Mission: The College of Biblical Studies–Houston provides biblically based education for the Body of Christ, with primary focus on African-American and other ethnic minority groups, and equips its students with a biblical worldview for Christian service to the church and the world.

GOVT 2301: Principles of American Politics

Course Syllabus

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Assistant Professor, Chair of General Education Department
Fall 2013
Mondays 9:30am-12:30pm
marvin.mcneese@cbshouston.edu, 832-252-0726
Office Hours: Mondays 12:30pm-2:30pm, Wednesdays 9:00am-2:00pm
I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course traces the American historical foundation from the American Revolution through today. Topics include American government, federalism, democracy, Congress, the presidency, the judiciary, political economy, political parties, interest groups, the media and civil rights. The course includes readings from the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. The course defines the term government, and identifies the institutions and processes of government in the United States and Texas and Houston. The course helps students to understand how these institutions were established and how they affect the lives they govern.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, successful students will possess the following competencies and abilities:

A. Describe the social, political and ideological forces surround the American Revolution.

B. Describe the path of any policy from proposal to enactment through the government at each the federal, state and local levels.

C. Distinguish the changes in relationship between the branches of government, the social and historical events that surrounded those changes, and how those changes affect the U.S. government’s representation of citizens.

D. Classify the goals, methods, and impact of non-governmental actors, particularly political parties, interest groups and the media on the functioning of government.

E. Diagram the economy and the role of the government therein.

F. Summarize the functioning of elections, and learned truths about voters, voting and the impact of non-voting actors.

G. Construct a government relations strategy for a ministry, indicating how the ministry might persuade the government to pass favorable policy.

III. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

A. **Required**
   
IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Reading Assignments (20% of final course grade)

Each student is responsible for independently completing the assignments listed in the table at the end of the syllabus. Each assignment involves reading a portion of the main textbook, taking a short quiz online and addressing the topic assigned to that reading. The instructions for each is found on turnitin.com. They are to be submitted through turnitin.com by 5pm the night before class.

Format for Reading Assignments
• No more than two (2) pages total, Single spaced
• Your Name & Due Date in upper Right corner
• Include the Questions (as listed in the syllabus) as the first sentence.

Grading Criteria for Summary:
1) Completeness of answer. In the first part of topic, the student will evidence that they read and understood the chapter; in the second part of the topic, the student will demonstrate that they have given serious consideration to the information.
2) Length is to completeness as works are to faith. Complete answers will get a good grade; a short answer is probably not complete.

B. Term Paper (20% of final course grade)

For the term paper students will perform a “Government Impact Analysis” on a social service ministry of their choice. It must be submitted through turnitin.com. It will be due by the 8:30am on Monday November 25, 2013. Drafts of each component will be due at certain weeks in the course; their completion will count towards the student’s participation grade.

The paper will address how government might affect the operations of a ministry focused on addressing some problem in society. It will include the following components:

A. Opening (describe the social problem and how your ministry addresses it)
B. Indicate whether the federal or state level of government that has (the most) jurisdiction over the problem
C. Identify the mechanics of how the legislative, executive and judicial actors at that level could impact (for good or bad) your ministry
D. Identify the mechanics of how at least two local level governments could impact your ministry.
E. Detail a “government relations strategy” for convincing those governments to make decisions that you favor? (The more detailed the better.)
F. Conclusion: Discuss how important is it for your ministry to strategically interact with the government.
Format for Term Paper:
- No less than five (5) and no more than seven (7) full pages, Double Spaced
- Otherwise, Turabian formatting

C. Exams – Midterm and Final (10% and 30% of final course grade, respectively)

There will be two, multiple-choice exams taken in the CBS computer lab during class times (Midterm on October 14; the Final on December 9). The midterm exam will contain 50 questions on basic facts about the U.S. system of government and U.S. history taken from the U.S. Citizenship Exam (can be found online at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website: www.uscis.gov). The final exam will include the same questions as the midterm exam, plus 50 additional questions drawn from the course lectures.

D. Class Participation (20% of final course grade)

It is the student’s responsibility to actively participate in the class. The principle ways of doing this will be to show up, and on-time, and to pay attention. Also, students should not allow themselves to not understand the information presented in the text or in class. The student should ask the professor, and keep asking, until the student feels clear in their understanding of the matter.

Also, first drafts of components of the term paper will be due at certain times in the semester. Their completion will count toward the student’s class participation grade.

E. Extra Credit – Article Summaries (up to 3.5% points to final course grade)

Each student has the opportunity to produce up to five (5) summaries of articles from news journals or magazines related to the topic studied in the prior class session. For example, on October 7, the student can present and turn in an article on the Texas government institutions, the topic discussed in the previous class on September 30. These must be submitted through turnitin.com.

