

UNIVERSITY *of* HOUSTON

Political Science 1336
American Government I
U.S. and Texas Constitutions and Politics

FALL 2009

Class Number 30485

Online Distance Education Section



COURSE DESIGN

Welcome to POLS1336 –30485! This is a structured on-line class. The class is based on weekly assignments and scheduled tests. **You must meet the deadlines shown on the syllabus.** The class cannot be tailored to your personal schedule. You need to read this syllabus very carefully with attention to the assignments and deadlines. If you cannot meet the deadlines and take the scheduled exams on the dates listed below, you should not be in this class.

The course is offered on WebCT in Blackboard Vista. The syllabus explains how to use the class WebCT page and provides you with a weekly assignments schedule with deadlines. You will need to allocate time each week for the course and meet the deadlines. Once each deadline is passed, the on-line tests over that material as well as any other assignments will be closed. There will also be three on-campus tests. Check this syllabus for exam dates. Do not make any plans that keep you from taking these exams. If you work, you should show your employer the dates of the exams and make sure that you will be able to take the exams on the scheduled dates. We will not accept out-of-town business trips or a cranky boss as an excuse for missing these exams. Again, we cannot tailor the class to fit your personal schedule. Also, make sure that the exams do not conflict with any other classes that you are taking.

We want this class to be a success for you, but not everyone is well suited for this type of class. If you are not well organized and disciplined in your work habits, this is not the right course for you. In addition to this on-line version, the Department offers this class in small class format, hybrid format and large lecture format. You need to be savvy about the approach that works best for you. This approach is not easier than the other approaches. You will have to learn the same amount of material.

To access the class website, direct your web browser to: <http://www.uh.edu/webct> and click on the blue BLACKBOARD Vista button. Enter your PeopleSoft ID and password and then select this class from the list:

POLS1336 - 2009FA-30485-US AND TEXAS CONST POLITICS Section Instructor: Harrell Rodgers

If you do not know your Blackboard Vista password, please call 713-743-1411 or stop by the TSS Help Desk in Hoffman Hall Room 116.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will attain through reading, lectures and discussion, and demonstrate through exams, a knowledge of the structure of American government and how inputs into the political systems determines who gets what, when and how in American society.

CLASS STAFF

Instructor: Dr. Harrell R. Rodgers, Professor of Political Science

Office: 406 PGH

Office Hours: By appointment

E-mail: hrodgers@uh.edu

Web Site: <http://www.uh.edu/~dsocs3>

Teaching Assistants: Jon Cooper
Nathan Hosey

Email: BLACKBOARD VISTA MAIL
Email: BLACKBOARD VISTA MAIL

Office: 426 PGH – Hours by Appointment

REQUIRED TEXT

Kent, Tedin, The **People and American Government** (New York: Pearson Publishing, 2009). You must buy this text. It is central to the course and you cannot pass without the text.

WEEKLY LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENTS

There are 15 weeks in the semester. Each week you will have assigned readings, PowerPoint slides to review, and in most weeks on-line exercises with a quiz. In some weeks there will be bulletin boards and special projects. The on-line work is explained in more detail below along with the point scores and grading.

ON-LINE UNITS AND QUIZZES

The on-line exercises are materials prepared by a division of our publisher (Pearson Custom Publishing). A code book comes with your text book (Code books can only be obtained by purchasing a textbook. They will not be available by any other method.) Please log onto Blackboard Vista for instructions on how to register for the AB Longman content.

The on-line exercises require you to read visual literacy selections, government comparisons, review timelines, watch short videos and work through simulations to give you better insights into the American political system compared to other governments of the world. At the end of each unit you will take an online quiz.

Each required quiz or questionnaire must be completed by 11:30PM on the night that it is due. You will generally have at least a week to do the assignments. The due dates are listed in each week's assignments. If you fail to take the quiz by the deadline, you will receive a zero for that quiz. We cannot open a quiz after it has been closed. Please do not ask. If you are having technical difficulties with Blackboard Vista, **you must contact your teaching assistant by email and the UH Help Desk (713-743-1411) before the quiz closes.** It is to your benefit to complete these assignments as soon as possible.

