

Introduction to American and Texas Government-Honors

GOV 310L

Unique: 38835

Professor Eric L. McDaniel

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Days: Monday & Wednesday	Time: 2:30-3:45	Room: Parlin 210
Instructor Information Office: Batts Hall 4.122 Phone: 512-232-7268		
Drop-Hours		
In-Person: Monday 10:30-12:00	Virtual: Tuesday 10-11:30	

Course Description

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the processes and issues of United States and Texas government. The course will cover the relevant institutions in the development of the governmental process as well as discuss the role of the citizens in shaping our government.

Required Texts and Items

1. American Government: Power and Purpose 16th edition 978-0-393-53894-6
2. Additional readings, videos, and podcasts will be posted on Canvas {C}.
3. Students are expected to be aware of current events and regularly read either the *New York Times* or *Washington Post*. Articles from these two media sources will be posted throughout the semester. Students should be prepared to answer questions related to the posted articles for papers and exams.

Films and Videos

Several films and videos are available on Canvas. Many of them will not be shown in class, it is the student's responsibility to take the time to watch the film and take notes. Below is a list of some of the films and their purpose.

1. Belton, David. 2010. ["A New Eden."](#) In *God In America*, ed. David Belton. Boston: WGBH Educational Foundation.
The purpose of this film is to establish an understanding of how religion was approached in the early years of the nation. My showing of this film is not an attempt to indoctrinate any thinking about how religion should operate in America. When watching this film pay particular attention to the discussion of separation of church and state as well as the discussion of religious freedom.
2. Espinosa, Paul. 1985. [The Lemon Grove Incident](#). Espinosa Productions.
The purpose of this film is to provide a vivid example of how the nation has come to define civil rights. When watching this film, pay special attention to the cause of the conflict, how the decision was contested, the final outcome and the logic behind the final outcome.

Coursework

Participation: 15%

The class participation grade will be further determined by how students contribute to the overall discussions in class. I of course expect you to attend class, to have read and thought about all of the week's assigned readings, and not to be bashful or overzealous in sharing your thoughts.

Content Application Assignments: 15%

One of the goals of this course is to help students better understand how they can use the government to help solve issues or problems of importance to them. To accomplish this, students will have three (3) writing assignments in which they apply what they have learned about in a specific section of the class to solving a particular problem of interest. Students will be asked to identify their issue or problem of interest in the first few weeks of the class. The completed assignment should be 300-500 words.

Career Preparedness Exercise Due 8:00 AM November 25: 10%

Because your time in college will swiftly pass. It is important for students to begin preparing themselves for their careers as soon as possible. The career preparedness exercise is intended help students think about their future after college. The career preparedness exercise will require students to prepare

- (1) Resume
- (2) Career plan

Guidelines for Career Plan

3-5 pages double spaced; size 12 font; include page numbers

Your career plan must address each of the following:

1. Develop a refined list of career options by examining your interests, skills, and values through self-assessment.
Online Career Assessment Tests
 - a. <https://www.princetonreview.com/quiz/career-quiz>
 - b. <http://yourfreecareertest.com/>
 - c. <http://www.assessment.com/>
 - d. <https://www.whatcareerisrightforme.com/career-aptitude-test.php>
2. Prioritize your top skills and interests. Indicate what is most important to you, such as money family, location, or benefits. Make sure to include potential deal breakers, such as long hours, travel or high turnover rate.
3. Provide a realistic description of the aspects of the careers you are interested in pursuing. Make it clear what the day-to-day activities of this career entail and establish what skills are needed to advance in this career.
4. Compare your most promising career options against your list of prioritized skills, interests and values.
5. Consider other factors, such as demand, barriers to entry, and needed qualifications. Discuss what may issues may increase or decrease the demand for people in these careers. Make sure to discuss how you plan to overcome barriers to entry and earn the necessary qualifications for that career.

6. Provide and justify at least one career choice. Describe what you have done to work towards the career choice, such as job experience, internships and classes. Make sure you are realistic in making your career choice.
7. Develop a realistic timeline to achieve your career goals.

