

**POLS 2301-01 | Spring 2020**  
**American Government**  
**National & Texas Organizations**

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**Humanities Division**

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**(830) 792-7325**

#### Class Hours

Monday:

Tuesday:

8:00 to 9:15am @Weir 212

Wednesday:

Thursday:

8:00 to 9:15am @Weir 212

Friday:

#### Office Hours

Monday:

11:00 to 12:30pm

Tuesday:

12:05 to 1:00pm

Wednesday

11:00 to 12:30pm

Thursday:

12:05 to 1:00pm

Friday:

*By Appointment*

## **I. Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to the American and Texas political systems, with specific attention to the institutional aspects of a functioning democracy. The primary goal of this course is to provide students with the analytical knowledge and critical thinking skills that are necessary to participate within this federal system. That knowledge includes the ability to interpret and anticipate the political interactions that occur between citizens, their representative actors within executive and legislative branches, and more isolated actors such as the bureaucracy, judiciary, and interest groups. These relationships are fundamentally important as they will act as significant constraints upon students' future career prospects. We will be focusing on strategic approaches that maximize the likelihood of charting a rewarding career path in the contemporary political context.

A secondary goal of this course is to introduce students to the discipline of political science. Emphasis will be placed upon simplifying theories and frameworks – the various lenses through which we view and understand political phenomena. This approach is intended to help students identify more advanced political science courses that they find interesting and that will be valuable additions to their academic pursuits.

Finally, we will work on building the requisite skill sets necessary to chart a successful career path, by emphasizing clear and structured composition as well as analytical problem-solving skills.

## **II. Required Text and Readings**

The following text is required and will act as a general resource for course lectures and

topics:

Lowi, Theodore J., Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A. Shepsle, and Stephen Ansolabehere. 2019. *American Government Power and Purpose (Brief 15<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 9780393664867

This text will be supplemented with topical readings from newspapers, journals, books and video content. These materials will be made available to students through the Schreiner Canvas system, which provides a web-based resource for the course that will act as the current calendar of readings/lectures:

Schreiner Canvas System

<https://schreiner.instructure.com/>

Please make note of the help button on the lower left-hand menu. It will be useful for issues specific to the Canvas system. For other Schreiner technical issues, such as user accounts, email and passwords, you can utilize:

Schreiner Help Desk

(830) 792-7344

[helpdesk@schreiner.edu](mailto:helpdesk@schreiner.edu)

### III. Calendar of Topics

Tuesday	01/14/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>Introduction to the Course</b>
Thursday	01/16/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>Social Contracts &amp; the Revolution</b> <i>Hobbes Leviathan &amp; Locke Second Treatise (SC)</i>
Tuesday	01/21/20	<u>Lecture / Film</u> <b>Social Contracts &amp; the Revolution</b> <i>10 Days that Unexpectedly Changed America: Shay's Rebellion (SC)</i> <b>Drop Deadline (01/22)</b>
Thursday	01/23/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>The Constitution</b> Lowi, et al. – Chs 1, 2, & Constitution (appx.)
Tuesday	01/28/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>The Constitution</b>

Thursday	01/30/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>Participation &amp; Voting</b> Lowi, et al. – Chs 9 (276-296) & 10 (314-344) <b>Assignment 1 Due – Social Contracts</b>
Tuesday	02/04/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>Participation &amp; Voting</b>
Thursday	02/06/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>Political Parties &amp; Realignment</b> Lowi, et al. – Ch 11 & Federalist 10 & 51 (appx.)
Tuesday	02/11/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>Political Parties &amp; Realignment</b> <i>Presidential Campaign Ads</i>
Thursday	02/13/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>The Executive Election Process</b> Lowi, et al. – Ch 10 (345-359) <i>4 Week Grades Due (02/13)</i>
Tuesday	02/18/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>The Executive Election Process</b>
Thursday	02/20/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>The Executive Election Process</b>
Tuesday	02/25/20	<b>Exam #1</b>
Thursday	02/27/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>The Legislative Process</b> Lowi, et al. – Ch 5
Tuesday	03/03/20	<u>Lecture / Film</u> <b>The Legislative Process</b> <i>PBS Frontline – Cliffhanger (SC)</i>
Thursday	03/05/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>The Judicial Branch</b> Lowi, et al. – Ch 8 <b>Drop Deadline (03/05 @ 1pm)</b>

