) be able to hold factually based perspectives on important current issues.

### Why Understanding American Government and Politics is Important:

Citizenship comes with political rights and duties. As citizens of a democratic republic, we are already part of a system of government that relies not only on ethical, representative institutions but also on public discourse, social movements, and civic participation. In fact, the Constitution inaugurates "*We the People* of the United States" as the first and most important political actor. Together "*We* hold these

truths to be self-evident,” that equality and unalienable rights are human endowments made meaningful by the government of the Constitution. Because the Constitution acknowledges standards of right and equality to which *all* people may appeal, the Union it establishes exists as a challenge to injustice and inequality everywhere. This has made the Union the natural adversary of despotisms and dictatorships, like those faced during World War II. But American politics are complicated by their own history of injustice and inequality. This history begins with enslavement and continues through Jim Crow and its modern-day legacies of racism and inequality. “It can happen that the constitution is free and the citizen is not” (*Spirit of the Laws*, Book 12). Oppression undermines the moral integrity of a republic and the efficacy of the federal Union, as Frederick Douglass, Montesquieu, and Alexis de Tocqueville each warn.

Rules matter. To contribute or make changes within the political institution you are part of you must understand the rules and structure. Further, understanding how the institutions and rules have evolved throughout history will give you a better appreciation for where we are currently at and the impact of future changes. Our democratic republic is not perfect and is subject to change. The more you understand it, the more you can benefit from it or improve it for future generations.

### Course Textbook

The course textbook chapters are located on the Blackboard (Bb) website.

### Course Obligations

Students are expected to actively participate in the learning process. This course is entirely remote and conducted asynchronously. This will require discipline and self-directed learning.

What does this mean? You will need to

- 1) Understand what the lesson objectives and key concepts are before beginning the readings. These fundamentals will focus your learning effort.
- 2) Complete the reading assignments (found in this syllabus) before viewing the lectures or videos. The videos are meant to supplement and build on your understanding of the readings.
- 3) Follow current political developments around the world in the media. Some suggested periodicals include the *BBC*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Forbes*, *The Associated Press*, or *The Washington Post*. If you have knowledge of one or more foreign languages, you are encouraged to read international newspapers on the internet. Applying what you’ve read and watched in the videos to the real world will further reinforce your understanding of the political institution we are studying.

Weekly lessons will vary with a mixture of videos and readings. You will need to review each presentation (along with the readings) so you can maximize your chances on doing well on the weekly quizzes and final exam. There is a quasi-option to move through the course at your own pace. This means you can move through the readings, lectures, and quizzes faster than the weekly requirement. However, everyone will need to at least complete the weekly quizzes before the quiz day and times.

(see “Readings and Presentations” section for full schedules). After the week is complete, you will not be able to complete the quizzes. Therefore, please do not miss any.

There is a mix of obligations you must meet to fulfill the course requirements. This includes weekly quizzes and a comprehensive final exam.

### Quizzes and Final Exam

You will need to take weekly quizzes to assess your active learning in the course. Quizzes will only include multiple-choice or true/false questions based on the readings and the lectures and are open notes and book. Quizzes will be on Bb and are due by 11pm (Mountain Time zone) of the Friday listed in the schedule. They will be available at 630am on Monday the week they are due. You will have **one minute per question** to answer the questions. FYI: You will not be able to see your grade or the answers until all students' quizzes are graded. You only have one attempt for each quiz, so do not take the quiz until you are ready.

The final exam is also open book and notes. The exam is solely multiple-choice questions based on the readings and lectures. The exam delivery is in Bb and you will have **two hours** to complete the final exam. All quizzes and the final exam will be in an electronic format. The exam will be available on Dec 11th.

Steps for taking the quizzes and exams:

- 1) Be sure to connect to a stable Wi-Fi connection. If you lack one at home, please use one of the labs at UTEP. If you are going to use the UTEP option, it would be wise to plan well ahead of time so you have the space to use it.
- 2) If you encounter an issue during the exam, launch the exam again. The exam will pick up where you left off.

### Grades

Course Requirement	Weight
13 Quizzes (total points)	60 percent
Final Examination	40 percent

Points	Letter
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 and below	F

Use the following table to calculate your weighted points:

Course Requirement	Your Total Score	Multiply by	Your Weighted Score
Quizzes		0.60	
Final Examination		0.40	
Sum of Weighted Score			

## Due Dates and Academic Honesty

Academic life places all of us under demanding time constraints. Please mark your calendar with due dates for the assignments and begin working on these projects early in the semester. To get credit for your work, you must meet the due dates. You will receive zero credit for late assignments; however, I will consider any reasonable and extenuating circumstances. If you find that you must turn in an assignment late due to an unforeseen circumstance, please contact me as soon as you recognize there is a problem. Remember: it is your responsibility to notify me to make these arrangements.

