

INTRODUCTION TO U.S. POLITICS

Political Science 2311-001

MWF 8-8:50am, 002 UH

<http://www.dalestory.org>

The official syllabus is found only on Professor Story's web site

Dale Story
Spring 2014

449 University Hall, story@uta.edu
Office Hours (by appointment): MWF, 9-10, 11-12noon

The main objectives of this course are: (1) to provide the students with substantive knowledge of formal and informal institutions of U.S. government; (2) to motivate them to evaluate political problems, specifically in the U.S. context; (3) to expose them to basic issues and policy decisions in U.S. politics; and (4) to sensitize them to their "roles" as political participants.

This course is both an introduction to the study of politics as well as an introduction to the study of U.S. government. The instructor's assumption is that there have always been fundamental problems in terms of properly and efficiently allocating decision-making authority and scarce resources. We will examine these problems in the U.S. context with the aim of reaching some conclusions concerning solutions (which, of necessity, must be the responsibility of each individual student). We will look at normative questions relating to the extent and source of these problems. Interspersed with these normative questions will be empirical analysis of the U.S. political system. Normative issues are not raised in order to teach the students a particular viewpoint, but rather to motivate the students to examine critically the U.S. political system and to reach independent conclusions regarding that system.

One expectation for students is that they will keep aware of national news events either through: (1) reading a daily newspaper with good national coverage; (2) watching the national news on one of the major networks; or (3) reading one of the major newsmagazines. Hopefully, one or all of these will become a habit extending beyond the time span of this course. Students will be held responsible on exams for any current events discussed in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS. Students are expected to do the readings as well as attend class. Class activities and the readings are complementary yet distinct; and all exams will cover both the readings and class lectures. All readings listed in this syllabus for the textbook and any links from the web site ("current events" or links on outlines) are required—unless otherwise stated.

The required text is: Janda (et al), *The Challenge of Democracy, The Essentials*, 3rd Edition.

- See UTA Bookstore Website for details and purchasing options.

The final grade for the course is based on three exams (plus/minus any extra credit and/or deductions). Exam grades may be adjusted, depending on the statistical analysis (minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation). The three exams are averaged equally to give an exam grade. The final grade for the course is a function of the exam grade plus/minus points. Each exam (including the "Final" Exam—or Exam 3) covers only the material since the preceding exam.

Please notify me by email by Friday, January 17 if:

1. You request permission to utilize a lap top in class. If granted, you will be required to sit in a designated seat in the front of the class; and/or

2. You would like me to track your attendance for possible extra credit points (for good to excellent attendance (typically 80-100%)—or possible deductions (typically below 80%). The extra points/deductions will be a function of the statistical analysis at the end of the semester.

The three tests will consist of some 20-30 objective questions (multiple choice and true-false). Roughly 20-30% of these will be chosen randomly from a nationally normed test bank from your text-book (composed of literally hundreds of questions). The other 70-80% will consist of questions derived from class lectures. You will need to bring a number two pencil and the appropriate Scantron Form (NCS Form 4521—8.5x11—blue form).

Each student will need to furnish their own #2 pencil and the appropriate Scantron Form for each exam (do not fold, etc.). Points will be deducted for any multiple choice exams that must be graded by hand (i.e., no pencil, no Scantron Form, unreadable Scan Form, etc.). You must have the correct test version affixed as instructed on your Scantron Form. Failure could mean grading your test by the wrong “key.” Such tests will not be re-graded.

Essential Expectations

All students are expected to: (1) attend class at all times (much critical information and many important announcements will only be made in class); (2) arrive in class on-time (preferably early); (3) always remain respectful of class environment; (4) never leave class before they are dismissed; (5) never leave class during an exam; (6) take extensive notes on class lectures and all assigned readings, videos, and the like; (7) pay attention and follow directions; and (8) devote at least two hours studying outside of class for every hour of scheduled class time. If you are not prepared to fulfill all of these expectations, the probability of your performing poorly in this class is very high.

General Policies

All requirements, exam dates, and deadlines are 99.5% firm. Any deviations will be due to highly extenuating circumstances, such as cancelled class due to inclement weather. These deviations will be announced in class and provided to the students in written form. Cancellations due to inclement weather are University decisions and will be posted on the UTA web site. No extensions will be given. Exercises/papers/projects are due by the beginning of class on the due date. Work submitted at any time after the precise deadline will receive an automatic deduction of 50 points. No excuses will be accepted. You are encouraged to submit your work early. Think: “Early is on-time; and on-time is late.”

Letter grades correspond to the following scales: 90+ = A; 80+ = B; 70+ = C; 50+ = D; and below 50 = F. Fractions are not rounded off, grades are not "curved," and the numerical minimums for letter grades are absolute and fixed. All students are treated equally, and grades are based on performance and not on need. If any adjustments are made to grades, they will be made equally to all students—and will be based on a quantitative analysis of mean, median, standard deviation, maximum, and minimum.

