TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-SAN ANTONIO

GOVT 2305: Federal Government

Fall 2026 Course Syllabus | 8-Week Online Course

Instructor	Prof. Jaymie Mangelsdorf, M.Jur., M.A.
Class Dates & Format	October 13, 2026 – December 11, 2026 | 100% Online (Blackboard)
Contact	Email: Jaymie.mangelsdorf@tamusa.edu Student meetings: by appointment

About the Instructor

Professor Jaymie Mangelsdorf is an Adjunct Faculty member at Texas A&M University–San Antonio (TAMUSA) and San Antonio College (SAC). A native of Laredo, Texas, she holds bachelor's and master's degrees in political science from the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and a Master of Jurisprudence from Texas A&M University School of Law, with a certification in Health Law, Policy, and Management. Her courses connect political institutions and political processes to real-world government through evidence-based discussion, critical analysis, and active participation. She is married to Charles Edward Mangelsdorf Jr., a surgical nurse and legal nurse consultant, and they have one son, Ryan.

Course Description & Outcomes

GOVT 2305 examines the foundations, institutions, political processes, and public policies of the United States national government. Topics include the U.S. Constitution, federalism, civil liberties and civil rights, Congress, the presidency, the executive branch, the federal courts, public opinion, elections, political parties, interest groups, the media, and major areas of public policy. The course supports the Texas Core objectives of critical thinking, communication, personal responsibility, and social responsibility.

- Explain the historical and constitutional foundations of the United States government.
- Describe the structure, powers, and functions of the major institutions of the national government.
- Analyze how public opinion, elections, political parties, interest groups, and the media shape American politics and public policy.
- Apply course concepts to contemporary issues in American government using evidence, critical analysis, and respectful discussion.

Required Materials

American Government: Power & Purpose, 18th ed. (W. W. Norton); Norton InQuizitive access; and regular Blackboard access for course materials, assignments, announcements, exams, and grades.

Course Format

This is an accelerated, 8-week, 100% online course covering the major foundations, institutions, political processes, and policy areas of American national government. Most instructional weeks include two or three textbook chapters and their corresponding Norton InQuizitive assignments. Students should log in to Blackboard several times each week and should not wait until the due date to begin coursework.

Assessment & Grading

Component	Weight	Purpose
InQuizitive	20%	Low-stakes chapter preparation and comprehension
Unit Exams	45%	Major course-unit mastery
Online Engagement	15%	Application, analysis, and course engagement
Final Exam	20%	Cumulative written analysis Total: 100%

Grading scale: A 90-100 | B 80-89 | C 70-79 | D 60-69 | F below 60

InQuizitive: Each assigned textbook chapter includes a corresponding Norton InQuizitive assignment. InQuizitive is intended as low-stakes practice and preparation. Except for the shortened opening week, new modules are released on Sunday and are due by 11:59 p.m. the following Sunday.

Check Blackboard and the Norton platform regularly.

Unit Exams: Four multiple-choice unit exams will be given and represent a major portion of the course grade. Unit Exam 1 covers Chapters 1-5; Unit Exam 2 covers Chapters 6-9; Unit Exam 3 covers Chapters 10-14; and Unit Exam 4 covers Chapters 15-17. Exams must be completed within the testing window posted on Blackboard.

Exams must be completed within the testing window posted on Blackboard.

Final Exam: The cumulative final exam will cover the major concepts, institutions, political processes, and public-policy themes addressed throughout the course. It will consist of 3-5 short essay-response questions requiring students to explain, connect, compare, and apply major course concepts in American government. It will be released Wednesday, December 9, 2026, and must be submitted on or before 11:59 p.m. Friday, December 11, 2026.

KEY DATES
October 13: Course begins
November 25: University Study Day
November 26-28: University closed
December 7: Instructional course schedule concludes

FINAL EXAM:
Released Wednesday, December 9, 2026
Due by 11:59 p.m. Friday, December 11, 2026

Course Policies

Online Attendance & Engagement: Because this is a fully online course, attendance is demonstrated through active participation in Blackboard, completion of assigned work, and timely submission of InQuizitive assignments and exams. Students are responsible for all posted materials, announcements, and deadlines. Due to the accelerated format, falling behind even one week may represent a significant portion of the course.