Each quiz is worth 10 points for a combined total of 100 points.

DISCUSSION BOARDS

There will be five discussion boards. You will be given an article to read. You write an original posting and reply to at least one classmate's posting. There is no limit on the number of posting you can make on a topic, but you must post at least one original and one reply. Rules of "netiquette" apply! Flaming, comments that are derogatory to ones nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation are not acceptable. You can disagree with someone's opinion, but do so respectfully. These are exercises to engage you in free thinking. Do not let preconceived ideas limit you. You will be given more information on how to participate in the bulletin boards.

Each discussion board is worth 10 points for a combined total of 50 points.

Special Projects

There will be two or three special projects. These projects will be discussed later by the instructor.

Your special projects grades will be worth a combined total of 50 points.

Major Exams

There will be three major exams. The exams will be consisting of 55 multiple choice questions. Each exam is worth a total of 110 points. There is a 10 point curve built into the exams. As such, there will not be any other curves added to any of the exams.

Each major exam is worth 110 points.

GRADING

You can look at your grades on-line at any time. The on-line grading system works quite well. It is fast and accurate. However, it is your obligation to regularly check your grades on-line to make certain that your module scores are being recorded. After you submit work, wait 24 hours and then go on line to see if your scores show up in the on-line grade book. If you see a problem, let your teaching assistant know immediately. Once the semester is over, we will not accept the excuse that you did not know that one or more of your scores was not recorded.

Your final grade will be determined by the following method:

1. **3 Exams - 110 points each**
2. **10 On-Line Quizzes - 10 Points Each**
3. **5 Discussion Boards - 10 Points Each**
4. **Special Projects – worth a total of 50 Points**
5. **Total the number of points that you receive for each assignment and test. Divide that number by five. This is your course grade.**

Total maximum points that you can earn is 530. So if you made the following grades:

Exam I:	82
Exam II:	84
Exam III:	92
Cumulative On-Line Quizzes	87
Cumulative Discussion Board	37
Cumulative Special Projects	39
Total Points Earned (TPE)	421
<i>TPE Divided by 5</i>	<i>84</i>

You would have earned a B in this class.

THE FINAL GRADE SYSTEM IS AS FOLLOWS

94 or Above = A	89 - 87 = B+	79 - 77 = C+	69 - 67 = D+	59 or Below = F
90 - 93 = A-	86 - 84 = B	76 - 74 = C	66 - 64 = D	
	83 - 80 = B-	73 - 70 = C-	63 - 60 = D-	

SYLLABUS QUIZ

You are required to take and pass a Syllabus Quiz. This is a short true/false online exam. You will be given two attempts to make at least an 80% on the quiz. If you fail to make an 80% or to take the quiz by the prescribed deadline, you will be dropped from the class. There will be no exceptions to this rule. Other than an 80% pass or fail completion, the syllabus quiz will not be calculated as part of your grade.

PLEASE NOTE:

Make sure you know how to sign on to the Course Blackboard Vista site.
Register with AB Longman (See instructions on Blackboard Vista)
Watch the Class Orientation Video.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS/COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1 – 08/24/2009 – 08/30/2009

ORIENTATION

**These items can be found on the class home page of Blackboard Vista by selecting the folder:
Materials for Getting Started! Week 1**

Watch Orientation on the web page - **Due Date: Sunday, 08/30/2009 at 11:30PM**

Complete Syllabus Quiz - **Due Date: Sunday, 08/30/2009 at 11:30PM**

Complete Pre Test - **Due Date: Sunday, 08/30/2009 at 11:30PM**

Register for Pearson Online Activities - **Due Date: Sunday, 08/30/2009 at 11:30PM**

Week 2 – 08-31-2009 – 09-06-2009

CHAPTER 1: Democracy in the United States

CHAPTER 13: The Social and Economic Milieu of Texas Politics

**These items can be found on the class home page of Blackboard Vista by selecting the folder:
Materials for Exam I and then the folder named Week 02 - Democracy in the United States.**

