Course Description
This course introduces you to theories about and the practice of American federal government. Specific topics include: origin and development of the U.S. Constitution, structure and powers of the national government including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public policy, civil liberties, and civil rights. Throughout the semester, we will examine the following questions. Why is our government set up the way it is? How was our government established by our Constitution and the debates of the founding era? How have they evolved over time? How does the American mass public fit into the political process of American government? In doing so, we will explore the very foundation of our national government and public behavior in American politics.

Learning Objectives/Outcomes for the Course
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.

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

**Calendar of Activities**
Some important dates for Fall 2017 include:

- Aug 28  
  Fall classes begin
- Aug 31  
  Last day to add or register for Fall classes
- Sept 1  
  Last day to withdraw (drop all classes) for a 80% refund
- Sept 4  
  Labor Day Holiday, no classes
- Sept 13  
  Census day (last day to drop without it appearing on the transcript)
- Nov 15  
  Last day to drop (DR grade) a class or withdraw (grade of W)
- Nov 15 - Dec 6  
  Online course evaluations available
- Nov 23 - Nov 25  
  Thanksgiving Holiday, no classes
- Dec 7  
  Study Day, no classes
- Dec 8 – Dec 14  
  Final Exams

**How to Succeed in this Class**

1) Succeeding in this course will take a significant investment of your time. Be prepared to keep up with reading assignments and review materials periodically to make sure you get main points.

2) Participation in online discussion is strongly encouraged. The course will encompass online discussions, and your participation is necessary to make these discussions/projects profitable.

3) **The key to succeeding in this class is to complete the reading assignments before the day for which they are assigned, turn in assignments on time, and complete quizzes and other activities on time.**
Communication is the KEY
Email is the official method of communication for this course. Students will receive emails from the instructor, Dr. Mi-son Kim about assigned course activities, important dates, and announcements. Students are expected to check their university email account several times a week. Student questions emailed to Dr. Kim will be answered within two working days.

Concerning Email/Blackboard:
1) The subject line of each email must state your full name and section number.
2) Use your university email account (UTRGV) when sending emails to me. I will not respond to those emails sent via outside accounts.
3) It is a good idea to save all correspondence between you and me.
4) Please contact me through email instead of Blackboard “message”.
5) Check the Blackboard page at least once a day for updates. You are responsible for keeping up-to-date with the posts.

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The course structure mentioned above assumes students have basic computer skills and know how to use the various programs and hardware used during this session (e.g. Microsoft Word). For information and computer support geared toward online learning, access:
• Center for Online Learning and Teaching Technology (COLTT) Help Desk – Edinburg (956) 665-5327 / Brownsville (956) 882-6792 / portal – utrgv.edu/coltt/help
• Blackboard Technical Support page – http://www.utrgv.edu/online/getting-support/index.htm
• Blackboard Course Technology page – http://www.utrgv.edu/online/getting-support/course-technology/index.htm
• Student Support Services page – http://www.utrgv.edu/online/getting-support/academic-support/index.htm

Course Requirements
All quizzes and assignments must be taken by the due date listed on the schedule below or they will not be counted. This course requires students to complete the content of the course as it is assigned. However, students have the flexibility to complete the content any time during the week it is assigned.

A. Exams (60%): You will have three (3) exams in this course, each of which counts for 20% of your course grade. These exams are not cumulative, each covering the only topics learned in each period.
   There are NO make-up exams.
   • Exam dates are: Oct 7 Sat, Nov 7 Tue, and Dec 13, Wed.

B. Reading Quizzes (10%): For each topic, you will be given a quiz of 15 questions on the chapter of your textbook to be discussed the following week. The questions will be simple true/false, multiple choice questions whose answers can easily be found from the corresponding chapter of the textbook. This activity is designed for you to familiarize yourself with a new topic before viewing lecture material & doing assignments for the topic. Ideally, you are supposed to complete the quiz first before completing any other activities assigned for the topic as a warm-up activity.

C. Review Quizzes (15%): Seven (7) times during the semester, you will be asked to complete a short quiz on recent material via Blackboard. The quiz format will be five multiple-choice or/and T/F items. To ensure that you are prepared for quizzes, I recommend that you review what you have learned
after every lecture. You will find that devoting fifteen minutes or so, either later that day or during
the next, to looking back over the points that were covered will be very helpful to keeping up with
material. There are NO make-up quizzes.
• Quiz dates are: Sept 17 Sun, Oct 6 Fri, Oct 17 Tue, Nov 4 Sat, Nov 19 Sun, Dec 3 Sun, and Dec 11
  Mon.