I expect students to do their own work and to act with integrity. I take cheating very seriously and follow the university's policies on academic honesty, cheating, fabrication, helping others to cheat, or plagiarism (presenting the work of others as if it were your own, including material you find on the Internet). Any of these offenses will result in receiving a failing grade in the course and being reported to university authorities. Please note that, on written assignments, exact quotes must be placed in quotation marks, and the source of the quote must be cited in full. In addition, all ideas that come from another source—other than your own thoughts—must be cited in full. These include any ideas you have paraphrased or rephrased, but which originated in someone else's writing or expression.

According to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, “Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. 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 without giving sufficient credit, taking an examination for another person, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.”

The following are resources that students can use to stay academically honest:

1. [Avoiding Plagiarism \(PDF\)](#)
2. [Deterring Academic Dishonesty Student Resource \(PDF\)](#)

Because the course is entirely open book and open notes, I do not anticipate any instances of plagiarism however you are required to use your own notes for quizzes and the final exam. You are also required to take the quizzes and exam without assistance from others.

## Technology Requirements

All course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP's Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about [Microsoft Office 365](#) and follow the instructions.

IMPORTANT: If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP [Help Desk](#) as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than I am to assist you!

### Course Communication

Because this is an online class (and I am located over 3,000 miles away), we won't see each other in the ways you may be accustomed to: during class time, small group meetings, and office hours. However, there are several ways we can keep the communication channels open:

- Office Hours: We will not be able to meet on campus, but I will still have office hours for your questions and comments about the course. My office hours will be held on Blackboard. See the link on the homepage.
- Email: UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24-48 hours of receipt. When e-mailing me, be sure to email from your UTEP student account and please put the course number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.
- Announcements: Check the Blackboard announcements frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages.

### Netiquette

As we know, sometimes communication online can be challenging. It's possible to miscommunicate what we mean or to misunderstand what our classmates mean given the lack of body language and immediate feedback. Therefore, please keep these netiquette (network etiquette) guidelines in mind. Failure to observe them may result in disciplinary action.

- Always consider audience. This is a college-level course; therefore, all communication should reflect polite consideration of other's ideas.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.

- o Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted in these online spaces is intended for classmates and the professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

### Course Drop Policy

I will not drop you from the course. However, if you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the [Registrar's Office](#) to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an "F" for the course.

### Copyright Statement for Course Materials

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.

### UTEP provides a variety of student services and support

#### Technology Resources

- [Help Desk](#): Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance via phone, email, chat, website, or in person.

#### Academic Resources

- [UTEP Library](#): Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- [University Writing Center \(UWC\)](#): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
- [Math Tutoring Center \(MaRCS\)](#): Ask a tutor for help and explore other available math resources.
- [History Tutoring Center \(HTC\)](#): Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.
- [RefWorks](#): A bibliographic citation tool; check out RefWorks tutorial, Fact Sheet, Quick-Start Guide.
- [The Miner Learning Center](#): Join peer-led study sessions in person or online to review content and discover study strategies in core curriculum courses.
- [UTEP Edge](#): UTEP's cross-campus framework for student success and empowerment – develops students' assets through high-impact experiences made possible by the expertise and dedication of faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners.

#### Individual Resources

- [Student Success Help Desk \(SSHD\)](#): Students experiencing challenges or obstacles to academic success including registration, financial, food, housing, and transposition resources may submit a ticket request assistance to [studentsuccess@utep.edu](mailto:studentsuccess@utep.edu)
- [Military Student Success Center](#): Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach educational goals.
- [Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#): Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#): Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.
- [UTEP Food Pantry](#): Non-perishable food items are available to students who are currently enrolled in classes. Bring a Miner Gold Card to Memorial Gym, Room 105, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

## Course Schedule

Week 1 – Aug. 28, 2023	
<b>Introduction to the Course</b>	
<b>READ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ BB: Syllabus</li> <li>□ BB: Montesquieu, <i>The Spirit of the Laws</i> Book 3, excerpts from Ch. 1-9</li> </ul>
<b>WATCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Blackboard: Introductory Video with review of Syllabus</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson Objectives</b>	<p><b>Describe</b> the basic functions of government and define and describe politics.  <b>Explain</b> the nature and principles of the three types of government according to Montesquieu.</p>
<b>Assignment</b>	<b>No Assignment due this week.</b>
Week 2 – Sept. 4, 2023	
<b>International Politics, American Politics, and Political Science: Part 1</b>	
<b>READ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Exploring Politics. Ch. 1 “Analyzing Politics”</li> </ul>
<b>WATCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ BB: Harvard Online “Political Culture” Thomas Patterson:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxDfxXJtTLw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxDfxXJtTLw</a></li> </ul>
<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Quiz #1: Due Fri. Sept. 8</b>
<b>Key Concepts / Thinkers</b>	Political Science, Politics, Montesquieu, Regime Types

