



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO

GOVT 2305: Federal Government section 006

Fall 2025

General Information

Course & Section #	GOVT 2305- 006
Term & Years	Fall 2025
Course Schedule	Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30am-10:45am
Course Location	Central Academic Building 334

Instructor Information

Name and Title	Dr. Daniel Braaten
E-mail	dbraaten@tamusa.edu
Phone Number	210-784-2276
Office Hours	Tuesday, Thursday 11:00am-1:00pm
Office Location	Central Academic Building, Office 347-C

Course Overview

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.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the following topics

1. The origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States
2. The federal system
3. Separation of powers and check and balances in both theory and practice
4. The legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government
5. The role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system
6. The election process
7. The rights and responsibilities of citizens

Required Course Materials

American Government: A Brief Introduction 18th Edition, Theodore J Lowi, Benjamin Ginsberg, Kenneth A Shepsle, Stephen Ansolabehere, Hahrie Han. 2025. **Free through Blackboard**

Additional Readings on Blackboard

Course Requirements

Exams – There are three exams in this course, one covering each of the major sections of the course – founding institutions, governing institutions, and intermediary institutions. The exams will take place in class and are scheduled in the syllabus (see below). Each exam will consist of a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions and will be worth 100 points each. A study guide will be provided prior to each exam. (300 total points)

Quizzes - There are 12 weekly quizzes in this course. Each quiz will cover the chapter for that week and any additional reading assigned. Each quiz is worth 10 points with 1 point per question. I will drop the two lowest quiz scores and there are not make up quizzes available (100 total points)

Data Analysis Assignments – There are two data analysis assignments in this course. The due dates for the assignments are below and each assignment will require students to use a readily available data source to answer specific questions about American politics. Each assignment is worth 50 points and will be 3-5 pages in length (100 total points).

Participation/In Class Assignments – The participation grade for class is based on two components – class participation and completion of in class assignments. For the most part as long as I can tell the student put in a good faith effort on the assignments and their participation, they will receive full credit but if not, they will be docked points. The assignments are designed to be completed in class so that means students must be present in class to participate. Make up in-class assignments will be given only when the students are gone from class for an excused absence (i.e., illness or university sponsored event) (100 total points)

Grade Breakdown

Grade	Equivalent Points
A	90%-100%
B	80%-89%
C	70%-79%
D	60%-69%
F	Below 60%

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend every class. If a student is unable to attend class, they should notify the Professor as soon as possible.

Electronics Policy

Students can use laptops and/or tablets in class if they feel they are helpful for their educational experience. However, as the instructor I reserve the right to tell students to stop using them if I feel they are causing a distraction to myself or the rest of the class. I prefer that student put their phones away for the duration of the lecture portion of the class.

Make-Up Assignments

I will also accept late assignments (in class and data analysis) for one week passed the deadline but those late assignments have to be for excused absences only. I will not accept late quizzes.

If a student is unable to take an exam on the scheduled date, they must notify the instructor as soon as possible. Make up exams will only be given for legitimate reasons (i.e. illness, family emergency, school sponsored event)

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty

The faculty of the Department of Arts and Sciences expects students to conduct their academic work with integrity and honesty. Acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and can result in the failure of a course and dismissal from the University. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, collusion- the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit, the abuse of resource materials, and misrepresentation of credentials or accomplishments as a member of the College. Students are expected to do their own course work. Cheating or plagiarism by an individual student will result in a grade of F on the particular paper or in the course.

The University's policy on academic honesty and appeal procedures can be found in <http://www.tamusa.tamus.edu/undergraduate-catalog-2011.pdf>.

Prohibited Conduct

All forms of prohibited conduct are outlined in the TAMU-SA student handbook. In addition, guidelines and procedures for handling instances of student misconduct are contained therein, which can be viewed on line at: <http://www.tamusa.tamus.edu/studenthandbook.html>

No Use of Generative AI Permitted

GOVT 2305 assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT. Use of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Week	Topics Covered	Assigned Readings	Assignments Due
Foundational Institutions of American politics			
Week 1 (8/26, 8/28)	What is Politics?	Syllabus, <i>American Government</i> Chapter 1, <i>Are we alone in the Universe</i>	Quiz #1 on 8/28
Week 2 (9/2, 9/4)	America's Founding and the Constitution	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 2 <i>Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution</i>	Quiz #2 on 9/4
Week 3 (9/9, 9/11)	Federalism and Separation of Powers	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 3 <i>Federalist Papers #10 and #51</i>	Quiz #3 on 9/11

Week 4 (9/16, 9/18)	Civil Liberties and Civil Rights	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 4 <i>Letter From Birmingham Jail</i>	Quiz #4 on 9/18
Week 5 (9/23, 9/25)	Exam 1	No Reading Assignments	Exam 1 on 9/25
Governing Institutions of American politics			
Week 6 (9/30, 10/2)	Congress: The Legislative Branch	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 5	Quiz #5 on 10/2 Data Analysis Assignment #1 due on 10/3
Week 7 (10/7, 10/9)	The Institutional Presidency	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 6	Quiz #6 on 10/9
Week 8 (10/14, 10/16)	The Executive Branch	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 7	Quiz #7 on 10/16
Week 9 (10/21, 10/23)	The Federal Courts	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 8	Quiz #8 on 10/23
Week 10 (10/28, 10/30)	Exam 2	No Reading Assignment	Exam 2 on 10/30
Intermediary Institutions of American politics			
Week 11(11/4, 11/6)	Public Opinion and the Media	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 9	Quiz #9 on 11/6
Week 12 (11/11, 11/13)	Federal Elections	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 10	Quiz #10 on 11/13
Week 13 (11/18, 11/20)	Political Parties	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 11	Quiz #11 on 11/20 Data Analysis Assignment #2 due
Week 14 (11/25, 11/27)	No Class for Thanksgiving Break	No Reading Assignment	No Assignment Due
Week 15 (12/2, 12/4)	Interest Groups	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 12	Quiz #12 on 12/4
Week 16 Finals Week	Final Exam Week	No Reading Assignment	Exam 3 on 12/9 at 12:00pm in class

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html> or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss

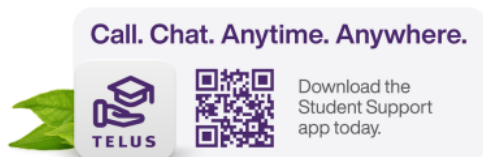
their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information on SCC services visit tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2'). Additionally, the TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in the moment distress, an anonymous peer to peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/emergency-management/>.

Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student

receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/>.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a CARE referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/file-a-report.html>) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots’ Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student’s GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as “F” grades and will impact the student’s GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual within our state,

nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, [Student Code of Conduct](#), on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated. Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity.html>).

Important Dates: Fall 2025 Regular 16-Week Session

August 25 First day of class

September 1

Labor Day Holiday – No classes

September 10

Census Date

November 14

Last day to drop with an automatic “W”

November 25 Last day to withdraw from the University

November 26 Study Day – No classes

November 27-29 Thanksgiving Holiday – No classes

December 4 Last day of classes

December 5 Study Day – No classes

December 6-12 Final exams

December 16 Commencement

The complete academic calendar is available online:

<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>



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