Week 02 – Online Quiz - **Due Date: Sunday, 09-06-2009 at 11:30PM**

Week 3 – 09-07-2009 – 09-13-2009

CHAPTER 2: Establishing a Constitutional Democracy

CHAPTER 14: The Texas Constitution

Week 03 – Online Quiz - **Due Date: Sunday, 09-13-2009 at 11:30PM**

Discussion Board One - **Due Date: Sunday, 09-13-2009 at 11:30PM**

Week 4 – 09-14-2009 – 09-20-2009

CHAPTER 3: Federalism: Divisions of Power of National

Week 04 – Online Quiz - **Due Date: Sunday, 09-20-2009 at 11:30PM**

Special Project 1 – Online Survey - **Due Date: Sunday, 09-20-2009 at 11:30PM**

Week 5 – 09-21-2009 – 09-27-2009

Chapter 4: American Political Culture

Week 05 – Online Quiz - **Due Date: Sunday, 09-27-2009 at 11:30PM**

Special Project 1 – Watch Video - **Due Date: Sunday, 09-27-2009 at 11:30PM**

Special Project 1 – Online Survey - **Due Date: Sunday, 09-27-2009 at 11:30PM**

EXAM I – Tuesday, September 29, 2009

Weeks 6 – 09-28-2009 – 10-04-2009

CHAPTER 5: Public Opinion

CHAPTER 20: Question Wording Effects in Public Opinion Polls

Week 06 – Online Quiz - **Due Date: Sunday, 10-04-2009 at 11:30PM**

Discussion Board Two - **Due Date: Sunday, 10-04-2009 at 11:30PM**

Week 7 – 10-05-2009 – 10-11-2009

CHAPTER 6: Individual Participation

CHAPTER 12: Texas Politics and Elections from 1990 to 2004

Week 07 – Online Quiz - **Due Date: Sunday, 10-11-2009 at 11:30PM**

Week 8 – 10-12-2009 – 10-18-2009

CHAPTER 7: Interest Group Participation in American Democracy

CHAPTER 18: Money and Politics: U.S. Campaign Finance in Comparative Perspective

Week 08 – Online Quiz - **Due Date: Sunday, 10-18-2009 at 11:30PM**

Week 9 – 10-19-2009 – 10-25-2009

CHAPTER 8: Political Parties

CHAPTER 15: The Party System in Texas

Week 09 – Online Quiz - **Due Date: Sunday, 10-25-2009 at 11:30PM**

EXAM II – Tuesday, October 27, 2009

Week 10 – 10-26-2009 – 11-01-2009

CHAPTER 9: The Media

CHAPTER 22: Light Rail in Houston: History, Ideology, Opinion and Public Policy

Discussion Board Three - **Due Date: Sunday, 11-01-2009 at 11:30PM**

Special Project 2 – Online Survey - **Due Date: Sunday, 11-01-2009 at 11:30PM**

Week 11 – 11-02-2009 – 11-08-2009

CHAPTER 10: Electing the President

CHAPTER 16: It seems like Déjà vu All Over Again: The Presidential Approval Lyndon Johnson in Vietnam and George W. Bush in Iraq

Week 02 – Online Quiz - **Due Date: Sunday, 11-08-2009 at 11:30PM**

Weeks 12 – 11-09-2009 – 11-15-2009

CHAPTER 11: Choosing the Congress

Discussion Board Four - **Due Date: Sunday, 11-15-2009 at 11:30PM**

Week 13 – 11-16-2009 – 11-22-09

CHAPTER 17: Civil Liberties

Week 02 – Online Quiz - **Due Date: Sunday, 11-22-09 at 11:30PM**

Week 14 – 11-23-2009 – 11-29-2009

Thanksgiving Holiday - **No Assignments**

Week 15 – 11-30-2009 – 12-05-2009

CHAPTER 19: Governance in Houston: A Hamiltonian Model of Executive Power in Action

CHAPTER 23: Providing Public Goods: Alternative Policy Approaches

Discussion Board Five - **Due Date: Sunday, 12-05-2009 at 11:30PM**

EXAM III – Tuesday, December 15, 2009

REVIEW of MAJOR EXAMS DATES

All three major tests will be given in the CLASS Electronic Testing Center in [Agnes Arnold Hall Room 101](#).