Week 3 – Sept. 11, 2023	
International Politics, American Politics, and Political Science: Part 2	
<b>READ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Exploring Politics. Ch. 2 “Studying Politics”</li> <li>☐ BB: “The Letters of 1775 Between George Washington &amp; the Legislature of New York” and commentary</li> <li>☐ BB: The “Newburgh Conspiracy”</li> <li>☐ BB: “To the Officers of the Army, March 15, 1783: The Newburgh Addresses”</li> </ul>
<b>WATCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ BB: “The Newburgh Address”: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QL7ZcNB6jUw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QL7ZcNB6jUw</a></li> </ul>
<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Quiz #2: Due Fri. Sept. 15.</b>
<b>Key Concepts / Thinkers</b>	Scientific Method, Hypothesis, Scientific Theory, Variable, Independent/Dependent Variables, Testing Hypothesis, Theory-Based Hypothesis, Role of Normative Theory in Political Science, Democracy, Evidence-Based Claims, Studying Politics Systematically, Role of Assumptions in Theory Building, Parsimonious Theory, Causation v. Association, American Revolution, The tradition of civilian control of military power (civil-military relations); the need for both good character and strong institutions to maintain civilian control; moderation, discord, common country, Alexis de Tocqueville

Week 4 – Sept. 18, 2023	
Political Ideologies and Political Thoughts	
<b>READ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Exploring Politics. Ch. 3</li> <li>☐ BB: Thomas Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> (Excerpts)</li> <li>☐ BB: John Locke, <i>Second Treatise</i> (Excerpts)</li> <li>☐ APT: Declaration of Independence, Appendix: A1-A2</li> <li>☐ BB: “What to the Slave is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July?” Speech: Frederick Douglass (1852)</li> </ul>
<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Quiz #3: Due Fri. Sept. 22</b>
<b>Key Concepts / Thinkers</b>	Political Realism, Machiavelli, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> , Liberalism, Norms, democracy, liberty, equality; republicanism, “consent of the governed,” natural rights, Competition, diffidence, glory; established law, authoritative judgment, effective execution of law; right to alter or abolish harmful government, unalienable rights, social contract

Week 5 – Sept. 25, 2023	
The Cultural Dimension of Politics	
<b>READ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Exploring Politics. Ch. 4</li> </ul>



<b>Assignment:</b>	<b>Quiz #4: Due Fri. Sept. 29</b>
<b>Key Concepts / Thinkers</b>	Political Culture, Political Socialization

### Week 6 – Oct. 2, 2023

#### Federalists v. Antifederalists: Trust, Identity, and Political Behavior

<b>READ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Exploring Politics. Ch. 5</li> <li>☐ BB: <i>Cato</i> 3, 25 Oct 1787</li> <li>☐ BB. Publius, <i>Federalist</i> 08, 20 Nov 1787</li> <li>☐ BB. Publius, <i>Federalist</i> 10, 23 Nov 1787.</li> <li>☐ BB. Publius, <i>Federalist</i> 51, 08 Feb 1788.</li> </ul>
<b>Assignment:</b>	<b>Quiz #5: Due Fri. Oct. 6</b>
<b>Key Concepts / Thinkers</b>	Rational actor model, Federalists and Antifederalists; Bill of Rights; civil liberties; standing armies; faction; double security, Origins of civil liberties; the Union as a balancing mechanism for civil-military relations; multiplicity of interests, extended sphere, counteracting ambitions

### Week 7 – Oct. 9, 2023

#### States, Nations, and Regime Types

<b>READ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Exploring Politics. Ch. 6</li> <li>☐ BB. Montesquieu, <i>The Spirit of the Laws</i> Book 9 (selected chapters)</li> <li>☐ BB. Perspectives on Federalism During and After the Constitutional Convention: Letter from Washington to David Stuart and excerpts from <i>Federalist</i> 45</li> <li>☐ BB. Constitution of Texas Summary</li> </ul>
<b>Assignment:</b>	<b>Quiz #6: Due Fri. Oct. 13</b>
<b>Key Concepts / Thinkers</b>	Sovereign power, police powers; full faith and credit clause, privileges and immunities clause; dual federalism, states' rights, cooperative federalism; picket fence federalism; competitive federalism;

