

# CURRICULUM CHANGE PROPOSAL

## APPROVAL PAGE

Proposal Title: POLS Core Curriculum Course Description Revisions

College: Liberal Arts

Department: Political Science

### DEPARTMENT CHAIR

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I have read the enclosed proposal and approve this proposal on behalf of the department.

**Dr. Charles Boehmer**

Digitally signed by Dr. Charles Boehmer  
DN: cn=Dr. Charles Boehmer, o=The University of Texas at El Paso,  
ou=Department of Political Science, email=crboehmer@utep.edu, c=US  
Date: 2020.12.16 10:34:52 -07'00'

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE CHAIR

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I have read the enclosed documents and approve the proposal on behalf of the college curriculum committee.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### COLLEGE DEAN

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I have read the enclosed documents and approve the proposal on behalf of the college. I certify that the necessary funds will be allocated by the college in support of this proposal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

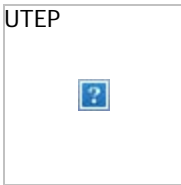
**From:** [Ohearn, Denis A](#)  
**To:** [Herman, Crystal](#)  
**Cc:** [Rivera, Julie A](#)  
**Subject:** Re: LACC proposals for Dean's signature  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 20, 2021 2:17:56 PM

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I approve these. This email constitutes my signature.

Best,

Denis



**Denis O'Hearn**  
Dean of Liberal Arts  
Professor of Sociology  
  
College of Liberal Arts  
The University of Texas at El Paso  
500 W. University Ave.  
El Paso, TX 79968  
Office: 915-747-7016  
[utep.edu](http://utep.edu)

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**From:** Herman, Crystal  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 20, 2021 1:52 PM  
**To:** Ohearn, Denis A  
**Cc:** Rivera, Julie A  
**Subject:** LACC proposals for Dean's signature

Denis,

Attached are the proposals approved in December and January that are awaiting your signature for inclusion in February's UGCC meeting.

*Crystal G. Herman M.F.A.*  
Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts  
Liberal Arts Curriculum Committee Chair  
Associate Professor, Costume Design  
Department of Theatre & Dance  
University of Texas at El Paso

Liberal Arts Office:  
Liberal Arts Building room 347  
(915) 747-5781

Theatre & Dance Office:  
Fox Fine Arts Building Room 271  
(915) 747-7853

# UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM CHANGE MEMO

**Date:** 11/19/2020  
**From:** Political Science Department  
**Through:** Charles Boehmer  
**Through:** Crystal Herman  
**To:** Denis O'Hearn

**Proposal Title:** POLS Core Curriculum Course Description Revisions

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**The purpose is to make mainstream and explicit antiracism content in POLS 2310 and POLS 2311 courses by updating their course descriptions.**

## **POLS 2310: Introduction to Politics**

### Old Course Description:

Introduction to Politics (3-0) (Common Course Number GOVT 2302) An overview of the concepts, principles, and practices of politics as background for the study of American and Texas political institutions. The course may employ an international, comparative, or theoretical focus.

### New Course Description:

Introduction to Politics (3-0) (Common Course Number GOVT 2302) An overview of the concepts, principles, and practices of politics as background for the study of American and Texas political institutions. The course may employ an international, comparative, or theoretical focus. Possible topics include colonization, critiques of political and economic theories, and global or comparative systems of inequality.

## **POLS 2311: American Government and Politics**

### Old Course Description:

American Government and Politics (3-0) (Common Course Number GOVT 2301) A survey of contemporary American, national, state, and local political processes and institutions, with emphasis upon the Constitutions of the United States and Texas. This course meets teacher certification requirements for out-of-state graduate students.

### New Course Description:

American Government and Politics (3-0) (Common Course Number GOVT 2301) A survey of contemporary American, national, state, and local political processes and institutions, with an emphasis upon the Constitutions of the United States and Texas. Possible topics include settler colonialism, intersectionality, systemic racism(s), and the political oppression or marginalization of minoritized peoples. This course meets teacher certification requirements for out-of-state graduate students.

Specifically, these revisions:

- 1) **Directly inform existing course content** on the international, national, state, and local politics and constitutions—and are thus not auxiliary topics. These processes are fundamental to the development of the American political systems, as well as the development of the international political systems and politics within other nation-states.
- 2) **Codify what instructors are already doing and ensure increased attention to antiracism themes**, thereby making these efforts explicit and public. All instructors in all iterations of these courses already include aspects of these items, as determined by the review found in the task force report.
- 3) **Ensure faculty to retain academic freedom** in terms of content, extent of content, and approach. As all the items added to both courses are very broad and include a variety of processes, policies, and politics, instructors have great flexibility in how they would like to address these themes and how to incorporate them into existing syllabi. A minimalist approach may include adding a couple slides to a Civil Rights section, or instructors can take on more significant course changes. Descriptions are designed to invite and support faculty in these endeavors, not mandate specific content and approach. These themes can fit virtually anywhere within existing courses, depending upon which aspects of these processes instructors wish to incorporate or prioritize.
- 4) **Identify broad processes that affect everyone**. These processes, described briefly in Appendix A of the task force report, affect IBPOC communities but equally apply to white, European, immigrant, gendered, LGBTQ+, and all other communities. As such, these revisions do not prioritize certain identity groups over others.
- 5) **Identify timeless processes** in that they directly affected the founding of the US (and other nation-states), nation-building, and politics across the entirety of national history(s)—including contemporary social justice issues. As such, these descriptions will not require additional departmental revision as contemporary political discussion changes.
- 6) Balance broad processes with sufficient specificity to a) signal to students that our department takes seriously our efforts for antiracism and to b) assist instructors with their existing efforts by introducing areas for further inquiry.
  - a. If instructors are interested in learning more about these themes and how they can incorporate them into their courses, non-mandatory workshops, presentations, and resources will be made available. The intent is to support faculty and build departmental capacity to engage in these activities to the extent that individual faculty are interested.
  - b. The proposed course revisions keep the descriptions succinct while maximizing course/instructor flexibility and offering concrete topics rather than vague, meaningless, or 'tooth-less' phrases. Banner allows 600 characters (including spaces) for course descriptions. Both revisions fit within that requirement (at 418 characters and 491 characters, respectively).

As such, these revisions comply with University Core Curriculum criteria below.

1. Core components must be transferable as mandated by the Legislature and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB);
2. Core courses must be designed to satisfy the exemplary educational objectives specified for the component area by THECB;
3. All lower-division core courses must be consistent with the "Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS);
4. Core courses must not contain college-level prerequisites that are not part of the Core Curriculum;
5. Core courses must not be restricted to specific majors;
6. Courses should be offered at least once per academic year, preferably during each long semester;
7. More than one faculty member of the department/program should be able to teach the course.

# COURSE CHANGE FORM

COPY OF CATALOG PAGE NOT REQUIRED

All fields below are required

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College : Liberal Arts

Department : Political Science

Rationale for changing the course:

The purpose is to make mainstream and explicit antiracism content in POLS 2310 and POLS 2311 courses by updating their course descriptions.

All fields below are required

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Subject Prefix and number POLS 2310

Course Title Introduction to Politics

Change	From	To
Ex. Prerequisite	Ex. POLS 2310	Ex. POLS 2312
Course Description	Current description	Proposed description
Course Description	Introduction to Politics (3-0) (Common Course Number GOVT 2302) An overview of the concepts, principles, and practices of politics as background for the study of American and Texas political institutions. The course may employ an international, comparative, or theoretical focus.	Introduction to Politics (3-0) (Common Course Number GOVT 2302) An overview of the concepts, principles, and practices of politics as background for the study of American and Texas political institutions. The course may employ an international, comparative, or theoretical focus. Possible topics include colonization, critiques of political and economic theories, and global or comparative systems of inequality.


**These changes will be reflected in Banner, Goldmine, and the catalog**

# COURSE CHANGE FORM

COPY OF CATALOG PAGE NOT REQUIRED

All fields below are required

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College : Liberal Arts

Department : Political Science

Rationale for changing the course:

The purpose is to make mainstream and explicit antiracism content in POLS 2310 and POLS 2311 courses by updating their course descriptions.

All fields below are required

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Subject Prefix and number POLS 2311

Course Title American Government and Politics

Change	From	To
Ex. Prerequisite	Ex. POLS 2310	Ex. POLS 2312
Course Description	Current description	Proposed description
Course Description	American Government and Politics (3-0) (Common Course Number GOVT 2301) A survey of contemporary American, national, state, and local political processes and institutions, with emphasis upon the Constitutions of the United States and Texas. This course meets teacher certification requirements for out-of-state graduate students.	American Government and Politics (3-0) (Common Course Number GOVT 2301) A survey of contemporary American, national, state, and local political processes and institutions, with an emphasis upon the Constitutions of the United States and Texas. Possible topics include settler colonialism, intersectionality, systemic racism(s), and the political oppression or marginalization of minoritized peoples. This course meets teacher certification requirements for out-of-state graduate students.


**These changes will be reflected in Banner, Goldmine, and the catalog**



UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICS

Political Science 2310

[Insert Semester Here] 20XX

Professor

[Insert Name Here]

Department of Political Science

Office: [Insert Location Here]

Office Hours: [Insert Days/Times Here]; and by appointment

Phone: [Insert Number Here]

E-mail: [Insert Address Here]

Class Time/Location: [Insert Information Here]

Teaching Assistants

Name	Office Hours	Email	Office/Phone
TBD			

Course Tutor

Name	Hours	Email	Office
TBD			

Catalogue Description

Introduction to Politics (3-0) (Common Course Number GOVT 2302) An overview of the concepts, principles, and practices of politics as background for the study of American and Texas political institutions. The course may employ an international, comparative, or theoretical focus, and may incorporate topics of colonization, critiques of political and economic theories, and global or comparative systems of inequality.