In answering essay questions in exercises or exams (describing, analyzing, discussing, explaining, identifying, etc.), always use complete sentences and paragraphs. Organize your answers. Be complete, but do not ramble. Diagrams, lists, graphs, and the like might be useful—but they should be within the structure of sentences and paragraphs. For statistical or quantitative problems and questions, show all work. Begin by writing the formula(s) and show all important steps in reaching your answer.

On all exercises and essay tests, be neat and show all work! Use sentences and paragraphs where appropriate. Submit only your final draft (clean copy—no corrections). Significant points will be deducted for presentation, organization, and general neatness.

You must bring 8.5x11” paper and a writing utensil to class. You also must bring an 8.5x11” blue book for all essay exams. Ten points will be deducted on your exam if you do not have an 8.5x11” blue book for an essay exam. You should purchase a blue book well in advance of your test.

You should be taking extensive notes in this class—from class lectures and discussions and from your readings. You should always bring all of your notes to class. Write your last name in the upper right-hand corner of each page. Do not discard any of your notes until after the conclusion of the class.

You do not need to bring your text book(s) to class—but always bring your notes (class and outside readings) to class.

If it would be of any assistance, I would be glad to provide any student feedback regarding their notes from this class. Obviously, I am not going to criticize your particular approach, but I will certainly provide you with some opinions as to whether you are covering the correct information, enough information, etc.

All exercises, research projects, and the like must have the following information displayed up-front: the student’s last name followed by their first name (comma separating); course number (e.g., POLS 3310); and assignment name (e.g., Exercise Number 1). Assignments submitted via email should have the subject line as stipulated in class.

If I cannot read or find your name on any assignment or test, you will receive a grade of zero for that assignment or test.

Last Name

You should always write your last name first on any tests, projects, etc. that you submit to me. Your last name is defined as the last name officially recognized by UTA. Be sure to notify me if you officially change your last name with the UTA Registrar.

Retain Originals

All students should submit copies of papers, projects, assignments, etc.—and retain their originals. Many assignments will be submitted electronically—obviously, you will retain your file.

Exams, etc. Retained for One Long Semester

Any exercises or exams not returned will be retained for the following long semester.

Timed Exams

All exams must be completed by the end of the class. Some tests might be timed and must be finished by the end of a particular time period (before the end of the class).

Seating Chart

You will be notified if and when a seating chart will be established.

Optical Scan Form

If an optical scantron form is used in this class, you will need to always have a #2 pencil and the appropriate optical scantron form (NCS Form 4521—8.5x11, blue form) when you arrive for a test. Points will be deducted for any multiple choice exams that must be graded by hand (i.e., no pencil, no Scantron Form, unreadable Scan Form, etc.). No erasures on the Scantron Form. No stray marks. Make heavy black marks that fill the circle/box completely. You must write your last name first on the form. The UTA equipment used to grade Scantrons is assumed to be completely accurate. You should purchase optical scantron forms well in advance of your tests.

Prerequisites

Any 3-4000 courses are advanced courses for undergraduate Political Science majors, though non-Political Science students are welcome to take these classes. All students should have completed the required core curriculum: 12 hours of English, 6 hours of History, 14 hours of Foreign Language, 6 hours of Math (College Algebra and Statistics), 8 hours of Science, 3 hours of Fine Arts, 6 hours of Political Science, and 9 hours of Social Sciences. Problem-solving and mathematical skills appropriate for upper-level undergraduates are especially important. POLS 2311 does not have any prerequisites.

Students Should Know Their Grades

Each student should keep an excel file (or other written record) with all grades (including attendance, assignments submitted, etc.).

If you are interested in “projecting” a possible grade given existing grades and expectations of future grades, simply use the percentages described in the Syllabus. As an example, assume that the Mid-Term is worth 40 percent, the Final is worth 40 percent, and daily quizzes are worth 20 percent. If you have your grade for the Mid-Term, multiply that by 0.40. If you have half of your daily quiz grades, project what you might expect to be your final grade on daily quizzes and multiply that by 0.20. Project what you might expect to be your Final grade to be and multiply that by 0.40. Add the three numbers for a projected final average.

Make-up Exams, Extra Credit, Optional Tests, etc.

Make-up exams are strongly discouraged. All students are expected to take the exams at the scheduled time. Only one make-up exam is allowed. This make-up exam will be given on the last class day of the particular course (in the regular classroom and the normal class time). There is no make-up exam for the make-up exam. Make-up exams are only to make-up an exam that you missed. Unless otherwise stated, make-up exams are essay exams.