Late Work / Missed Assessments: Submit work by the stated deadline. Make-up work or extensions are considered under university policy, approved accommodations, and the circumstances of the absence; specific Blackboard instructions control when applicable. Students should contact the instructor as soon as possible when circumstances may interfere with meeting a deadline.

Online Engagement: Selected weeks will include a short online engagement activity designed to apply course concepts to American government and public affairs. These activities may include a brief response, analysis, reflection, or other Blackboard-based activity. Students are expected to engage respectfully and consider differing perspectives. The professor will facilitate course engagement in an academically neutral and nonpartisan manner, with emphasis on critical analysis, evidence, and civil discourse.

Communication: Blackboard is the primary course hub. Check it and your university email regularly. Email from your university account, include GOVT 2305 in the subject line, and allow up to two business days for a response. Please keep in communication with me to ensure your success: Jaymie.mangelsdorf@tamusa.edu

Syllabus Changes

The instructor may make reasonable changes to support course learning or university requirements. Substantive changes will be announced through Blackboard. Students are responsible for reviewing announcements, weekly modules, and the course schedule regularly.

Weekly Course Schedule

The course follows a predictable weekly rhythm.

Week 1 is a shortened opening week from Tuesday, October 13 through Sunday, October 18. Beginning Sunday, October 18, each new module is released on Sunday and is due by 11:59 p.m. the following Sunday.

Most weeks include two or three textbook chapters and their corresponding InQuizitive assignments. Online engagement is assigned only in selected weeks, and unit exams occur approximately every two weeks. All dates, readings, and testing windows are also posted on Blackboard.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COURSE SCHEDULE

Fall 2026 | October 13 – December 11, 2026

Week 1 | October 13–18

Chapter 1: Five Principles of Politics

Chapter 2: Constructing a Government: The Founding and the Constitution

Assignments: Read Chapters 1–2; InQuizitive 1–2; Online Engagement 1

Due: Sunday, October 18, 11:59 p.m.

Week 2 | October 19–25

Chapter 3: Federalism and the Separation of Powers

Chapter 4: Civil Liberties

Chapter 5: Civil Rights

Assignments: Read Chapters 3–5; InQuizitive 3–5; Unit Exam 1 (Chapters 1–5)

Due: Sunday, October 25, 11:59 p.m.

Week 3 | October 26 – November 1

Chapter 6: Congress: The First Branch

Chapter 7: The Presidency as an Institution

Assignments: Read Chapters 6–7; InQuizitive 6–7; Online Engagement 2

Due: Sunday, November 1, 11:59 p.m.

Week 4 | November 2–8

Chapter 8: The Executive Branch

Chapter 9: The Federal Courts

Assignments: Read Chapters 8–9; InQuizitive 8–9; Unit Exam 2 (Chapters 6–9)

Due: Sunday, November 8, 11:59 p.m.

Week 5 | November 9–15

Chapter 10: Public Opinion

Chapter 11: Elections

Assignments: Read Chapters 10–11; InQuizitive 10–11; Online Engagement 3

Due: Sunday, November 15, 11:59 p.m.

Week 6 | November 16–22

Chapter 12: Political Parties

Chapter 13: Groups and Interests

Chapter 14: The Media

Assignments: Read Chapters 12–14; InQuizitive 12–14; Unit Exam 3 (Chapters 10–14)

Due: Sunday, November 22, 11:59 p.m.

Week 7 | November 23–24

Chapter 15: Economic Policy

Chapter 16: Social Policy

Assignments: Read Chapters 15–16; InQuizitive 15–16

Due: Tuesday, November 24, 11:59 p.m.

Note: Week 7 readings and InQuizitive activities available November 16.

THANKSGIVING BREAK | November 25–30

No required coursework or assignment deadlines.

Week 8 | December 1–7

Chapter 17: Foreign Policy

Course Review and Synthesis

Assignments: Read Chapter 17; InQuizitive 17; Unit Exam 4 (Chapters 15–17)

Due: Monday, December 7, 11:59 p.m.

FINAL EXAM | December 9–11

Cumulative examination covering Chapters 1–17; 3–5 short essay responses

Due: Friday, December 11, 11:59 p.m.

IMPORTANT NOTES

All coursework deadlines are at 11:59 p.m. on the dates listed. Check Blackboard regularly for announcements, instructions, and grades

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 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 responses 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, 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 real-time 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 with 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. 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 reasonable accommodation 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 students' 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

Prohibition on Generative AI Use

GOVT 2305: Federal Government 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.