Land Acknowledgment

We, the UTEP Department of Political Science, acknowledge that we are in the unceded territories of the Indigenous Peoples who, along with countless generations of ancestors, are the guardians and keepers of this land, both throughout history and more contemporary times: the Tigua, Mansos, Sumas, Ndé, the Piros, Mescalero Apache, Chiricahua Apache, Tarahumara, Yaqui, Jumano, Comanche, Kiowa, Rarámuri, Tohono O’odham, Yaqui, Kickapoo, Diné, Hopi, Zapotec, Mixtec, Aztec-Nahua-Mexica, Huichol, Tepehuan, Coahuilteco, Chichimeca, and the other Native communities who comprise our multinational region. As scholars and people who reside and work in these lands, we respect and honor the millennia-long history of Native peoples on this land and their ongoing presence today.

Course Content

This is an introductory course in the study of politics, with an emphasis on understanding politics within the context of **global awareness**. We will break the subject down into political behavior within various domestic settings (comparative politics) and relations among countries (international relations). The course will require **critical thinking** in learning fundamental political concepts and issues through the focus on institutions, culture, ideas, and political economy with

attention on their global transformations. We will also closely view the politics of various countries drawn from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. The goal for the semester is to give you grounding in the study of politics, increase your powers of analysis and argument, and further your ability to enhance **problem-solving** skills both individually and through **teamwork**.

At the end of this course you will:

- 1) have a knowledge base regarding politics and government in general;
- 2) be able to analyze political activity scientifically in the world today; and
- 3) be able to hold factually based perspectives on important current issues.

### Course Textbook

The course textbook chapters are located on the Blackboard (Bb) website.

### Response System

We will be using a cloud-based student response software by iClicker for all the quizzes, See the “Course Obligation” section of the syllabus for more information on the quizzes. There is no extra cost for using this software application.

You are required to bring a device to participate in my iClicker Cloud quizzes. You can participate with a smartphone, tablet, or laptop. It is your responsibility to set up your iClicker Reef account in a timely fashion, as well as making sure your device is working properly. If you do not have an existing iClicker Reef student account then you will need to create one. You will also need to connect to either UTEP’s Wi-Fi (UTEPSecure) or to your mobile data plan while using iClicker Reef.

Submitting quiz answers for a fellow student is a case of academic dishonesty and a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. If caught do this, you will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for possible disciplinary action.

Beginning on [Insert Date Here], we will have quizzes during every meeting using the response system. If you do not register by [Insert Date Here], I will need to drop you from this course since this is major portion of your grade.

In order to participate in the iClicker sessions and ensure that your grades are properly reflected in blackboard, see below for instructions:

- **Log into Blackboard and click on the page for this course. Search for the iClicker Reef icon on the Home Page Tab and click on it.**
  - Sign into your iClicker Reef account from the window that opens.
    - If you do not have an iClicker Reef account, create one by clicking "**Sign Up!**" It is free to create an account. You should **use your university email address** ([username@miners.utep.edu](mailto:username@miners.utep.edu)) when creating your account. When asked to register a remote device, **choose not at this time or skip.**

- **If you already have an existing account, DO NOT create a new one. If you do not remember your account email or password please contact the [UTEP Technology Support HelpDesk](#).**
- Clicking the iClicker link in my Blackboard course will ensure your iClicker grades show up in my Blackboard gradebook.
- This will also add my iClicker Cloud course to your iClicker Reef account so you'll be ready to participate in class.

**Note:** Upon signing up for a **new** account you will see a message about a 14 day free trial. You **will not** need to purchase a subscription after the 14 day free trial is over because the use of iClicker REEF is provided to you for free.

### **How to participate in my iClicker sessions during each class.**

- Each time our class meets, make sure you have selected my course from the main screen of your iClicker Reef account.
  - When I start a session, click the **Join** button that appears on your screen, then answer each question I ask in iClicker Reef.
  - For short answer, target and numeric questions, make sure you press **Send/Enter**.
- I have turned on the Attendance GPS location requirement for iClicker Reef in our class. If you are not physically in class when you try to join my session, your quiz scores will not be count.
  - You will need to allow the device you are using to reveal your location in order to successfully check in.
  - If you have any issues with your device's geolocation, refer to the [Attendance Geolocation Troubleshooting Guide](#) or contact the [UTEP Technology Support HelpDesk](#).

Please go to

[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/INST\\_ClassResponseSystem.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/INST_ClassResponseSystem.html) for more information.

### **Course Obligations**

Students are expected to actively participate in the learning process. What does this mean? You will need to

- 1) complete the reading assignments (found in this syllabus) before the beginning of class;
- 2) review your lecture notes before the beginning of class;
- 3) follow current political developments around the world in the media. Some suggested periodicals include the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, or *Christian Science Monitor*. If you have knowledge of one or more foreign languages, you are encouraged to read international newspapers on the internet.