### Week 8 – Oct. 16, 2023

#### Public Policy, Public Goods, and Political Responsibility

<b>READ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Exploring Politics. Ch. 7</li> <li>☐ BB. Michelle Alexander, "The Rebirth of Caste," from <i>The New Jim Crow</i></li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ BB. Iris Marion Young, “Political Responsibility and Structural Injustice”</li> <li>□ BB. Montesquieu, <i>The Spirit of the Laws</i> Book 5, Ch 3</li> </ul>
<b>Assignment:</b>	<b>Quiz #7: Due Fri. Oct. 20</b>
<b>Key Concepts / Thinkers</b>	Civil rights, disenfranchisement, Jim Crow laws; social position, connection, power, privilege, interest, Criminalization, discriminatory treatment, voting access, socioeconomic inequality, criminal justice & hate crimes; political responsibility; love of equality

### Week 9 – Oct. 23, 2023

#### Governmental Institutions

<b>READ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Exploring Politics. Ch. 8</li> <li>□ BB. Gary Miller and Andrew Whitford, excerpt from <i>Above Politics: Bureaucratic Discretion and Credible Commitment</i>.</li> <li>□ BB: Readings in American Politics. 213-215, 217. Richard Neustadt, excerpts from <i>Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Assignment:</b>	<b>Quiz #8: Due Fri. Oct. 27</b>
<b>Key Concepts / Thinkers</b>	Civil servants, political appointees, regulation, state capacity, principal-agent game, regulatory capture; federal civil service; independent agencies; bureaucratic drift, police patrol oversight, fire alarm oversight; executive office of the president, Evolution of state capacity; administrative expertise, professional responsibility, political neutrality, separated institutions sharing powers

### Week 10 – Oct. 30, 2023

#### Elections and Political Parties

<b>READ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Exploring Politics. Ch. 9</li> <li>□ BB. Steven Rosenstone and John Hansen, “Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America”</li> <li>□ BB. Robert Putnam and Shaylyn R. Garrett, “Why Did Racial Progress Stall in America?”</li> </ul>
<b>Assignment:</b>	<b>Quiz #9: Due Fri. Nov. 3</b>
<b>Key Concepts / Thinkers</b>	Incumbent, primary, general election, vote counting; electoral college, swing state; open seat; GOTV; voting cues, split tickets; rational ignorance, targeted and timed mobilization, The costs & resources of mobilization, I-we-I curve

### Week 11 – Nov. 6, 2023

#### Political Economy: How do Countries Govern their Economies?

<b>READ</b>	□ Exploring Politics. Ch. 10
<b>Assignment:</b>	<b>Quiz #10: Due Fri. Nov. 10</b>
<b>Key Concepts / Thinkers</b>	Economic Development, Seigniorage, Free Market Capitalism, Centrally Planned Economies,

### Week 12 – Nov. 13, 2023

#### Democratization and Social Movements

<b>READ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Exploring Politics. Ch. 11</li> <li>□ BB. 01-10. Deva Woodly, <i>The Politics of Common Sense</i> excerpts</li> <li>□ BB. Abraham Lincoln, “Speech at a Republican Banquet,” Chicago, Illinois (December 10, 1856)</li> </ul>
<b>Assignment:</b>	<b>Quiz #11: Due Fri. Nov. 17</b>
<b>Key Concepts / Thinkers</b>	Social movements, public opinion; public discourse, political acceptance, emergence

### Week 13 – Nov. 20, 2023

#### Global Conflict: International and Civil Wars

<b>READ</b>	□ Exploring Politics. Ch. 12
<b>Assignment:</b>	<b>Quiz #12: Due Fri. Nov. 24</b>
<b>Key Concepts / Thinkers</b>	Types of state relations; major actors involved in international relations, their interests, and how they make decisions; various theories of international conflict and cooperation.

### Week 14 – Nov. 27, 2023

#### Cooperation in Our Globalizing World

<b>READ</b>	□ Exploring Politics. Ch. 13
<b>Key Concepts</b>	Characteristics and forms of globalization and regionalization; types and functions of international institutions; missions and functions of major global institutions; principal critiques of globalization
<b>Assignment:</b>	<b>Quiz #13: Due Fri. Dec. 1</b>

### Week 15 – Dec. 4, 2023

Study and preparation for final exam.

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION DUE FRI. DEC. 15, 11PM**