Tuesday	03/10/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>The Judicial Branch</b>
Thursday	03/12/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>The Bureaucracy &amp; Interest Groups</b> Lowi, et al. – Chs 7 & 12 <i>Midterm Grades Due (03/07)</i>
Tuesday	03/17/20	<i>Spring Break</i>
Thursday	03/19/20	<i>Spring Break</i>
Tuesday	03/24/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>The Bureaucracy &amp; Interest Groups</b>
Thursday	03/26/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>The Bureaucracy &amp; Interest Groups</b>
Tuesday	03/31/20	<b>Exam #2</b>
Thursday	04/02/20	<u>Lecture / Film</u> <b>Policy-Making – Civil Liberties &amp; Rights</b> Lowi, et al. – Ch 4 <i>Eyes On The Prize: Mississippi Is This America 1962–1964 (SC)</i>
Tuesday	04/07/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>Policy-Making – Economic &amp; Fiscal Policy</b> Lowi, et al. – Ch 13
Thursday	04/09/20	<u>Lecture / Film</u> <b>Policy-Making – Economic &amp; Fiscal Policy</b> <i>IOUSA</i>
Tuesday	04/14/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>Policy-Making – Capstone</b> <b>Assignment 2 Due – Voting Rights</b>
Thursday	04/16/20	<i>Student Academic Achievement Showcase</i>

Tuesday	04/21/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>Federalism and the Laboratories of (d)emocracy</b> Lowi, et al. – Ch 3
Thursday	04/23/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>Texas Institutions</b>
Tuesday	04/28/20	<u>Lecture</u> <b>Texas Institutions</b>
Friday	05/01/20	<b>Final Examination</b> <b>(8:00 to 10:00am)</b>

#### IV. Course Requirements / Grading

The final course grade will primarily be associated with two periodic exams and a final examination. These tests will comprise of multiple choice, true/false, matching, diagram, and short answer questions. The course grade also comprises of two short paper assignments. The first written assignment will be related to the topic of social contracts and the settling of Texas territory. The second assignment will be related to our policy-making lectures and will cover the movement for voting rights.

The remainder of the grade will be attributable to a measure of attendance, which will be recorded for each class session. An excused absence will be allowed per university guidelines, *but prior notice is mandatory*. A complete attendance policy to the online system with additional detail.

Occasionally, a student will be traveling for academic or athletic events during a regularly scheduled examination period. Please contact me the week before the examination, so that we can arrange an alternative time/format.

Students with a documented medical excuse that conflicts with a course assignment should likewise contact me to establish an alternative time for submission / completion. All others that miss an assignment or exam deadline potentially are subject to a late penalty. Typically, I will assess a 5% penalty for each school day that it is delayed.

The breakdown of the course grade will be the following:

	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Numerical</b>	<b>Letter</b>
1.	Attendance	8%	100-90	A
2.	Social Contract Assignment	12%	89-80	B
3.	Exam 1	20%	79-70	C
4.	Exam 2	22%	69-60	D
5.	Voting Rights Assignment	14%	59-0	F

6.	Final Exam	24%
		100%

## V. Policies and Guidelines

### ***Academic Integrity and Student Conduct Policies***

Activity in this course is subject to the *Schreiner University Academic Code of Conduct* and the *Student Code of Conduct*, both of which are located within the *Student Handbook*:

<http://www.schreiner.edu/student-life/student-handbook.aspx>

#### *Schreiner University Academic Code of Conduct*

These rules govern the standards and penalties for violations of academic integrity, such as cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, collusion and other questionable practices. Broadly speaking, an incident of *academic dishonesty* occurs when a student presents another's work (in whole or part) as his or her own. More specifically, *plagiarism* is the act of stealing or using the ideas or written text of another and representing them as one's own.

These types of behaviors can occur within exam answers, research papers, and other course assignments.

You should know that plagiarism and any other forms of cheating will not be tolerated and it will be handled according to the appropriate provision within these university regulations. Student papers are subject to review by a plagiarism checking service (e.g., turnitin.com). Violations will be pursued and may result in an F grade for this course and possible expulsion from the University.