There is a mix of obligations you must meet to fulfill the course requirements. This includes daily quizzes, group discussion questions, and a comprehensive final exam.

### Daily Quizzes

Each day, you will be given a short quiz of 3-5 questions (using the response system) to assess your active participation in the course. Quizzes are closed notes and book and will be given throughout our course meetings.

### Group Discussion Questions

You will form study groups of 3-4 students and answer discussion questions, which are found in the course textbook. The answers are due one day after we complete a chapter. Answers to the question should be brief (no more than 100 words) and uploaded onto Bb.

You will provide me with your study group memberships on [Insert Date Here] by placing your names on a single index card that I will provide. If you do not form a study group on [Insert Date Here], I will need to drop you from this course since this is major portion of your grade.

You can put your group contact information here:

Name	Email	Phone Number

### Comprehensive Final eExam

The final exam is closed book/notes and in-class. The exam is solely multiple-choice questions based on the readings, lectures, and current political developments.

It will be in an eExam format. This course requires the use of LockDown Browser for exams. Watch this [brief video](#) to get a basic understanding.

Follow these steps to ensure you do not encounter issues during your final. Do this *at least one week* prior.

- 1) Download the [Lockdown](#) browser on your personal laptop or [reserve](#) one with Equipment Checkout in the Library 300.
- 2) Contact the [Technology Support](#) if you encounter issues.

### Steps for exam day

- 1) During the exam, be sure to connect to the UTEPSecure WiFi.
- 2) Make sure you are using the Lockdown Browser to take the exam (not Chrome, Firefox, etc.)
- 3) If you encounter an issue during the exam, restart the Lockdown Browser and launch the exam again. If you cannot close Lockdown Browser, restart your computer. The exam will pick up where you left off. Do this *first*, before raising your hand for a hard copy.

The final will be held [Insert Date Here] from [Insert Time Here] in [Insert Location Here].

### Grades

Each obligation is worth up to 100 points. The following weights are used in determining students' final grades. No "extra credit" points will be given in this course.

Course Requirement	Due	Weight
Daily Quizzes	Each Meeting	40 percent
Group Discussion Questions	After Chapter Completion	30 percent
Final Examination	TBD	30 percent

All grades (including the course grade) are based on the following distribution of points:

Points	Letter
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 and below	F

### Course Policies

The following policies are in place in order to better manage the learning environment in a large class room:

- 1) Students may tape class lectures for personal use. However the sale or exchange of such tapes is not permitted unless prior permission is given.
- 2) Cell/Smart phones use is restricted. You may only use them for daily quizzes and ringers must be turned off during class time.
- 3) There must be complete silence when the instructor is speaking. Please let me know if you have questions during instruction.
- 4) You may use your laptop in class in order to take notes. However, chatting, texting, e-mailing, internet browsing, or any activity not related to official class activity is prohibited. All laptop users will need to sit in a designated area in the front of the auditorium.
- 5) Some communication from me will be posted on BlackBoard. Please monitor our course webpage on BlackBoard regularly.
- 6) Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. For further information, please refer to <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>
- 7) Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please see me personally within the first week to discuss

any special needs you might have. If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will need to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) (formerly known as the Disabled Student Services Office) in 302 Union East within the first two weeks of classes. CASS can also be reached in the following ways:  
 Web: <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/> E-Mail: [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu)  
 Phone: (915) 747-5148 voice or TTY

## **Readings and Presentations**

### All presentation slides posted on Black Board

[Insert Date Here]

Orientation; International Politics and Political Science (Textbook 1 & 2)

Why is generalizing important? How does one go about developing a generalization? What is the difference between a dependent and an independent variable? What is meant by the comparative method? How are comparative politics and international relations different? What is meant by critical thinking? What is the difference between a description, an explanation, and a prediction?

[Insert Date Here] (Quizzes will begin on [Insert Date Here]!)

Views of “What Ought to be:” Normative Thinking (Textbook Chapter 3)

What is the difference between a scientific theory and an ideology? What is the difference between the way the term liberalism is used in the US and how it is used around the world? What about conservatism? What is the difference between socialism and social democracy? What happened to Marxism in countries that adopted it? Is fascism the same as communism? What is the connection between religious fundamentalism and ideology? Is Islam the only religion that some practice like an ideology? What is epistemology, and how does it affect normative thinking and scientific inquiry?

[Insert Date Here]

Individual Political Behavior: The Role of Culture (Textbook Chapter 4)

What part(s) of a country’s culture would be important to the study of politics? How are values acquired? Are attitudes purely cultural? Are religious conflicts only about religion, or are there other factors? What types of attitudes are important to the study of politics? How do individual and group identities—like race, ethnicity, gender, and class—affect attitudes? How do these attitudes influence or define political culture? Does political culture change over time?