Below are the websites to some of the career services offices in the various colleges that can help you prepare your resume and career plan.

1. Undergraduate Studies: <https://ugs.utexas.edu/vick/career>
2. Fine Arts: <http://finearts.utexas.edu/careers>
3. Moody College of Communications: <https://moody.utexas.edu/career-services>
4. McCombs School of Business: <https://www.mcombs.utexas.edu/career-services>
5. College of Natural Sciences: <https://cns.utexas.edu/career-services>
6. Liberal Arts: <http://liberalarts.utexas.edu/lacs/>
7. Jackson School of Geosciences: <https://www.jsge.utexas.edu/careers/>
8. School of Information: <https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/careers>
9. School of Social Work: <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/dccs/>
10. College of Education: <https://education.utexas.edu/about/offices/career-services>
11. School of Nursing: <https://nursing.utexas.edu/academics/career.html>
12. School of Architecture: <http://soa.utexas.edu/resources/career-services>
13. Cockrell School of Engineering: <http://www.engr.utexas.edu/ecac>

Take-Home Exams: 60%

There will be three (3) take-home exams in this course. The take-home exams will be in essay format and will give students the opportunity demonstrate a mastery of course materials and concepts. broader and deeper analysis of the course material. Students will be given two questions and are expected to answer both. Each answer should range between 600-750 words. The essay questions will be posted at least seventy-two (72) hours before they are due. A more detailed guideline will be posted on Canvas.

Participation	15%
Content Application	15%
Career Preparedness	10%
Take Home Exam One	20%
Take Home Exam Two	20%
Take Home Exam Three	20%
Total	100%

Overall Grades

Please note, there is no curve and I do not round up grades. A 92.999% is an A-.

A	93-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	0-59

Expectations

Preparation

Doing well in this class necessitates students be informed and prepared. Therefore, you will be expected to complete the readings prior to when class meets. This course covers a large amount of material in a short amount of time. If you do not keep up with the readings, your grade will reflect your preparation.

Professionalism

Remember that this is an academic environment. Therefore, I ask that you minimize unnecessary disruptions. This includes (but it is not limited to) side conversations, cell phone calls and pagers. If you come to class late or must leave early, please do so quietly. I also ask that you be proactive if any conflict occurs. This means notifying me ahead of time if you are unable to meet the requirements of the course.

Ground Rules

Because this course will sometimes deal with sensitive material, it is imperative that we set a series of ground rules.

1. Respect others. There will be times when you disagree with an idea that has been presented to the class. Although you have the right to disagree with someone, you must remember to challenge the idea and not the person.
2. Listen attentively. The purpose of this course is to present and discuss different ideas. In order to reap the benefits of such an exchange, you must be willing to pay attention to what others have to say.
3. Think before you speak. Refrain from making broad, general, and/or unsubstantiated comments. Make sure that you use evidence and provide a rationale for your statements.
4. Maintain the dignity of the academic environment. Your ideas should be presented using Standard English, minus the use of any profanity.
5. Raise your hand. This helps to maintain order in the classroom and helps to ensure that everyone has a chance to talk.
6. Be courteous. Refrain from interrupting or engaging in private conversation while others are speaking. Also, limit disruptive behavior, such as newspaper reading, personal grooming, etc.

Recording of Lectures

Advance, written permission is required to record classroom lectures, discussions or presentations ("lectures"). When granted, permission to record lectures is subject to the limitations set forth in this policy. Violations of this policy may constitute copyright infringement in violation of federal or state law and may be subject to University disciplinary action.

II. Definitions

- A. Course Materials mean lecture notes, outlines, slides, PowerPoint presentations, readings, or other content made available to students by the instructor or presenter, or through any University online learning system.
- B. Recording means a video or audio replication or photographic image recorded on devices including, but not limited to, audio recorders, video recorders, cell phones, Smartphones, digital cameras, media players, computers, or other devices that record images or sound.