Structure of the Article Summary
A. Article Information: Title, Author, Date, Name of Publication
B. Main Idea of Article (4 sentences)
C. Actions in the Article of the Institution Studied in Class (4 sentences)
D. Institution’s Motivations/Desired Results of the Action (4 sentences)
E. Author’s Opinion of the Institution’s Behavior (2 sentences)
F. Do you agree with the author? How so? (2 sentences)

Format for Article Summary
- No more than one (1) page total, Single spaced
• Your name & Date of Class Session (turned in) in upper Right corner
• Copy of actual article stapled behind the summary

F. Course Requirements for Grading

Final Exam 30%
Midterm Exam 10%
Term Paper 20%
Reading Assignments 20%
Class Participation 20%
Total 100%
Extra Credit up to 3.5%

G. Late Assignments

All Written Assignments are to be submitted through turnitin.com.

Reading assignments are considered late if turned in after 8:00 a.m. on the due date (these are all Mondays). Reading assignments will be accepted until 8:00 a.m. on the Wednesday following the due date, but will be marked down two (2) letter grades after the content is graded.

The term paper is considered late if turned in after 8:30 am on the due date (November 25, 2013). Late term papers must be turned in electronically, and will be accepted until 8:30 a.m. on the Monday following the due date (December 2, 2013), but will be marked down two (2) letter grades after the content is graded.

Only one (1) article summary may be turned in for extra credit per week, must be formatted correctly and must be related to the topic discussed the week before (or the prior session). Article summaries turned in after the start of class will be considered late, and not given credit.

H. Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes in which they are enrolled. It is your responsibility to follow procedures as outlined by the registrar’s office in view of class attendance. Students should miss no more than 9 hours of class. If you miss more than that, you will need to drop course or change to audit. Each class is critical to your papers. Moreover, you must be punctual in attendance. Arrive on-time! We will take attendance each session at the beginning of class. Lastly, if you miss a class, you are responsible to keep up with reading. Absences totaling more than 20% of class time may result in an automatic “F”. Tardies and early departures are considered to equal half of an absence.
I. Letter/Numerical Grade Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A+</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D-</td>
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V. COURSE SCHEDULE

See the attached table on the final page.

VI. COURSE POLICIES

Add/Drop/Withdrawal. All students who add or drop a class, withdraw from a class, change class section, or change status between credit and audit must give official notice. All ADCP students must contact their Academic Advisor to complete a Change of Status Form. All other students must complete a Change of Status Form with the Registrar’s Office.

Agreement Between Professor And Student. This syllabus serves as the agreement between the professor and the student. Students are required to read the syllabus before the class begins and are responsible for all information contained in the syllabus whether they read it or not. The requirements of the syllabus are subject to change by the professor without notice. The professor may announce changes in class without written information. The student is still held responsible to comply with the changes made by the professor.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with a disability who believe they need an adjustment in this class are encouraged to contact the Division for Student and Enrollment Services by telephone at 832-252-4685 or 4620, as soon as possible. The office will process your request and include the decision in a letter directed to my attention. Please present the letter to me so that we may discuss adjustments for this class.

CCS Students. Checkout and computer privileges in the CBS library are paid for in part by the General Services Fee that CBS students pay each semester in addition to their tuition. Since Center for Continuing Studies participants are not responsible for paying that fee, they may not check out books in the library or use the computers.

Cell Phone And Electronic Device Policy. Classroom disruption by cell phones or other electronic devices is prohibited. All cell phones and similar electronic devices must remain turned off and out of sight for the duration of class. Electronic devices utilized in a learning context, such as laptops and language interpreters, may be permitted at the professor’s discretion. A student may face a zero and/or failure in the class if an electronic device is used for cheating during a test. Cheating at CBS is not tolerated and may result in expulsion.
Children In Classes And Unaccompanied Children. The College does not permit children under sixteen years of age to visit the library or the classroom. Under no circumstances should children be unaccompanied on the property. Any children must be accompanied by their parent or legal guardian at all times.

Class Cancellations (Emergency). In case of severe conditions that warrant course cancellations, it is the responsibility of the student to listen to or obtain information regarding announcements from the local media outlets, the CBS automated phone system, and/or at www.cbshouston.edu. The CBS Watchman Emergency Notification System uses text, email, and voice messages to alert CBS students in the event of an emergency or urgent situation. Alert messages are sent to registered mobile phones, home phones and email addresses. Contact information the student has provided and included in my records is automatically stored in the emergency alert system. Any changes the student makes to this information is automatically updated in CBS Watchman. Students are automatically enrolled in the emergency alert system and may elect not to participate by completing the Emergency Notification System Election not to Participate Form. The form and other information is available at www.cbhsouston.edu/watchman.