I may send an email asking for which students who missed an exam intend to take the make-up exam. If a student intends to take the make-up, they will need to respond to that email.

Unless the Syllabus explicitly states otherwise, there are no re-takes of tests, no extra credit, and no optional tests.

Incompletes will only be granted if a student is called to Active Duty after the Drop Date. A student may take a make-up for a missed Final Exam with a note from a doctor stating they were medically unable to attend the scheduled Final Exam (but a grade of F will be assigned for the Final until the make-up).

“Final” Exam Schedule

Consult the UTA Web Site (typically under “Current Students”) for the complete schedule for “Final Exams.” Many of my classes have a “last” exam (but not comprehensive). For example, I might have three exams (Exam 1, Exam 2, and Exam 3). And Exam 3 is the “last” exam of the course, but only covers material since the preceding exam. That exam would be considered the “final” exam, and will occur at the date and time noted for the class in the UTA Schedule for Final Exams.

All of Professor Story’s finals are in the same classroom as the regular class (unless otherwise stated).

Any projects due in the last week of classes (or any make-up exams) will be graded parallel with the final exam. I will be glad to provide you with general feedback about a project before the deadline, but I will not grade your project before you submit your final draft.

My schedule and availability after the last day of classes is very unpredictable, due to grading, end-of-semester paperwork, and research.

Student Responsibility (for the complete text: <http://www.uta.edu/catalog/general/academicreg>)

While University faculty and staff members give students academic advice and assistance, each graduate and undergraduate student is expected to take responsibility for his or her education and personal development. The student must know and abide by the academic and disciplinary policies given in this catalog, including rules governing quantity of work, the standard of work required to continue in the University, scholastic probation and dismissal, and enforced withdrawal. The student must also know and meet the requirements of his or her degree program, including the University's core education requirements; must enroll in courses appropriate to the program; must meet prerequisites and take courses in the proper sequence to ensure orderly and timely progress; and must seek advice from appropriate University representatives about degree requirements and other University policies when necessary. The student must also know and adhere to all University deadlines.

The professor is not responsible for reminding students of appropriate University and course policies. Enrollment in the course stipulates that you understand and will remember all policies and procedures for this course and any applicable University policies.

Americans With Disabilities Act

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of federal legislation entitled *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability. Also, you may visit the Office for Students with Disabilities in room 102 of University Hall or call them at (817) 272-3364.

Academic Integrity

It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

"Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the 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." (Regents' Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2)

Student Support Services Available

The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate referrals. Your instructor should be your most important source of support.

Start Strong First Year Student Tutoring Program

This tutoring program provides up to six (6) hours of free tutoring in selected courses offered during the spring semester for all first-time and returning freshmen. Go to the link above for information (including deadline and process for registering).

E-Culture Policy

The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University email address as an official means of communication with students. Through the use of email, UT-Arlington is able to provide students with relevant and timely information, designed to facilitate student success. In particular, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation may be sent to students through email.

All students are assigned an email account and information about activating and using it is available at www.uta.edu/email. New students (first semester at UTA) are able to activate their email account 24 hours after registering for courses. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, and it remains active as long as a student is enrolled at UT-Arlington. Students are responsible for checking their email regularly. Your UTA email is a necessity for this class, probably other classes, and definitely UTA business. If your UTA email ever becomes dysfunctional, you need to contact this professor immediately to arrange alternative means for email. In addition to checking your UTA email frequently, all email correspondence to me must be from your UTA email. Finally, be sure to include your particular class along with a brief reference to your issue in the subject box of your email.

All cell phones must be turned off and put away. You will need the instructor's permission to use a lap top—and you will sit in the front of the class. Whenever you email Professor Story, use only your UTA email and write the following in the subject line: your last name (e.g., *Story*); course number and section number (e.g., *3310-001*); and a brief description of the content or attachments (e.g., *Statistical Project*).

I am not able to reply to requests for verification receipt of a particular email. I have complete confidence in the UTA email system. You should be sure to save your sent copy as evidence if any questions arise.

Final Review Week

A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabi. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. Classes are held as scheduled during this week and lectures and presentations may be given.

Librarian to Contact

The UTA provides a highly qualified and motivated subject librarian in the Main Library. Please contact the Library for any assistance involving Library resources.

Grade Grievance Policy

Described in the Catalog at <http://www.uta.edu/catalog/general/academicreg.html> (scroll about halfway down).

Drop Policy

Described in the Catalog at <http://www.uta.edu/catalog/general/academicreg.html> (scroll about halfway down). Students are responsible for knowing all drop/withdrawal policies and deadlines. Students should drop any class as a last resort—and need to visit the office of their major to drop. This instructor will not approve any requests for extending the deadline to drop.

