

Course Syllabus

POLS 4331 Constitutional Law

Spring 2026

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Office: 331 Main Campus

Office hours : By appointment

Class Information: Online

Before we begin, please read this syllabus which provides a roadmap of the semester, outlines course policies and expectations, and provides some tips for improving your chances of succeeding in this course. This syllabus will also serve as a reference throughout the semester which you can consult to answer many of your questions and to guide you towards resources which may be of assistance. By remaining enrolled in this course (choosing not to drop the course), you are agreeing to abide by all course policies set forth in this syllabus.

Course Description: This course focuses on institutional power and constraints. A survey of American constitutional law, using leading cases, both historic and contemporary, of the Supreme Court of the United States. Establishment of the federal political system for which the Constitution provided and the judicial allocations of political and economic power within that system.

Prerequisites: GOVT 2305 and GOVT 2306.

Required Textbook: Constitutional Law: Principles and Practice. by Hames and Ekern. 2nd edition. Cengage Publishing. Recommended to buy e-book. ISBN-13: 9780357701966. Paperback edition: ISBN-13: 9781111648541

Course Policies, Assignments, and Student Resources

1. Class Participation/Grading/Late Work

Students are expected to log into the course regularly and complete all assigned chapter quizzes each week. Students should read the assigned material **prior** to completing quizzes and exams.

Regular participation is essential for success in this course.

Grading

Late assignments will not be accepted absent compelling circumstances. If any late assignment is accepted, a penalty of 10pts will be assessed.

| Chapter Quizzes | 100 points per quiz available | 40% of overall final course grade |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mid-Term Exam | 100 points available | 20% of overall final course grade |
| Final Exam | 100 points available | 20% of overall final course grade |
| Term Paper | 100 Points | 20% of overall final course grade |

2. Quizzes

- Weekly chapter quizzes will be administered **each week except Chapter 1**.
- Quizzes open at **12:00 a.m. (CST) on Monday**.
- Quizzes close at **11:59 p.m. (CST) on Sunday**.
- **Late quizzes are not accepted** and will not be reopened once the deadline has passed.

3. Term Paper (First Amendment Project)

Due Date

- One (1) term paper is required.
- The paper is due **no later than Week 15** of the course.
- Students may submit the paper early.
- **Late papers will not be accepted.**

Assignment Scenario

A new social group on the XYZ University campus, *Sons of the Republic of Texas*, consists of approximately 100 student members. Members wear identifying armbands while on campus and hold meetings in various public campus locations. During meetings, members openly voice opposition to the LGBT community and display images of burned bodies from the Holocaust using their cell phones.

The University President has warned the organization to stop both the speech and the use of the images or risk expulsion.

Assignment Prompt: Write your strongest argument explaining why the student group **should be allowed** to: 1. Voice opposition to LGBT individuals or groups, and 2. Display images of burned bodies during meetings

Your argument should be grounded in First Amendment principles.

Paper Requirements

- Minimum of **500 words** (not including cover page, abstract, or references)
- APA format required (cover page, abstract, headings, citations, references)
- Annotate the **word count** on the final page
- Submit the paper within the course
- A template is provided for student use

Sources

- A minimum of **three (3) academic-quality sources** is required
- Acceptable academic sources include:
 - Court opinions
 - Scholarly publications
 - Academic journals
 - Government reports

- Non-academic sources (e.g., Wikipedia) may be used **in addition** to academic sources

Grading Criteria (100 points total)

- 25% – APA Format
- 25% – Grammar and Spelling
- 25% – Analysis Supporting Position
- 25% – Use of Relevant Academic Sources

4. Exams

Mid-Term Exam

- Covers all chapters up to the mid-term week

Final Exam

- Covers chapters from the mid-term through the end of the course

5. Important University Policies and Student Resources

Academic Accommodations (Disability Support Services)

Texas A&M University-San Antonio provides reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

- Location: Central Academic Building, Suite 210
- Phone: (210) 784-1335
- Email: dss@tamusa.edu
- Website: <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html>

Academic Learning Center (Tutoring)

Free course-based tutoring is available to all enrolled students through Brainfuse.

- Email: tutoring@tamusa.edu
- Phone: (210) 784-1307
- Location: Central Academic Building, Room 202

Counseling and Mental Health Services

Confidential mental health services are available at no cost to students.

- Student Counseling Center: Madla 120
- Phone: (210) 784-1331
- Crisis Support (24/7): (210) 784-1331
- Website: <https://tamusa.edu/studentcounseling>

The TELUS Student Support App also provides mental health resources and peer support.

Emergency Preparedness

Students are encouraged to register for **JagE Alert**, the university's emergency notification system.

- Emergency: (210) 784-1911
- Non-Emergency: (210) 784-1900
- SafeZone App: <https://safezoneapp.com/>

Financial Aid and Attendance

Federal regulations require students to attend class to remain eligible for Title IV financial aid. Students who do not attend prior to the census date may have their aid terminated and returned to the Department of Education.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center

Support is available for writing, presentations, language support, and digital projects.

Appointments are scheduled through JagWire under Student Services.

Meeting Basic Needs

Students experiencing food or housing insecurity are encouraged to submit a CARE referral and may notify the instructor if comfortable doing so.

Office Hours

Faculty maintain regularly scheduled office hours in addition to appointments. Please refer to the syllabus or instructor announcements for details.

Military Affairs

Veterans and active-duty personnel may contact the Office of Military Affairs for benefits support.

- Location: Patriots' Casa, Room 202
- Email: military.va@tamus.edu
- Phone: (210) 784-1397

Religious Observances

Students observing religious holidays may make up missed work provided the instructor is notified before the end of the second week of classes.

The Six-Drop Rule

Texas law limits undergraduate students to six non-punitive course drops during their academic career.

Harassment, Discrimination, and Title IX

Texas A&M University–San Antonio prohibits discrimination and harassment in all forms.

- Civil Rights Officer / Title IX Coordinator
- Phone: (210) 784-2061
- Email: titleix@tamus.edu

Confidential resources are available through the Student Counseling Center.

Pregnant and Parenting Students

The university provides reasonable modifications and support services for pregnant and parenting students.

Young Jaguars Childcare Program: - Email: youngjaguars@tamusa.edu - Phone: (210) 784-2636

6. Students' Rights and Responsibilities

Students are entitled to freedom of expression, privacy, and due process, and are responsible for respecting others, complying with university policies, and maintaining academic integrity.

7. Academic Integrity and Use of Artificial Intelligence

No Use of Generative AI Permitted

All work submitted in this course must be completed by the student. The use of AI tools (including ChatGPT or similar platforms) for generating assignment content is strictly prohibited and constitutes academic dishonesty.

Violations may result in academic and/or disciplinary sanctions.