I. Course Description

This course introduces you to theories about and the practice of American government. **Why is our government set up the way it is?** Why was our government established by our Constitution and the debates of the founding era? **How have government institutions and ideas evolved over time?** How does American mass public fit into the political process of American government? **How does each branch of government operate in the political system?** How do different parts of government come together to run the political process of US government? In answering these questions together, we will explore the very foundation of American government.

II. Learning Objectives/Outcomes for the Course

The course is designed to develop and document content knowledge in 5 areas:

1. To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the separation of powers as described in the U.S. constitution;
2. To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Congress and its institutions;
3. To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Presidency and the workings of federal agencies;
4. To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the federal judicial system; and,
5. To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the processes by which federal domestic policy are made and executed.

III. Learning Objectives for Core Curriculum Requirements

- This course fulfills a core area requirement in Government/Political Science:

  1. Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas.
  2. Courses in this area involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.
  3. The following four core objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement: **Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.**
The core objectives are defined as:

**Critical Thinking:** You will demonstrate comprehension of a variety of written texts and other information sources by analyzing and evaluating the logic, validity, and relevance of the information in them to solve challenging problems, to arrive at well-reasoned conclusions, and to develop and explore new questions.

**Communication Skills:** You will demonstrate the ability to adapt their communications to a particular context, audience, and purpose using language, genre conventions, and sources appropriate to a specific discipline and/or communication task.

**Personal Responsibility:** You will demonstrate an awareness of the range of human values and beliefs that they draw upon to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

**Social Responsibility:** You will recognize and describe cultural diversity, the role of civic engagement in society, and the link between ethics and behavior.

IV. University Assessment:

The University of Texas system determined to evaluate this course by assessing your academic performance at the end of the semester. At the end of this course, you are required to take the University Assessment Exam. Keep this in mind, however, that this assessment exam has nothing to do with your final grade. However, I will provide one extra point for taking this exam. The exam is not available right now. You will see the exam set on “START HERE!!!” folder of the class blackboard at the later part of this course.

V. Required Texts

You are required to have the following book. It is allowed to have the earlier versions of the same book.


- There are different versions of this textbook. Make sure that you have the “Essentials.”
- Earlier editions are also okay. However, they would contain less information about the recent development in U.S. politics.

VI. Grading

A. **Attendance (10 points)** You are encouraged to attend class to take 10% of the total grade. The instructor will check the attendance at the start of every class! If you have a legitimate excuse, you should inform me in advance via email to make up the attendance point. For medical reasons or family issues, email is just fine with me.

   - **Attendance policy:**
     a. You will lose **1 point** for each absence.
     b. Without addressed in advance, there is **no way** to make up attendance points.
     c. Be on time in class. You will lose **.3 point** for each incident.
B. **Class Participation (5 Extra points):** In every class, we will discuss important issues of American Politics. You can earn 5 extra points by actively participate in class discussion! These extra 5 points will be added to your whole grade at the end of the semester.

C. **Three Exams (60 points):** There will be two exams given in this class during the semester. The exams will cover class lectures and assigned materials. In each exam, you will have multiple choice questions. You will have the entire class period to complete each exam, and the material covered on each exam is not cumulative. Each exam will take 30 points of your total grade.

D. **Textbook Quiz (22 points):** Each week, you will take total 11 quizzes from the textbook. Make sure to be in class prepared. Please read the required chapter for each week. See the calendar of activities below to check the required chapter reading from the textbook.

E. **Lecture Quiz (10 points):** Over the semester, you will have five quizzes about lecture. They are all multiple choice questions.

F. **University Assessment Exam (1 point):** See the explanation above.

G. **Calculation:** The final grade will NOT be curved.
   a. At the end, please **DO NOT AVERAGE OUT** your grade. The total point you can acquire in this course is 106 including all extra points. That total point is your final grade.
   
   b. 106–90: A  
      89–80: B  
      79–70: C  
      69–60: D  
      59–: F

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**VI. Calendar of Activities**