Course Evaluations. Each student is required to complete a course evaluation on MyRecords.cbshouston.edu in order to see his or her grade in MyRecords.cbshouston.edu.

Financial Aid. Students who are receiving federal, state, or institutional financial aid who withdraw or add hours during the semester may have their financial aid adjusted because of the withdrawal or addition. This change in schedule may affect the aid they are receiving during the current semester, and could affect their eligibility for aid in future semesters.

Final Grades. Final course grades provided to a student by a faculty member may not be relied upon as official. Students may access their official final grades online through the SonisWeb System. The Registrar’s Office will mail grades to a student only upon request. All accounts must be paid in full before a student can receive transcripts. According to FERPA rulings, faculty may not provide final grade information to students via telephone, email, posting or any other source which might compromise student confidentiality.

Gifts to Faculty. CBS faculty members may not keep any money or cash equivalents (e.g. checks or gift cards) of any amount from a student or group of students. Additionally, a CBS faculty member may not keep any gift from a student or a group of students that has a market value of over $100.

Homework. For every hour spent in class, a student should expect at least two hours of homework outside of class. Cumulatively, a student should expect at least 135 hours of in-class lecture and homework for a 3 credit course.

Plagiarism. Students who plagiarize (copy material from other sources without citing references) are committing a very serious offense. Those who plagiarize may be subject to grade reduction, loss of graduation honors, discipline and/or dismissal from CBS.
Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not a valid argument for not incurring all penalties associated with plagiarism.

**Registered Students Receive Grades.** Students who are officially registered in a course are the only students who will subsequently receive graded assignments, grades and/or credit for a course.

**Retention of Students’ Writings.** The CBS faculty members have the discretion to take as long as necessary to grade and return student work. Returned work should be retained by the student in case it is required for a grade appeal. It is the responsibility of the student to collect work from the CBS faculty member. In the event that the student is unable to obtain the work directly from the professor, a self-addressed stamped envelope with sufficient postage should be included with the assignment when it is turned in. After one year, CBS and its faculty members reserve the right to destroy any unclaimed work. In the event the professor is willing to accept an assignment via email, the professor is not able to communicate a grade via email. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure the professor received the emailed assignment. CBS faculty are required to keep emails with assignments for only 6 months from the date the assignment was originally sent to the faculty member.

**Safety Information.** Safety and Security information is located in the clear plastic holders in each classroom. These pamphlets give an outline of what to do during the event of an emergency. They also list important emergency phone numbers as well as an incident report in the case of an emergency. There is additional safety and security information located at [http://cbshouston.edu/emergency](http://cbshouston.edu/emergency).

**Students’ Rights and Responsibilities.** Students are responsible for adherence to all college policies and procedures, including those related to academic freedom, cheating, classroom conduct, computer/network/e-mail use and other items included in the Academic Catalog and Student Handbook. *A complete statement of student rights and responsibilities is found in the Student Handbook. It is the responsibility of every student to read and adhere to the policies in the Student Handbook.*


**Tutoring.** Complimentary tutoring services are available. For more information, see [http://www.cbshouston.edu/tutoring](http://www.cbshouston.edu/tutoring).

Syllabus Template Revised June 2013
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>August 26, 2013</td>
<td>Founding a New Nation – One</td>
<td>Article Summary</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2, 2013</td>
<td>NO CLASS – LABOR DAY</td>
<td>Draft of Term Paper – Introduction/Ministry Idea</td>
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<td>September 9, 2013</td>
<td>Founding a New Nation – Two</td>
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<td>September 23, 2013</td>
<td>National Government Institutions – Development and Growth</td>
<td>Reading 2 – Federalism</td>
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<td>September 30, 2013</td>
<td>Texas Political Institutions</td>
<td>Reading 3 – Administrative Government</td>
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<td>Draft of Term Paper – Federal/State Jurisdiction</td>
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<td>MIDTERM EXAM – LIBRARY DAY</td>
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<td>Elections &amp; Political Parties</td>
<td>Draft of Term Paper – Government Structures</td>
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<td>Political Influences – Interest Groups</td>
<td>Reading 4 – Election Special Report</td>
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<td>Media &amp; Public Opinion</td>
<td>Reading 5 – Interest Groups</td>
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<td>Political Economy – One</td>
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<td>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING</td>
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<td>December 2, 2013</td>
<td>Review Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 9, 2013</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM – IN CLASS</td>
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TOPICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Founding a New Nation


National Government Institutions – Structure and Operations

*Congress*


*President*


*Federal Courts*


*National Government Institutions – Development and Growth*


**Texas Political Institutions**


**Local Political Institutions**


**Elections & Political Parties**


**Political Influences – Interest Groups**


**Media & Public Opinion**


**Political Economy**