D. Discussion Assignments (15%): After each topic, you will be asked to complete a discussion
assignment. The assignment correspond with the topic covered during each period. Your write-up is
approximately 1-2 paragraphs, or less than one single-spaced page in length. These assignments will
form the basis of the class discussion and be posted on the course website for each assigned time.
Please do not email me your discussion assignments. The aim of these assignments is to link the
theory and practice of politics, by learning about the real (and constantly changing) world of politics.
This write-up accounts for 10% out of total Discussion Assignment component (15%).

Then, you are responsible for reading the posts of other students, and commenting on TWO of them
each time in at least 3 sentences. When you respond to other posts please try to have constructive
feedback/comments, but remember to keep them respectful. Simply saying “I agree with you”, “I
like your idea”, or “I don’t agree” does not count as a comment. You should discuss why you agree
or disagree with the person you comment on. This accounts for rest 5% of this assignment.

E. Grading Rubric: 100-90 A; 89-80 B; 79-70 C; 69-60 D; 59- F

The final grade for the course will be determined on the basis of your point totals for all assignments
over the course of the summer II session. Please email the instructor at any time during the session if
you have questions about your grade or progress in the class.

Required Textbooks
Barbour, Christine and Gerald C. Wright. Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship in American
Politics; THE ESSENTIALS, either 6th, 7th, or 8th Edition allowed. CQ Press. (Available both used and new
on Amazon and other online retailers).

Class Topics and Readings
Readings are to be completed by the due date assigned to each topic. For each topic you should 1) read
the assigned chapter in the textbook, 2) view the PowerPoint slides and 3) complete assignments such
as reading quiz, discussion assignment and review quiz. Discussion assignments will be posted under the
tab “Discussion Assignments” in Content.

Topic 1 (Aug 28 Mon - Sept 3 Sun)
Introduction to U.S. & Texas Politics; Historical and Philosophical Foundation of American Politics
Barbour and Wright Chapter 3 “Politics of the American Founding”

Discussion Assignment 1
Discussion Assignment 1 will be available between Aug 28 and Sept 3. Read instructions carefully
posted on Blackboard to complete the assignment properly. Remember, you should post your
own posting and then comment on TWO other postings by the deadline.


- Discussion Write-Up due Aug 31 Thu, 11:59PM
- Two Comments due Sept 3 Sun, 11:59PM

Topic 2 (Sept 6 Wed – Sept 17 Sun)

The U.S. Constitution
Barbour and Wright Chapter 4 “Federalism and the U.S. Constitution”

Reading Quiz 1 (Due Sept 17, Sun 11:59PM)
Reading Quiz 1 will be available between Sept 6 and Sept 17. Read Chapter 4 of your textbook closely and complete the quiz by the deadline.

Discussion Assignment 2
Discussion Assignment 2 will be available between Sept 6 and Sept 17.
- Discussion Write-Up due Sept 13 Wed, 11:59PM
- Two Comments due Sept 17 Sun, 11:59PM

Review Quiz 1 (Due Sept 17, Sun 11:59PM)
It covers Topic 1 and 2. Review Quiz 1 will be made available between Sept 6 and Sept 17. Choose the best time for you to complete the quiz within the window.

Topic 3 (Sept 18 Mon – Sept 26 Tue)

Civil Liberties
Barbour and Wright Chapter 5 “Fundamental American Liberties”

Reading Quiz 2 (Due Sept 26, Tue 11:59PM)
Reading Quiz 2 will be available between Sept 18 and Sept 26. Read Chapter 5 of your textbook closely and complete the quiz by the deadline.

Discussion Assignment 3
Discussion Assignment 3 will be available between Sept 18 and Sept 24.
- Discussion Write-Up due Sept 22 Fri, 11:59PM
- Two Comments due Sept 26 Tue, 11:59PM

Topic 4 (Sept 27 Wed – Oct 4 Wed)

Civil Rights
Barbour and Wright Chapter 6 “The Struggle for Equal Rights”

Reading Quiz 3 (Due Oct 4, Wed 11:59PM)
Reading Quiz 3 will be available between Sept 27 and Oct 4. Read Chapter 6 of your textbook closely and complete the quiz by the deadline.

Discussion Assignment 4
Discussion Assignment 4 will be available between Sept 27 and Oct 4.
• Discussion Write-Up due Oct 2 Mon, 11:59PM
• Two Comments due Oct 4 Wed, 11:59PM

Review Quiz 2 (Due Oct 6, Fri 11:59PM)
It covers Topic 3 and 4.
Review Quiz 2 will be made available between Sept 27 and Oct 6. Choose the best time for you to complete the quiz within the window.

Exam 1 Due Oct 7, Sat 11:59PM
Exam 1 will be made available between Oct 6 8:00AM and Oct 7 11:59PM. You MUST complete your exam by Oct 7 11:59PM.