**Week 1**  
**August 28**  
**Introduction to U.S. Government & Politics**

   **The Philosophical Challenges for the New Nation**
   **Reading:** KTR Chapter 1 Who Gets What and How?

**Week 2**  
**September 4**  
**Labor Day**

**Week 3**  
**September 11**  
**The Constitution 1**

   **Textbook Quiz 1:** KTR Chapter 3 Politics of American Founding

**Week 4**  
**September 18**  
**The Constitution 2 & Civil Liberties 1**

   **Textbook Quiz 2:** KTR Chapter 4 Federalism and the U.S. Constitution

**Week 5**  
**September 25**  
**Civil Liberties 2 & Civil Rights 1**

   **Textbook Quiz 3:** KTR Chapter 5 Fundamental American Liberties
   **Lecture Quiz 1 (up to the Constitution)**

**Week 6**  
**October 2**  
**Civil Rights 2 & Political Ideology**

   **Textbook Quiz 4:** KTR Chapter 6 The Struggle for Equal Rights
**Week 7**  October 9  Political Behavior 1: Public Opinion

Textbook Quiz 5: KTR Chapter 11 Public Opinion
Lecture Quiz 2 (Civil Liberties – Civil Rights)

**Week 8**  October 16  Political Behavior 2: Participation & Review

Textbook Quiz 6: KTR Chapter 14 Voting, Campaigns, and Elections
Lecture Quiz 3

**Week 9**  October 23  Mid-term

**Week 10**  October 30  Group Politics 1: Theories of Group Politics & Interest Groups

Textbook Quiz 7: KTR Chapter 13 Interest Groups

**Week 11**  November 6  Group Politics 2: Political Parties

Textbook Quiz 8: KTR Chapter 12 Political Parties

**Week 12**  November 13  Congress 1: Types of Representation & Structure of Congress

Textbook Quiz 9: KTR Chapter 7 Congress
Lecture Quiz 4 (Group Politics)

**Week 13**  November 20  Congress 3: Legislative Procedure & American Presidency 1

Textbook Quiz 10: KTR Chapter 8 Presidency

**Week 13**  November 27  American Presidency 2 & American Judiciary 1

Textbook Quiz 11: KTR Chapter 10 The American Legal System

**Week 15**  December 4  Supreme Court and American Judiciary 2

Lecture Quiz 5 (Congress & Presidency)

**Review**

**Week 16**  December 11  Final Exam

*KTR = Keeping the Republic*

**Other Course Information**

A. **Office Hours:** I will hold regular office hours as noted at the top of the syllabus or will schedule extra office hours by appointment upon request. During these office hours, you are encouraged to bring any problems, concerns, or questions from the class to me, and I will do my best to solve or answer them. This is the best way to get any help you need early in the class, and I want to help you enjoy this class, and get the most out of it that you can.

B. **Make-Up Exams:** Make-up exams are only given in this class in extenuating circumstances and with proof of that circumstance. Proof, for instance, consists of the speeding ticket you received, your hospital admittance paper, or a relevant obituary. Requests for make-up exams should be made to Dr. Kim directly and MUST BE MADE BEFORE THE EXAM TAKES PLACE. This means if you do not show up for the exam without notifying me ahead of time, you will NOT receive a make-up exam.
C. **Reading Assignments:** Reading assignments are given in the calendar of activities section in this syllabus. I expect you to have done the reading for each class ahead of time, and I reserve the right to quiz you if I feel you are not doing the reading ahead of time. Reading assignments are subject to change, and any change will be announced in class.

D. **Cheating/Plagiarism:** I do not tolerate cheating or plagiarism in any manner. Please see the CLAS policies sheet attached to this syllabus for more information.

E. **Other Stuff:** Please turn your **cell phone** off before you enter the classroom. If I see or hear a cell phone once, you get a warning and a dirty look. If I see it twice, you will be asked to leave the classroom. **Laptops** are welcome for note taking in the classroom. However, I expect that if your laptop is out during class, you will be taking notes rather than checking your email or playing solitaire. If I notice that things other than note-taking are going on, you will be asked to put the laptop away and take notes in longhand. Please do not pack up before I say that class is over. If this becomes a problem, pop quizzes or similar will be your new end of class activity. When using email, please conduct yourself in a professional manner, and if you use an email address other than your @utrgv.edu account, please identify yourself in the subject line.
UTRGV Policy Statements

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor and contact Student Accessibility Services to schedule an appointment to initiate services. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with Student Accessibility Services before classes start. However, accommodations can be provided at any time. Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at ability@utrgv.edu. Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

Mandatory course evaluation period:
Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (https://my.utrgv.edu/home); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available:

   Feb 15 – Feb 21 for Module 1 courses
   Apr 12 – Apr 18 for Module 2 courses
   Apr 12 – May 3 for full spring semester courses

Attendance:
Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV’s attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.

Scholastic integrity:
As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

Sexual harassment, discrimination, and violence:
In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning,
working and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

**COURSE DROPS:**
According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.