#### *Student Code of Conduct*

The *Student Handbook* also addresses more general matters of personal conduct, such as violations of criminal law, fraud, alcohol/drug use, student hazing, and sexual misconduct or violence (see also, Title IX below). Although these particular items are less likely to be encountered within a classroom setting, an issue could present itself. To the extent that this set of policies become relevant, we will abide by the intent and purpose of Schreiner University's *Student Code of Conduct*.

### ***Title IX: Sexual Discrimination/Harassment/Misconduct/Assault***

Schreiner University is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from inappropriate conduct based on gender. As required by *Title IX*, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs and activities, and it encourages any student or employee who thinks that he or she has been subjected to sex discrimination, sexual harassment (including sexual violence) or sexual misconduct by another student, member of the faculty or staff, or campus visitor or contractor, to immediately report the incident to any of the individuals or offices listed below:

<https://schreiner.edu/campus-life/title-ix/>

Dr. Travis Frampton (Title IX Coordinator)  
Provost & VP for Academic Affairs  
830-792-7351  
[provost@schreiner.edu](mailto:provost@schreiner.edu)

Wendy L. Blaettner (Deputy Coordinator)  
Director of Human Resource Services  
(830) 792-7375  
[wblaettner@schreiner.edu](mailto:wblaettner@schreiner.edu)

Dr. William Davis (Deputy Coordinator)  
Dean of the Faculty  
830-792-7415  
[wdavis@schreiner.edu](mailto:wdavis@schreiner.edu)

Dr. Charles Hueber (Deputy Coordinator)  
Dean of Students  
(830) 792-7278  
[cmhueber@schreiner.edu](mailto:cmhueber@schreiner.edu)

Schreiner University takes acts of sexual violence and sexual harassment seriously. In an effort to comply with the *Violence Against Women Act* and the Office for Civil Rights federal guidelines, all students are required to complete training on sexual violence prevention. Along these lines, you are already aware of these policies and understand that you are expected to abide by them.

For those who have confidentiality concerns regarding a Title IX report, you should know that faculty and staff are *Mandatory Reporters* under this act. If you discuss a potential violation with a professor, then he or she *must* report it.

You do have a couple of other options for consultation. First, you may take advantage of Schreiner University Counseling Services, which has stronger confidentiality protections. You may also utilize the Campus Conduct Hotline as an anonymous means of reporting questionable conduct:

Kim Woods

Director of Counseling Services  
Mountaineer Fitness Center | CMB 6220  
(830) 792-7279 | [kjwoods@schreiner.edu](mailto:kjwoods@schreiner.edu)  
<https://schreiner.edu/campus-life/campus-services/health-services/>

Campus Conduct Hotline  
(866) 943-5787

Given this course is in the discipline of political science we will throughout the semester be discussing issues and policies that are discomfoting or controversial in some manner. We will make every attempt to take an academic orientation toward these topics, but students and faculty can and do make errors that can be insulting or off putting to others. Feel free to contact me in a confidential manner and we will address any such issue.

***Matters of Accommodation***

Schreiner University supports the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and welcomes requests for reasonable accommodation. The University in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability or status as a veteran in any of its policies practices or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid and educational services.

Every effort will be made to make accommodations for those who fall under the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* and the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*. Students

desiring academic adjustments/auxiliary aids should contact:

Dr. Jude Gallik

Director of Learning Support Services/Section 504 Coordinator  
(830) 792-7258 | [jgallik@schreiner.edu](mailto:jgallik@schreiner.edu)

In terms of accommodations and this particular course, please contact me directly and we will handle it in a discrete manner according to University guidelines.

***Unanticipated Events, Incomplete Grades & Withdrawals***

On some occasions, a student will come down with an extended illness, or get called up for military duty, etc. These situations will be dealt with on a case by case basis and are often resolved through withdrawal from the course or through an incomplete grade agreement between the student, academic advisor and professor. I am extremely reluctant to go forward with an incomplete grade in any course. In the event that a substantive cause is present to do so, we will proceed through the guidelines found in the *Student Handbook*.

Withdrawal from this course will be governed by the University's procedure and applicable deadlines. Students contemplating withdrawing from the university during the term, or not returning after a break, should contact the Registrar. In addition to discussing reasons for withdrawing, it is very important that the withdrawal policy be followed, so that severe financial problems can be avoided. Please refer to the *Schreiner University Catalog* for more information about withdrawals.