_topic_5 (Oct 9 Mon – Oct 17 Tue)_
Political Ideology & Political Culture; Public Opinion & Participation
Barbour and Wright Chapter 11 “Public Opinion”

Reading Quiz 4 (Due Oct 17, Tue 11:59PM)
Reading Quiz 4 will be available between Oct 9 and Oct 17. Read Chapter 11 of your textbook closely and complete the quiz by the deadline.

Discussion Assignment 5
Discussion Assignment 5 will be available between Oct 9 and Oct 16.
• Discussion Write-Up due Oct 13 Fri, 11:59PM
• Two Comments due Oct 17 Tue, 11:59PM

Review Quiz 3 (Due Oct 17, Tue 11:59PM)
It covers Topic 5.

_topic_6 (Oct 18 Wed – Oct 25 Wed)_
Interest Groups
Barbour and Wright Chapter 13 “Interest Groups”

Reading Quiz 5 (Due Oct 25, Wed 11:59PM)
Reading Quiz 5 will be available between Oct 18 and Oct 25. Read Chapter 13 of your textbook closely and complete the quiz by the deadline.

Discussion Assignment 6
Discussion Assignment 6 will be available between Oct 18 and Oct 25.
• Discussion Write-Up due Oct 23 Mon, 11:59PM
• Two Comments due Oct 25 Wed, 11:59PM
**Topic 7 (Oct 26 Thu – November 4 Sat)**

Political Parties
Barbour and Wright Chapter 12 “Political Parties”

**Reading Quiz 6 (Due Nov 4, Sat 11:59PM)**
Reading Quiz 6 will be available between Oct 26 and Nov 4. Read Chapter 12 of your textbook closely and complete the quiz by the deadline.

**Discussion Assignment 7**
Discussion Assignment 7 will be available between Oct 26 and Nov 4.
- Discussion Write-Up due Nov 1 Wed, 11:59PM
- Two Comments due Nov 4 Sat, 11:59PM

**Review Quiz 4 (Due Nov 4, Sat 11:59PM)**
It covers Topic 6 and 7.

**Exam 2 Due Nov 7, Tue 11:59PM**
Exam 2 will be made available between Nov 5 8:00AM and Nov 7 11:59PM. You MUST complete your exam by Nov 7 11:59PM.

**Topic 8 (Nov 8 Wed – Nov 19 Sun)**

Congress
Barbour and Wright Chapter 7 “Congress”

**Reading Quiz 7 (Due Nov 19, Sun 11:59PM)**
Reading Quiz 7 will be available between Nov 8 and Nov 19. Read Chapter 7 of your textbook closely and complete the quiz by the deadline.

**Discussion Assignment 8**
Discussion Assignment 8 will be available between Nov 8 and Nov 19.
- Discussion Write-Up due Nov 14 Tue, 11:59PM
- Two Comments due Nov 19 Sun, 11:59PM

**Review Quiz 5 (Due Nov 19, Sun 11:59PM)**
It covers Topic 8.

**Topic 9 (Nov 20 Mon – Dec 3 Sun)**

The Presidency
Barbour and Wright Chapter 8 “The Presidency”
**Reading Quiz 8 (Due Dec 3, Sun 11:59PM)**
Reading Quiz 8 will be available between Nov 20 and Dec 3. Read Chapter 8 of your textbook closely and complete the quiz by the deadline.

**Discussion Assignment 9**
Discussion Assignment 9 will be available between Nov 20 and Dec 3.
- Discussion Write-Up *due Nov 28 Tue, 11:59PM*
- Two Comments *due Dec 3 Sun, 11:59PM*

**Review Quiz 6 (Due Dec 3, Sun 11:59PM)**
It covers Topic 9.

**Topic 10 (Dec 4 Mon – Dec 11 Mon)**
The Judiciary
Barbour and Wright Chapter 10 “The American Legal System and the Courts”

**Reading Quiz 9 (Due Dec 11, Mon 11:59PM)**
Reading Quiz 8 will be available between Dec 4 and Dec 11. Read Chapter 8 of your textbook closely and complete the quiz by the deadline.

**Discussion Assignment 10**
Discussion Assignment 10 will be available between Dec 4 and Dec 11.
- Discussion Write-Up *due Dec 7 Thu, 11:59PM*
- Two Comments *due Dec 11 Mon, 11:59PM*

**Review Quiz 7 (Due Dec 11, Mon 11:59PM)**
It covers Topic 10.

**Exam 3 Due Dec 13, Wed 11:59PM**
Exam 3 will be made available between Dec 12 8:00AM and Dec 13 11:59PM. You MUST complete your exam by Dec 13 11:59PM.
**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 (http://my.utrgv.edu); 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: **Nov 15 – Dec 6 for full fall semester courses**

**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.