



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO

GOVT 2305: Federal Government section 600

Fall 2026

General Information

Course & Section #	GOVT 2305-600
Term & Years	Fall 2026
Course Schedule	Online Asynchronous
Course Location	Remote

Instructor Information

Name and Title	Dr. Daniel Braaten
E-mail	dbraaten@tamusa.edu
Phone Number	210-784-2276
Office Hours	Tuesday, Thursday 12:30pm-2:00pm
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 liberties of people in the United States
8. The close reading of important historical texts
9. The basics of descriptive data analysis

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**

Course Requirements

Exams - There are two exams in this course, a midterm and a final exam. **Students are required to take these exams in the testing center on campus.** Each exam will consist of a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions and will be closed book and closed notes. The midterm exam will be worth 100 points and the final exam will be worth 150 points. Students will have 1 hour and 15 minutes to complete the mid-term exam and 2 hours and 15 minutes to complete the final exams. A study guide will be provided prior to each exam, and we will also have a review session prior to each exam. (250 total points)

Quizzes - There are 12 weekly quizzes in this course. Each quiz will cover the chapter for that week. Each quiz is worth 20 points with 15 multiple choice/true false questions each worth 1 point and a short answer question worth 5 points. The quizzes are taken through blackboard, require the use of Respondus lockdown browser, are timed (20 minutes) and are available on Monday at 12:01am and are due on Sunday at 11:59pm. Students are to work on the quizzes on their own. I will drop the lowest quiz score and there are no make-up quizzes available except in the case of emergencies which the student must contact the instructor about as soon as possible (220 total points)

Participation/In class Assignments – Each Monday (except for exam weeks and Thanksgiving week) I will post a discussion question related to the week's topic. Students are required to post at least 2 responses. One to the original post by me, and one post to one of your fellow classmates' posts. These responses will be graded and are worth 10 points each (for a total of 20 points). Your online participation will be evaluated on a quantity and quality basis. Your comments should advance the discussion, add value, and be relevant. Comments such as "I agree" and "ditto" are not considered value-added participation. Therefore, when you agree or disagree with a comment, please state and support your agreement or disagreement. The posts are due on Sundays at 11:59pm (240 total points)

Grade Breakdown

Grade Table

GRADE	PERCENTAGE	EQUIVALENT POINTS
A	90%-100%	639-710
B	80%-89%	568-638
C	70%-79%	497-567
D	60%-69%	426-496
F	Below 60%	0-425

Attendance Policy

This course is online and asynchronous so there is no attendance per se. However, the class is structured for students to progress through specific topics weekly. Although you have the entire week to complete the assignments you still need to complete them in that time frame. This is not a class you can put off until the end of the semester and try and race through to finish in the last few weeks. You must “attend” to the assignments weekly.

Make-Up Assignments

I will not accept late assignments except under exceptional circumstances. Students need to contact the instructor immediately if they are unable to complete any assignment on time

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 this [website](#)

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 online at this [website](#)

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

Academic Freedom Statement

Higher education is predicated on the exchange, vetting, and deliberation of often controversial and unsettled ideas. In this class, for example, we explore how the discipline of political science has addressed issues of racial justice in American politics. We are not here to simply express personal opinions or repeat talking points, but rather to engage a set of ideas and research findings that have a long and complicated history and are therefore subject to ongoing debate. Committed students and scholars can, and do, disagree on the topics we will be discussing.

The syllabus has been designed to bring these controversies and disagreements to the fore. Students are also invited to introduce additional challenges in a serious and open-minded manner.

Such conversations require mutual trust and respect. It is therefore essential that students feel free to express their deeply held views and continually developing perspectives. This means ensuring that all students and faculty feel included and welcomed to engage in discussion. Because hateful or discriminatory speech and behavior degrades the possibility for a free exchange of ideas, it will not be tolerated.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Class Schedule Table

WEEK	TOPICS COVERED	ASSIGNED READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
WEEK 1 (AUGUST 24-30)	What is Politics?	Syllabus, <i>American Government</i> Chapter 1	Quiz #1 and Discussion Post #1 due on 8/30
WEEK 2 (AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 6)	America's Founding and the Constitution	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 2	Quiz #2 and Discussion Post #2 due on 9/6
WEEK 3 (SEPTEMBER 7-SEPTEMBER 13)	Federalism and Separation of Powers	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 3	Quiz #3 and Discussion Post #3 due on 9/13
WEEK 4 (SEPTEMBER 14-SEPTEMBER 20)	Civil Liberties	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 4 up to the Bill of Rights today section	Quiz #4 and Discussion Post #4 due on 9/20
WEEK 5 (SEPTEMBER 21-SEPTEMBER 27)	Civil Rights	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 4 continuing to the Conclusion section,	Quiz #5 and Discussion Post #5 due on 9/27
WEEK 6 (SEPTEMBER 28-OCTOBER 4)	Congress: The Legislative Branch	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 5	Quiz #6 and Discussion Post #6 due on 10/4
WEEK 7 (OCTOBER 5-OCTOBER 11)	Midterm Exam	No Reading Assignment	Students schedule to take midterm exam at testing center from 10/5-10/9
WEEK 8 (OCTOBER 12-OCTOBER 18)	The Institutional Presidency	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 6	Quiz #7 and Discussion Post #7 due on 10/18

