

**POLS 1337**  
**American and Texas Government**  
**University of Houston-Main Campus**  
**Spring Semester 2014 (16 weeks)**

Class Section 23593

MWF 12pm-1pm, Room: SW 101 -OR- MW 4pm-530pm, Room AAA Aud 1

**Instructor:** Laila Sorurbakhsh, PhD  
**Contact:** lfsorurbakhsh@uh.edu  
Office Location: PGH 369  
Office Hours MW: 230-4pm

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students will attain through reading, lectures, and discussion, and demonstrate through exams, a knowledge of the structure of American government and how inputs into the political systems determines who get what, when, and how in American society.

**Course Website:** [www.uh.edu/blackboard](http://www.uh.edu/blackboard). Students must log in and sign into the class POLS 1337.

**Required Text:** American Democracy Now, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Texas Edition E-TEXTBOOK (accessed only through Blackboard).

**Additional Readings:** Supplemental readings will be distributed on the course website, in addition to the LearnSmart tutorials and the discussion board posts.

**Classroom Behavior:** All cell phones and electronic devices will be turned off for the duration of the class. Students engaging in inappropriate behavior in the classroom (i.e. sleeping, texting, talking, etc) will be requested to leave the class. If the behavior persists, the student will be dropped from the course. Fighting or threats of any kind will be reported immediately to the police and the student will not be permitted to return to the class.

**General Statement:** The instructor has the right to add, delete, or modify segments of this course or syllabus during the semester.

**Instructor Guidelines and Policies:**

**ATTENDANCE:** You cannot gain much from this course unless you attend class, thus attendance is required and will be to complete this course regularly. Attendance will be taken everyday, and students who are regularly tardy or leave early will not be counted as present.

Any student with more than 3 absences should drop the course, otherwise the professor will give the student a grade of F for the course. Should you need to miss a class or leave early, you must come talk to me to approve or excuse it.

**EXAMS:** There will be 3 exams: two administered throughout the course of the semester and a final exam. The final exam is NOT cumulative. These exams will consist of 50 multiple choice questions (2 points each). Exams will be administered in class on the scheduled test days, if not available online. Students are required to provide their own pencils.

LearnSmart tutorials: On the topical outline, students will see that some chapters have LearnSmart tutorial is available. For these chapters, students must log into blackboard and complete the tutorial to enrich course material and enrich the learning experience. The instructor may also log in at any time to see how much time each student has spent and also evaluate the level of mastery. Students have 2 weeks from the day a topic is discussed to complete the LearnSmart for that chapter. Students may also log into the tutorial to help study for the exams. This is a great study tool- use it wisely.

Discussion Board: Over the course of the semester, students will be required to make 10 discussion posts on a topic of the instructor's choice. These topics will cover the course material and connect them to current events. Students must write at least 5 sentences (with correct grammar and spelling) tying their opinions into the course material. To get full credit, you will need to provide evidence for your statements and opinions using things you have learned in class. In addition, the students must also make one reply to another student's post, also at least 5 sentences long. As always, no foul language, trash talk, or bullying will be tolerated.

Discussions will be posted every Tuesday by 12 noon on the indicated weeks and students must complete their posts by 5pm the following Sunday.

**Grading:**

Exam I	20%
Exam II	20%
Exam III	20%
Discussion Board Posts	20%
LearnSmart Tutorials	10%
Attendance/Participation	10%
TOTAL	100%

**Letter Grade:**

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	<60

**Academic Honesty**

Students are responsible for conducting themselves with honor and integrity in fulfilling course requirements. Penalties and/or disciplinary proceedings may be initiated by UH System officials against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion.

Cheating on a test includes:

- Copying from another students' test paper;
- Using materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- Collaborating with another student during a test without authorization;
- Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of a test that has not been administered; and
- Bribing another person to obtain a test that is to be administered.

Plagiarism means the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work offered for credit.

Collusion mean the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit. Possible punishments for academic dishonesty may include a grade of 0 or F in the particular assignment, failure in the course, and/or recommendation for probation or dismissal from the College System. (See the Student Handbook.)

**ADA/Disability Policy:** If you have a disability of any kind, please make arrangements with me to take exams at the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD), should you think it necessary. Students with disabilities can make arrangements with the professor for any special accommodation requests.

**Topical Outline and Reading Schedule:** (Exam dates and assignments subject to change.)

Week of January 13th:

Syllabus and Introduction

Congress, Chapter 5 (*LearnSmart available*)

-Discussion 1 posted-

Week of January 20th:

\*\*\*NO CLASS Monday, January 20th – MLK Day Holiday

Presidency, Chapter 6 (*LearnSmart available*)

-Discussion 2 posted-

Week of January 27th:

The Power to Proclaim, Chapter 7

The Bureaucracy, Chapter 8 (*LearnSmart available*)

-Discussion 3 posted-

Week of February 3rd:

The Bureaucracy, Chapter 8 (*LearnSmart available*)

-Discussion 4 posted-

Week of February 10th:

The Judiciary, Chapter 9 (*LearnSmart available*)

-Discussion 5 posted-

Week of February 17th:

Exam Review

\*\*\*WEDS, FEB 19TH: EXAM 1\*\*\*

Week of February 24<sup>th</sup>:

State and Local Government/Texas Government, Chapter 10 and Chapter 11  
-Discussion 6 posted-

Week of March 3<sup>rd</sup>:

The State Constitution, Chapter 12

\*\*\*SPRING BREAK MARCH 10<sup>TH</sup>-16<sup>TH</sup> NO CLASS\*\*\*

Week of March 17<sup>th</sup>:

Texas Legislature, Chapter 13

Texas Executive, Chapter 14

Week of March 24<sup>th</sup>:

Texas Judiciary, Chapter 15

Texas Budget Policy, Chapter 25

Exam Review

Week of March 31<sup>st</sup>:

\*\*\*MONDAY, MAR 31<sup>st</sup>: EXAM 2\*\*\*

Domestic Policy, Chapter 19 (*LearnSmart available*)

-Discussion 7 posted-

Week of April 7<sup>th</sup>:

Civil Rights, Chapter 20 (*LearnSmart available*)

Providing Public Goods, Chapter 21

-Discussion 8 posted-

Week of April 14<sup>th</sup>:

Economic Policy, Chapter 18 (*LearnSmart available*)

America's Market-Oriented Approach, Chapter 22

-Discussion 9 posted-

Week of April 21<sup>st</sup>:

Foreign Policy, Chapter 24 (*LearnSmart available*)

Immigration and American Politics, Chapter 23 (tentative)

-Discussion 10 posted-

Week of April 28<sup>th</sup>:

Exam Review (Apr 28<sup>th</sup>, last day of classes)

May 1<sup>st</sup>- May 9<sup>th</sup>: **Final Exam Period**

MWF class: Your final is Wed, May 7<sup>th</sup> 11am-2pm

MW class: Your final is Friday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2pm-5pm