Test 1: EXAM I – Tuesday, September 29, 2009

This test will cover Weeks 2 through 5. The test will consist of 55 multiple choice questions over the lecture materials, the assigned readings, and the online exercises.

Test 2: EXAM II – Tuesday, October 27, 2009

This test will cover Weeks 6 through 9. The test will consist of 55 multiple choice questions over the lecture materials, the assigned readings, and the online exercises.

Test 3: EXAM III – Tuesday, December 15, 2009

This test will cover Weeks 10 through 15. The test will consist of 55 multiple choice questions over the lecture materials, the assigned readings, and the online exercises.

PLEASE NOTE:

All make-up exams will be given on Tuesday, December 8, 2009 12:00PM-1:20PM. **You do not have the right to skip any of the exams.** Only one excused missed exam may be made-up. You must have a valid, documented excuse for missing an exam. Valid excuses include:

1. Sickness or hospitalization – Requiring the care of a Doctor
2. Death of an immediate family member.
3. Traffic accident on the way to the exam (police report will be required.)

Maintenance issues with your automobile, having overslept, work schedule conflicts will not be counted as an excused absence. If you are prone to making these kinds of excuses, you should not take this class. Ultimately, you are required to show up for the three exams on the specified dates. If you miss one, it better be important and documented.

Students will need to reserve a testing time and space **FOR ALL EXAMS** by visiting the CLASS ETC website at http://www.class.uh.edu/classidt/etc/etc_res/students/index.php.

Exams are posted on the CLASS ETC reservation software one month in advance. Students are responsible for remembering to make a reservation. STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE ETC WITHOUT A VALID RESERVATION OR PICTURE ID (a picture ID consists of a valid UH Student ID Card or a Government Issued ID, Drivers License or Passport.) There will be no exceptions!

COURSE PROTOCOLS

Rule 1: Read the Syllabus Carefully. We do not mind you asking questions about subjects covered by the syllabus, but please carefully read the syllabus and make a point of reviewing it over the course of the semester. If you do not carefully read the syllabus, you are vulnerable to making mistakes that will cost you points in the class.

Rule 2: Valid E-Mail Address. The University of Houston considers your e-mail address in PeopleSoft the official method of contact between you and the University. As a prerequisite of this course, you must have a valid e-mail address in PeopleSoft. You may not claim an incorrect or blank e-mail address as an excuse in the case of missed communications from the class professor or staff.

Rule 3: Schedules. Remember that this is a structured course with weekly deadlines. If you cannot meet the deadlines, you should not be in this class. You must do the assigned work during the semester and on time. Each semester we have students who fail to do assignments and then beg to have the assignments reposted. We do not have the staff to tailor the course in this fashion. You have to meet the deadlines for assignments and tests. Each semester we have some students who fail to do the assigned work and then want us to allow them to extend the course for a period after the semester is over. Again, we are dealing with large numbers of students and we cannot tailor the course in this fashion. You must do the work during the semester and meet all deadlines. Once the semester is over, it is over.

Rule 4: Computer Equipment. It is expected that your computer and internet connection can handle the requirements of an online course. There will be online quizzes, videos and writing assignments. The class staff cannot fix your computer. We will also not make special arrangements to deliver video content to you. This would be a violation of copyright law and will simply not be considered. If you have a computer problem, it is your responsibility to have your computer repaired. You may contact the University IT Help Desk at 713-743-1411 or visit them in Room 116 of Hoffman Hall. One of the most frequent problems students have in this class is that they wait until the very last minute to do assignments and then have problems with their personal computer that causes them to miss the deadline. If you make this mistake, you will not be able to do the assignment. Plan ahead and do not make this mistake.