[Insert Date Here]

Individual Political Behavior: A Psychological Approach (Textbook Chapter 5)

How can political psychology help us to understand behavior? How is this useful in understanding politics? How do individuals process information? What role does trust play in explaining political decisions? How do heterogeneous groups develop trust? How are social groups developed, and how does politics shape the development of these groups or the schisms that divide them? Why is

identity important in understanding national politics? What is ‘othering,’ and how does this process affect trust and political decisions? Why is the Prisoners’ Dilemma important to understanding individual behavior? Do all individuals behave in a rational manner?

[Insert Date Here]

States: Government Organization and Rule (Textbook Chapter 6)

What is a state and why do we view them as sovereign? What is the relationship between power and legitimacy? How has globalization changed the concept of state sovereignty? How do states get people to obey laws? Why do some states “fail?” What is the difference between a liberal democracy and authoritarian rule? What is the government’s responsibility to develop equality or (re)distribute resources? What is the social contract, and who may be excluded from the development of governments and political systems?

[Insert Date Here]

Governmental Institutions (Textbook Chapter 7)

What is the difference between unitary and federal systems? Which countries are federal and which are unitary? Why do some countries adopt one form over the other? How is power distributed in a federal system? What are the ways to represent citizens in a democracy? What is a parliamentary government? Which country exemplifies this type of government? How is that different from a presidential system? What is a ruling coalition? Is it possible to have both a presidential and a parliamentary system? Why do these things matter when talking about making laws? What is the difference between a head of state and the head of government? What influence does the head of government have in domestic politics? What role does the bureaucracy have in executive power? Are they autonomous? What are the components of a country’s judicial system? Are all judicial systems the same? How are judges chosen? Is it important for a country’s judiciary to be autonomous? What are the various sources of law?

[Insert Date Here]

Elections and Political Parties (Textbook Chapter 8)

What are the ways to count votes in a democracy? What are the various electoral systems? What forms do political parties take? What are their functions? What are the major differences between the political parties found in various countries? What is the difference between a political party and an interest group? Why does representation matter for political outcomes? What is descriptive and substantive representation? Are affirmative action policies, like quota systems, effective at ensuring minority representation?

[Insert Date Here]

Political Economy: How do countries govern their economies? (Textbook Chapter 9)

Why is it important to look at political economy? What are the economic concepts that are important to the basic understanding of political economy? What are some of the basic tenets of the capitalist system? How popular is capitalism today? What is a centrally planned economy? How does capitalism and command economies differ from mixed economies? What are the

assumptions undergirding these different economic systems? How do economic systems differ in terms of who is eligible for economic inclusion, economic and labor rights, government assistance? How do different economic systems deal with “invisible labor”? What is the role of environmental and labor extraction in each economic system? What are some of the current ideas regarding how countries can develop? How successful have these ideas been in reality? What is the relationship between colonization or (neo)colonialism and economic development? What forces are there in convincing a country to adopt one idea over another? Is the “one size fits all” approach to economic development realistic? Why or why not? Does economic development promote equality?

[Insert Date Here]

Democratization: The Magic Cure? (Textbook Chapter 10)

What are authoritarian regimes? Are they all alike? Why do individuals wish to transition from authoritarian rule to democracy? What are some of the ways countries democratize? Why are some democratization efforts violent while others are peaceful? Can democratization solve the problems facing a country? Why do new democracies fail and revert to becoming authoritarian regimes? Are democratization and promotion of human rights empowering or are they used as methods of neocolonialism and imperialism? Does democratization challenge international power relationships or maintain existing power structures? Does democratization and improved human rights always go hand-in-hand? How can democratization be supported without Western imperialism and without devolving into cultural relativism?

[Insert Date Here]

Global Conflict: International and Civil Wars (Textbook Chapter 11)

What is meant by “major war?” What are some of the causes of major war? Has the number of wars among countries declined since 1945? What about civil wars, have they increased or decreased? What explains the levels of international and civil wars since 1945? How has terrorism changed over time? Is terrorism and economic development connected? How does a government go about preventing terrorist acts? How will global climate change impact international politics? How do international human rights laws and courts affect wars? What are war crimes? Do human rights laws conflict with peace negotiations, such as with amnesty laws? How does war affect women (and children), and what are their roles in conflict, peace negotiations, and post conflict resolutions?

[Insert Date Here]

Cooperation in Our Globalizing World (Textbook Chapter 12)

What differentiates an international regime from other types of international organizations? What is the source of legitimacy of international organizations? Are all supranational organizations successful? Why or why not? Why would we connect globalization with international economics? Is liberalism important for the spread of globalization? How has the world been transformed over the last fifteen or so years? What were some of the failures that led to these transformations? Does globalization benefit everyone? Why or why not? Do international economic regimes and international human rights regimes seek shared outcomes? Why or why not? Do these international regimes and international organizations promote equality across states or ensure existing



hegemonies? How do international regimes impact individuals within states? How do international regimes treat vulnerable transnational groups, like Indigenous Peoples, human trafficking victims, and migrants?