WEEK	TOPICS COVERED	ASSIGNED READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
WEEK 9 (OCTOBER 19- OCTOBER 25)	The Federal Courts	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 8	Quiz #8 and Discussion Post #8 due on 10/25
WEEK 10 (OCTOBER 26- NOVEMBER 1)	Public Opinion and the Media	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 9	Quiz #9 and Discussion Post #9 due on 11/01
WEEK 11 (NOVEMBER 2 – NOVEMBER 8)	Federal Elections	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 10	Quiz #10 and Discussion Post #10 due on 11/08
WEEK 12 (NOVEMBER 9 – NOVEMBER 15)	Political Parties	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 11	Quiz #11 and Discussion Post #11 due on 11/15
WEEK 13 (NOVEMBER 16- NOVEMBER 22)	Interest Groups	<i>American Government</i> Chapter 12	Quiz #12 and Discussion Post #12 due on 11/22
WEEK 14 (NOVEMBER 23- NOVEMBER 29)	Thanksgiving Week	No Reading Assignment	No Assignments Due
WEEK 15 (NOVEMBER 30- DECEMBER 6)	Review Week	No Reading Assignment	Review for final exam
WEEK 16 (DECEMBER 7 – DECEMBER 11)	Final Exam	No Reading Assignment	Students schedule to take midterm exam at testing center from 12/7- 12/11

Important Policies and Resources

University Email Policy and Course Communications:

All correspondence between professors and students must occur via university email accounts. You must have your Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at helpdesk@tamusa.edu or at 210-784-HELP (4357). If you don't hear back within 48 hours, contact them again. They have many requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to follow up with them.

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 at the [website](#) or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. All

students are encouraged to discuss their academic accommodation with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center:

All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. 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. Online tutoring is also available for after hours and weekend assistance.

While tutoring hours may change based on tutor schedules and availability, the current tutoring hours for MATH in the ALC are as follows:

Appointments available MATH Walk in Tutoring – No appointment needed

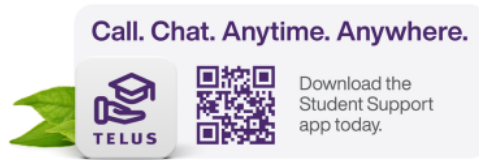
	Appointments available	Walk in Tutoring – No appointment needed
MONDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
TUESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
WEDNESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
THURSDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
FRIDAY	8 am – 5 pm	11 am – 4 pm

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, visit our website, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

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. *Crisis support is available 24/7/365 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 or through the TELUS student support App.*

The TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including 24/7/365 support for in the moment distress, crisis support, 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 system. 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 on emergency response may be found at: [Emergency Operations Plan](#) and the [Emergency Action Plan](#). 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 by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (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.

Jaguar Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC):

The WLDCC provides support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Writing 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. The WLDCC offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. Students can schedule appointments with the WLDCC in JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. Students wanting to work in realtime with a tutor can schedule an "Online Appointment." Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an "eTutoring" appointment. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our [website](#) . The WLDCC can also be reached by emailing wldcc@tamusa.edu.

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 report](#) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources. A food pantry is available on campus; click [here](#) for hours and contact information.

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 wide variety 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 on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to 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, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University's Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or titleix@tamusa.edu.

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 discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking based on sex, 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 sex-based 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.

Young Jaguars:

Can support parenting students with daycare if students meet this criteria: (1) must be enrolled in classes at Texas A&M-San Antonio in the current semester, (2) must be Pell eligible or a single parent, (3) child(ren) must be aged 3 to 12-years-old, and (4) child(ren) must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. Hours of operation is Monday-Thursday 3:30pm-9:00pm. For more information, please contact Young Jaguars at youngjaguars@tamusa.edu or call (210) 784-2636.

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, 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, 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](#) or visit the resources available in the [OSRR website](#)

Important Fall 2026 Dates:

Dates	Event
August 20	Tuition & Fee Payments deadline
August 24	First day of class
September 7	Labor Day Holiday – No Classes / University Closed
September 9	Census Date – Students not paid in full or enrolled in a payment plan by 4:59 pm may be dropped for non-payment
October 5 – October 16	Midterm grading period
November 13	Last day to drop with an automatic “W”
November 25	Study Day – No classes
November 26-November 28	Thanksgiving Holiday – No Classes / University Closed
November 30	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University
December 4	Last day of classes
December 5 – December 11	Final exams
December 15	Commencement

The complete [academic calendar](#) is available online.