Rule 5: Missed Internet Assignments. If you do not complete an online assignment by the date and time listed, you will not be allowed to make up the assignment. Your grade will be zero. No exceptions, do not ask. If you wait until the last minute to complete the assignment and then suffered technical problems with your computer, you will miss the deadline. Give yourself enough time to do the online work at home or at the University. Political science has a computer lab that you can use. The lab is located in room 391 PGH.

Rule 6: Posting Grades. Grades will be posted on the Blackboard Vista site.

Rule 7: Dropping the Course. You may drop the course passing up until the official university drop date. The last date you can drop the course passing is Tuesday, September 8, 2009. If you do not drop the course by then you will get a grade.

The last day to drop a course or withdraw with a 'W' is Wednesday, November 4, 2009.

Rule 8: Communication. Do not hesitate to send an e-mail to the instructor or one of the assistants if you need information or help. You will find that e-mail works very well. The instructor will not return phone calls. Please include the Course Name, Section Number, Your Name and the nature of the email in the subject line. This saves time in trying to establish who you are.

Why all these rules? We are trying to figure out how to successfully offer this class. Success for us is a format that works for the largest percentage of the students who sign up for the course. We have been experimenting with course design for the last three years. We have learned many things. First, deadlines are critical. Without them a large percentage of the students keep putting off the class work and then end up failing. Second, we have learned that this is not a good approach for disorganized people or students who are looking for an easy way to take this course. You must be organized and disciplined and you must be willing to invest the work to learn the material. Third, this is often not a good class for people who travel in their work, especially if they cannot predict their travel plans or if their company will not agree to let them take the scheduled exams. Do a personal assessment and be honest about what you find. If this is really not a class that fits you, take the class in one of the other formats offered by the department. We want you to pass the class, but you have to master the material to do so. This is not a watered down version of the class.

Do these rules really matter? If you ignore them and then beg for exceptions, will we cave in and tailor a schedule for you? Trust me, the answer is no. We are dealing with a large number of students and we simply do not have the staff to accommodate personal schedules or mistakes. You need to take these rules seriously.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The University of Houston Academic Honesty Policy appears in each edition of the Student Handbook (page 9 of the 2005-2006 edition) and online at <http://www.uh.edu/dos/hdbk/acad/achonpol.html>.

The FAQ's are intended to clarify Academic Honesty processes, not to substitute for the complete policy published in the Handbook. It is each student's responsibility to be aware of the Academic Honesty Policy.

[Click here to review the FAQs](#): Frequently Asked Questions about the Academic Honesty Policy.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In order to receive accommodation on exams and assignments, students must make arrangements with me during the first two weeks of the semester. In addition, I recommend that students with disabilities learn about their rights and responsibilities from the Center for Students with Disabilities. This center provides a wide variety of academic support services to all currently enrolled UH students who have any type of mental or physical disability of either temporary or permanent nature. These services include assistance with course accommodations, adaptive equipment, individualized exam administration, taped textbooks, wheelchair repair, library needs, registration, handicapped parking, accessible housing and transportation, as well as many other needs. If you feel that you may need assistance of this nature, you may wish to call the Center at 713-743-5400.

IMPORTANT DATES

August 2009	24 Monday First day of classes.
	29 Saturday Last day to add a class.
September 2009	7 Monday Labor Day holiday.
	8 Tuesday ORD - Official Reporting Day (12th class day). Last day to drop a course or withdraw without receiving a grade. Last day to drop a course without hours counting towards the Enrollment Cap for Texas Residents. - <i>NOTE: Tuition is higher for hours in excess of the cap.</i>
	18 Friday Last day to file university application for December graduation.
	4 Wednesday Last day to drop a course or withdraw with a 'W'.
	25-28 Wednesday - Saturday Thanksgiving holiday.
December 2009	5 Saturday Last day of classes.
	7-8 Monday - Tuesday Make up days for class days officially cancelled by the university (if necessary) or Reading Period.
	9-17 Wednesday - Thursday Final examination period.
	18 Friday Official closing of the fall semester.