**Final Examination: Wednesday, May 13 from 4:00-6:45pm in Undergraduate Learning Center 126.**

# POLS 2311 – AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

*MW: 1:30 – 2:50pm in UGLC 116*

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Rebecca Reid  
PHONE: 915-747-7970  
EMAIL: [rareid@utep.edu](mailto:rareid@utep.edu)  
OFFICE: 307 Benedict Hall  
OFFICE HOURS: MW 10:30 am-1:00 pm and 3:00-5:00 pm, or by appointment

## **LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

We, the UTEP Department of Political Science, acknowledge that we are in the unceded territories of the Indigenous Peoples who, along with countless generations of ancestors, are the guardians and keepers of this land, both throughout history and more contemporary times: the Tigua, Mansos, Sumas, Ndé, the Piros, Mescalero Apache, Chiricahua Apache, Tarahumara, Yaqui, Jumano, Comanche, Kiowa, Rarámuri, Tohono O’odham, Yaqui, Kickapoo, Diné, Hopi, Zapotec, Mixtec, Aztec-Nahua-Mexica, Huichol, Tepehuan, Coahuilteco, Chichimeca, and the other Native communities who comprise our multinational region. As scholars and people who reside and work in these lands, we respect and honor the millennia-long history of Native peoples on this land and their ongoing presence today.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

American Government and Politics (3-0) (Common Course Number GOVT 2301) A survey of contemporary American, national, state, and local political processes and institutions, with an emphasis upon the Constitutions of the United States and Texas, and may incorporate topics of settler colonialism, intersectionality, systemic racism(s), and the political oppression or marginalization of minoritized peoples. This course meets teacher certification requirements for out-of-state graduate students.

This course provides an introduction to the politics of the American system of government. The class will employ methods that are both traditional (lecture-based) and non-traditional (such as simulations and projects) to enable students to explore and analyze institutions and political behavior throughout the American political system.

## **UTEP EDGE**

This course encompasses activities associated with UTEP EDGE, including 1) teamwork through the Texas policy memo, 2) leadership through teamwork and debate opportunities, 3) communication through class discussion and debate, 4) problem-solving and critical thinking through the class discussion, debate, and policy analysis, 5) entrepreneurship through innovative and viable policy reform recommendations, and 6) social responsibility by practicing how to reform real world policies and civic engagement. Debates and policy analyses require the development of student research skills and the application of knowledge to new contexts. Furthermore, these assignments challenge students to think in creative, innovative ways to produce original arguments in addition to analytically evaluating policies.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Over the course of the semester students will have:

- An understanding of the key elements of American politics, including the Constitution, federalism, civil rights, civil liberties, political participation (voting, interest groups, parties), institutions (Congress, the courts, the president), and public opinion.
- An understanding of basic social science theories and be able to apply them to political behavior and processes.
- The skills necessary to understand and evaluate contemporary political events and problems.
- The ability to think analytically about political issues and articulate arguments with (empirical) justification.
- Their own active citizenship skills and be able to influence local and national policies/politics.
- Addressed and debunked prominent stereotypes across minoritized communities.
- Explored structural racism and how political processes, institutions, and policies create and maintain inequalities.
- Developed practices for engaging in antiracism.
- Developed writing skills to communicate their arguments, evaluations, and policies.
- Developed effective teamwork skills for collaborative work while demonstrating respect and value for a diversity of opinions, viewpoints, and perspectives.

## REQUIRED READING

- Barbour, Christine, and Gerald Wright. 2016. *Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship in American Politics*, Eighth Edition. CQPress.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation in this course will be based on the following components:

Attendance/Participation	10%
Quizzes and assignments	15%
Political Compass	10%
Texas Policy Memo	20%
Lowest Midterm Examination	10%
Midterm Examination	15%
Final Examination	20%

The grading scale is as follows:

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 and below	F

Participation: Attendance and participation are essential and thus mandatory. Students are responsible for offering their thoughts, opinions, and questions without solicitation from the instructor. Needless to say, these thoughts should have merit and be based upon the readings.

Quizzes: Regular quizzes evaluate the reading comprehension of the textbook throughout the semester. These quizzes will cover material from each chapter, and these questions are eligible for exams. As such, these quizzes are designed to help students prepare for exams. Under no circumstances are students able to make up quizzes, and no late work is accepted.

Examinations: There will be 3 exams during the course, two midterms and a final. The exams are closed book. All exams are **cumulative** and will cover material learned in the class lectures, videos, textbook, quizzes, discussion, and the assigned readings. As a general rule, make up exams will NOT be offered; although make up exams will be permitted only under the gravest of circumstances, and I reserve the right to determine whether a make up exam is offered to individuals based upon their situation and timely request. I reserve the right to alter the questions for make up exams. All exams require a new blue book.

The final exam is scheduled by the university and in under no circumstances can the final be rescheduled after its original date. Students with schedule conflicts should contact me to reschedule the final; in other words, the final exam may be taken prior to the scheduled date upon arrangement but cannot be rescheduled after the date.