III. Requirements and Limitations

A. Advance Written Permission

Recording of classroom lectures is prohibited unless advance written permission is obtained from the class instructor and any guest presenter(s). An instructor may provide such permission to an entire class as part of the course syllabus or other written description of a course. Students who require recording or other adaptations of lectures as a reasonable accommodation for a disability should contact the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) in advance of the lecture to obtain permission for the recording.

In the event permission to record classroom lectures is granted, the professor may notify all students, speakers, and other lecture attendees in advance that recording may occur. Every effort should be made to protect the confidentiality of a student with a disability who is being granted an accommodation, i.e., the professor will not name the student who is doing the recording when it is due to a disability accommodation.

B. Limitations on Use of Recordings and Materials

Permission to allow lecture recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording or related course materials. Such recordings and materials may be used only for individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class, and may not be reproduced, transferred, distributed, or displayed in any public or commercial manner.

Students must destroy recordings at the end of the semester in which they are enrolled in the class.

Procedures for Dealing with Grade/Evaluation Concerns

Grade/evaluation concerns will only be considered if the following procedure is followed:

All grade complaints must be **TYPED** and must clearly express the student's specific concerns. These written statements must be accompanied by citations of support from course materials, i.e., readings, textbook, and/or lecture notes, to ensure accuracy.

Written statements may be submitted for consideration **AFTER** one week has passed since the assignment was returned to students. This allows the student time to re-read his/her answers and think carefully about what improvements could have been made.

Grade complaints will not be considered once two weeks have passed. For example, if I return a graded assignment on Thursday February 14th, students must submit a complaint **BEFORE** the Thursday February 28th. Once class is over on that Thursday, no complaints will be considered for that assignment.

Since class time is limited, we will only deal with questions or concerns during scheduled office hours. You will need to file the grievance with the individual who graded your exam or assignment and in addition, you will need to meet with them to discuss the grievance.

Finally, submitting a grade grievance will result in a complete re-grade of the assignment.

Academic Dishonesty

The University defines scholastic dishonesty in the following way:

“According to the *Institutional Rules*, scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and falsifying academic records.” For a detailed explanation of the University’s honor code and definition of plagiarism, please refer to the following website <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>.

In the event that a student violates the University policy on scholastic dishonesty, he or she will be subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>. Students who require special accommodations for exams should contact Services for Students with Disabilities to reserve space at their facility on exam days. Neither the instructor nor the teaching assistants will provide separate accommodations.

TITLE IX Reporting

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When sexual misconduct occurs in our community, the university can:

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university’s [relevant policies](#).

Faculty members and certain staff members are considered “Responsible Employees” or “Mandatory Reporters,” which means that they are required to report violations of Title IX to the Title IX Coordinator. **We are Responsible Employees and must report any Title IX related incidents** that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with us, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you want to speak with someone for support or remedies without making an official report to the university, email advocate@austin.utexas.edu. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit titleix.utexas.edu or contact the Title IX Office at titleix@austin.utexas.edu.

Religious Holy Day Observance

By UT Austin policy, you must notify your instructor of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

In the event of a fire or other emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a building rapidly. Upon the activation of a fire alarm or the announcement of an emergency in a university building, all occupants of the building are required to evacuate and assemble outside. Once evacuated, no one may re-enter the building without instruction to do so from the Austin Fire Department, University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Students should familiarize themselves with all the exit doors of each room and building they occupy at the university and should remember that the nearest exit routes may not be the same as the way they typically enter buildings.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructors in writing during the first week of class. Faculty members must then provide this information to the Fire Prevention Services office by fax (512-232-2759), with "Attn. Mr. Roosevelt Easley" written in the subject line.

Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>

E-mail

Prof. McDaniel only responds to email if there is an extremely extenuating circumstance. If you have an issue that you need to discuss with him, please attend his office hours. If you cannot attend office hours, you may contact him to make an appointment. Please be aware that if you make an appointment to meet with Prof. McDaniel outside of his office hours and do not show up, there will be a grade penalty. When contacting the teaching assistants please limit your e-mails to questions about class topics. Any grievances involving the class must be handled during office hours. Make sure to check the syllabus or Canvas first before sending an e-mail. In many cases they will answer your question. Finally, you are required use proper etiquette when sending e-mail messages. The teaching assistants have been instructed to not reply to any emails that do not follow proper etiquette. For tips on proper e-mail etiquette visit <http://www.101emailtippetips.com/>.

Canvas

The syllabus, course assignments, and class announcements are posted on Canvas for reference. In addition, a portion of the course reading will also be available on Canvas. In special cases, the lecture notes will be available on Canvas as well. Make sure to regularly check Canvas for announcements and assignments. Before you contact me with a question for the class, *make sure to check Canvas first*.

Excused Absences

An absence from class will only be excused if proper documentation from a university representative is presented. If you have an emergency which prevents you from attending class, please contact the [Emergency Services Office in the Office of the Dean of Students](#) to gain documentation. In the case of planned activities, the documentation must be presented at least two weeks before your scheduled absence. I will not accept a planned activity as a valid excuse for an absence after the fact. In the case of unexpected circumstances, the documentation must be turned in within a week of your return.

Make-up Exams

Students will only be allowed to take the make-up exam if they have an excused absence.

Changes to the Course

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus to better facilitate the needs of the course.

Date	Topic	Textbook Chapter	Audio/Video Resource
25-Aug	What is Government?	Chapter One	Video: Defining Government
30-Aug	Public Policy	Chapter Fifteen	Video: Public Policy I
1-Sep	Public Policy	Chapter Sixteen	Video: Public Policy II
6-Sep	Labor Day		
8-Sep	Public Policy		Video: Understanding the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill and the Fight for Reconciliation
			Video: The Story of Medicare: A Timeline
13-Sep	Constitution	Chapter Two	Video: Constitutions
15-Sep	Constitution		Ten Good Minutes: Prof. Zachary Elkins {C}
20-Sep	Federalism	Chapter Three	Video: Federalism
22-Sep	Federalism		Ten Good Minutes: Prof. Craig Volden {C}
27-Sep	Civil Liberties	Chapter Four	Video: Civil Liberties and Rights
			Video: God in America: Chapter Two "A New Eden"
29-Sep	Civil Rights	Chapter Five	Video: The Lemon Grove Incident
1-Oct	First Take-Home Essay Due		
4-Oct	Congress	Chapter Six	Video: Congress
6-Oct	Congress		Ten Good Minutes: Prof. Christian Grose {C}
11-Oct	Presidency	Chapter Seven	Video: Executive Branch
			Ten Good Minutes: Prof. Matthew Beckmann {C}
13-Oct	Bureaucracy	Chapter Eight	Video: Bureaucracy
18-Oct	Courts	Chapter Nine	Video: Courts
20-Oct	Courts		Ten Good Minutes: Prof. James Gibson {C}
25-Oct	Media	Chapter Fourteen	Video: Media
27-Oct	Media		
29-Oct	Second Take-Home Essay Due		

1-Nov	Interest Groups	Chapter Thirteen	Video: Interest Groups
3-Nov	Interest Groups		Video Social Movements
8-Nov	Political Parties	Chapter Twelve	Video: Political Parties
10-Nov	Political Parties		Ten Good Minutes: Prof. Jessica Trounstein {C}
15-Nov	Public Opinion	Chapter Ten	Video: Public Opinion
17-Nov	Public Opinion		
22-Nov	Political Participation		Video: Political Participation
24-Nov	Thanksgiving		
29-Nov	Campaigns and Elections	Chapter Eleven	Video: Campaigns and Elections
1-Dec	Campaigns and Elections		Ten Good Minutes: Prof. Andrea Benjamin {C}
			Ten Good Minutes: Prof. Nicholas Valentino {C}
6-Dec	Foreign Policy	Chapter Seventeen	Video: Foreign Policy
10-Dec	Third Take-Home Essay Due		