Dropping a course is a decision a student must make for themselves. However, I would recommend that if a student has missed 6 or more classes, they should consider dropping the course--as it will be very challenging to be successful if you have missed that many classes.

Excused Absences.

“Excused” Absences are recognized in only three cases.

1. The student has a memo from the Provost that they were absent due to a University activity.
2. The student has a note from their doctor stating explicitly the dates in which the student was medically unable to attend class.
3. Students who are suddenly called to active duty in the armed services.

Students may take the make-up exam for any tests other than the final exam no matter if their absence is excused or not. However, they may take the make-up exam for the final exam only when their absence is excused.

Add Policy

Any student has the prerogative and right to add this class up to the last day of Late Registration (or the final date for students to add themselves in MyMav). However, I will not approve any adds beyond the class capacity, and I will not approve any adds beyond that last date for students to add themselves.

Receipt for submitted exam

I maintain that I have never lost a hard-copy exam submitted to me. However, if you would like assurance that you submitted your exam, please ask for a receipt when you give me your exam.

Use SPSS only in a UTA computer lab

If this class requires utilizing SPSS, I strongly recommend that you access SPSS only in a UTA computer lab. You can find the lists with software available in each at

<http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/computerlabs/software/index.php>

Other Academic Policies and Regulations

All University academic policies and regulations can be found in the UTA Undergraduate Catalog, particularly in the section on Academic Regulations: <http://www.uta.edu/catalog/general/academicreg.html>.

Inclement Weather

In the event that weather or other conditions are such that normal campus operations could be impeded, the Vice President for Student Affairs is responsible for determining whether classes will be canceled or delayed and if University offices will be closed or open late. Such information will be provided to the local broadcast media, normally no later than 6:30 a.m. Information may also be obtained by dialing (972) 601-2049, by watching Arlington Comcast Cable Channel 76, or by reviewing the UTA website (www.uta.edu).

Work Load, Attendance, Behavior, and Prompt Arrival

It is expected that students will need to devote at least 2 hours per week outside of class for every one hour per week in class. All students should recognize that their education is a priority. Students are required to attend all classes and arrive on time, unless otherwise stated in the Syllabus. In any case, if a student comes to class, they must arrive on-time. Students may not leave class early, unless they have notified Professor Story in advance. Students should not sleep in class. Non-disruptive behavior and academic honesty are required. Points may be deducted from exams or from final grades for not following policies, procedures, and directions for this class—and for any misconduct or disruptive behavior.

Pace Yourself

Many projects and papers are not due until the end of the semester. However, students should make continual progress on these during the semester and not postpone all of the work until the end of the semester.

Many Grades are Frequently not Available until the End of the Semester

Students should recognize that many (sometimes most) of the grades are not available until the end of the semester.

The Official Syllabus is found only on Professor Story’s web site

No incompletes are granted for the Honors paper

Posting Grades

Grades are not posted online nor given out over the phone. Exams will be returned in as timely a manner as possible. After the conclusion of the semester, you are welcome to provide me with a self-stamped and self-addressed postcard or envelope, and I will mail your final grade to you.

Typographical Errors on Syllabus

Please notify the instructor if you ever notice any typographical errors, incorrect dates, or the like in this syllabus.

Any Student Enrolled in the Class Recognizes that they Understand all Syllabus Policies

All students should also confirm their official enrollment in this class.

Do not enroll in a class unless you are certain that you can always arrive on time. If for any reason you cannot always arrive on time, you should select a different class which fits your schedule.

Significant points will be deducted for failure to follow any policies, procedures, or directions.

Questions

If you ever have any questions, do not hesitate to email me.

COURSE OUTLINE

	<u>Week(s) Covered</u>
1. Introduction—Ch. 1	Jan. 13 and 20

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|---------|
| 2. | Political Economy | Jan. 20 |
| 3. | Constitution and Federalism—Ch. 2 & 3 | Jan. 27 |
| 4. | Ideology and Public Opinion—Ch. 4 | Feb. 3 |
| 5. | Participation and Elections—Ch. 5 & 6 | Feb. 10 |

FIRST EXAM, Feb. 17 (Monday)

- | | | |
|----|---|----------------|
| 6. | Political Parties—Review Ch. 6 on parties | Feb. 17 |
| 7. | Interest Groups—Ch. 7 | Feb. 24 |
| 8. | Presidency—Ch. 9 & 10 | March 3 and 17 |
| 9. | Congress—Ch. 8 | March 24 |

SECOND EXAM, March 31 (Monday)

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 10. | Courts—Ch. 11, 12, & 13 | March 31 and April 7 |
| 11. | Public Policy—Ch. 14 | April 14, 21, and 28 |

MAKE-UP EXAM, MAY 2 (Friday)

FINAL EXAM (same room as the regular classroom)—per the Final Exam Schedule (UTA web site—Academic Calendar).