Political Compass: The Political Compass survey can be located at this website: <https://www.politicalcompass.org>. At the bottom of this home page, there is a link stating, “Take the Test” that takes students directly to the survey. The completion of the survey will produce a graph and coordinates that students can observe and save. On the assigned due date, students are required to email me their coordinates only—for example (-3, 2.78). No late work is accepted.

Texas Policy Memo: In groups of 4 students each, students must turn in a 1-3 page memo (in hard copy, typed format) addressing a current local problem plaguing Texas/El Paso/UTEP) **due on April 30<sup>th</sup>**. This paper should a) address and briefly explain this problem, b) explain why it is important, c) propose a policy solution to this problem, d) address why the proposed solution is superior to alternative solutions (identifying what alternative solutions are), and e) address the costs (and problems) associated with implementing your proposed policy. You must also identify the correct audience for your memo—meaning that you need to find out to whom would you send your memo if you were actually sending it. As such, you need to provide as much information as necessary to enable their decision. This policy proposal will be evaluated on persuasiveness, research, organization, clarity, spelling, grammatical correctness, references, and thoroughness in evaluation using relevant class themes. (See page 9-16 of syllabus for the rubric, additional information, and a sample of policy memos.) References are required but do not count towards the page limits. I welcome the submission of drafts to me prior to the deadline for revisions and feedback.

Groups must notify me immediately if there are any group problems with free-riding, non-response, disrespect, etc. If you choose to drop the course, please be courteous and notify your group members (and me) as soon as possible. Individuals who do not sufficiently participate and contribute to the group memo should expect to have their grade deducted.

### **SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS**

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at [www.sa.utep.edu/cass](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass). CASS' Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

**Absolutely no form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated.** The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In all matters of intellectual pursuit, UTEP faculty and students must strive to achieve excellence based on the quality of work produced by the individual. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of scholastic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and jeopardizes the quality of the degree awarded to all graduates of UTEP. It is imperative, therefore, that the members of this academic community understand the regulations pertaining to academic integrity and that all faculty insist on adherence to these standards.

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) and available in the Office of the Dean of Students and the homepage of The Dean of Students at [www.utep.edu/dos](http://www.utep.edu/dos), may result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to failing a grade on the work in question, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or dismissal, among others.

### **UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER**

The University Writing Center is a useful tool each of student should take advantage of in for all written/paper assignments. While not required, your paper will be improved following a consultation with the staff. The staff sees students through appointments or walk-ins, though appointments are preferred. For more information, go to: <http://uwc.utep.edu/index.php/hours-location>. For appropriate assignments, I offer up to 10 points extra credit if you consult the writing center. In order to be eligible for this credit, you must show evidence of your consultation and evidence of the revisions suggested and those you made. You must also provide a reflection as to what you learned from the experience (for instance, what types of errors do you systematically make and how can you correct them). Hence, credit will only be possible with adequate evidence and thoughtful reflection of the writing and revision process.

## **COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

The center, located at 202 Union West, offers confidential counseling services in English or in Spanish. They also provide group and individual counseling for currently enrolled UTEP students. For more information, go to: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/>.

## **ADELANTE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

Child care is available for children of all students of the University. The Adelante Child Development Center is located at 314 W. Schuster and is managed and operated by Adelante Childcare, Inc. Children aged three months to 12 years are accepted, depending on space availability (Hourly, daily and weekly care are available and the Center offers a Summer Camp for school-age children). Age-appropriate early childhood developmental programs are offered in the curriculum. The Adelante Child Development Center is licensed by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. Financial assistance is available for qualifying parents through Child Care Services. For more information, please call: **915-532-1114** or **contact: [studentaffairs.utep.edu/childcare](http://studentaffairs.utep.edu/childcare)**. If, for any reason, you cannot find a care-taker for your child(ren), you are welcome to bring them to class.

## **GENERAL EXPECTATIONS**

I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. You will be held responsible for all material covered in the textbooks, articles, videos, and the class discussions. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for the content of that day's information. I will not tolerate disruptive behavior, including (but not limited to) inappropriate computer use, reading newspapers, talking during lectures, using cell phones or pagers, and disrespecting classmates or the instructor. Additionally, I expect all students to attend class prepared and to show up on time. It is disrespectful to the instructor and the other students when individuals show up late or are not prepared to participate in the class discussion. I allow the use of laptops for class purposes only; however, should laptop usage become disruptive, I reserve the right to prohibit laptops and other electronic devices.

This class is designed to provide information and challenge students with new, and sometimes controversial, ideas and arguments. This class is designed to be a safe, open environment to express ideas, arguments, and opinions for learning purposes. However, safe does not always mean comfortable. This class does not *give* you knowledge—i.e. knowledge and understanding is not transfused to students by simply sitting in class. Learning is an interactive process, requiring engagement with the material. Assignments are designed to assist you in learning processes, which consist of understanding material, remembering material, and being able to clearly (and correctly) communicate that material. Learning also entails developing your own insights, and applying them to better your own livelihood and authentic self.

As a general policy, I do not offer incompletes, and **I will not change final grades for the course under any circumstances**, with the single exception of where an error occurred on my part.

## CIVILITY AND RESPECT

Civility in the classroom and respect for the opinions of others is very important in an academic environment. It is likely you may not agree with everything which is said or discussed in the classroom, but courteous behavior and responses are expected. Our campus community reflects and is a part of a society comprising all races, genders, ethnicities, creeds, sexualities, and social circumstances. It is fundamental to our mission to create an unbiased community and to oppose vigorously any form of racism, religious intolerance, sexism, ageism, homophobia, heterosexism, and discrimination against those with disabling conditions.

During discussions and in assignments, students must show an awareness of diverse audiences, which means that ALL identity groups (genders, sexualities, gender identities, races, ethnicities, colors, nationalities, creeds, religions, socioeconomic classes, etc.) must be discussed with respect. Any comments that reveal intolerance of any (majority or minority) identity group are unacceptable; that is, statements or arguments that are rooted in any identity group being less than (less valuable, less human, less dignified, less good, etc.) than another identity group are illogical and offensive. Nonproductive and/or offensive comments will be diplomatically addressed and used as a learning tool for the class; however, a student who fails to treat others respectfully will be dismissed from the course after one formal warning.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is a list of topics to be covered at each class meeting, and the readings, which should be completed in order to fully participate in class that day. You are required to read the material prior to the class. Literature not included in the textbook but listed on syllabus are the responsibility of students to locate (online) and read. Academic articles can often be found via the UTEP library's website under the "Articles and Database" tab, where you can search repositories like JSTOR and Sage as well as individual journal titles.

While I give specific days on which certain topics will be discussed, the calendar is subject to change. Any alterations to the course schedule will be clearly announced. As a general rule, the course will follow this order of topics, regardless of date changes, unless otherwise announced. *Readings due* and *Watch* are homework assignments due prior to class that day.

January	17	Distribute Syllabus and Introduction
	22	Introduction to Politics <i>Reading due:</i> Barbour and Wright Chapter 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is politics and how does it affect you?</li><li>• Types of political systems and institutions</li><li>• Purpose(s) of government</li></ul>
	24	Introduction to Politics <i>Watch:</i> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3KsVRkbnn4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3KsVRkbnn4</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• American values: ideas versus implementation</li><li>• How are they informed by, and reflective of, colonization and structural racism?</li></ul>

- 29 Introduction to Politics  
*Reading due:* Barbour and Wright Chapter 2  
**Discussion: Ideas the Divide and Unite Us**
- What are the ideas that unite Americans?
  - What are the ideas that divide Americans?
  - Where do these ideas come from?
  - Who has been left out?
  - How do we reconcile disagreements?
  - How do we create a more equal, equitable society?
  - What is antiracism?
- 31 The American Founding and Colonization  
*Watch:* Columbus in America  
<https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/columbus-in-america-2/>
- What is settler colonialism?
  - Colonization as foundation for racism, sexism, -isms
  - Whose history is our history?
- (Divide into Texas Policy Memo Groups)
- February 5 The American Founding and the Constitution  
*Reading due:* Barbour and Wright Chapter 3
- Road to independence
  - Articles of Confederation
  - Constitution and ratification
- 7 The American Founding and the Constitution  
*Watch:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOktqY5wY4A>  
**Discussion: The Constitution Enshrined**
- Is the Constitution a “living document”?
  - What does the Constitution mean for those excluded by it?
  - Revisiting the social contract
- Due: Texas Policy Memo Topic***
- 12 Federalism  
*Reading due:* Barbour and Wright Chapter 4
- Federalism and the Constitution
  - Dual versus cooperative federalism
  - Nationalization of public policy



- 14 Civil Liberties  
*Reading due:* Barbour and Wright Chapter 5
- Bill of Rights and the Constitution
  - Supreme Court and selection incorporation
- 19 Civil Liberties  
*Watch:* 13<sup>th</sup>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krfcq5pF8u8>  
**Discussion: Land of the Free**
- Criminality, race, gender, and inequality
  - Policing and state power
  - Constitution and Bill of Rights in theory versus application
- 21 Civil Liberties  
*Watch:* State of Pride  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_J48BIRaG7A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_J48BIRaG7A)  
**Discussion: Liberty, Freedom, and Identity**
- Right to privacy
  - Gender and women's rights
  - Sexuality and LGBTQ+ rights
- 26 Civil Rights  
*Reading due:* Barbour and Wright Chapter 6
- Enslavement, racialization, and
  - Civil War and Reconstruction
  - Jim Crow and structural racism
  - Civil Rights Movement(s)
  - American Indian Movement
  - Chicano Rights
  - Intersectionality

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Civil Rights

*Watch:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=newsS7pMApI>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVQomlXMeek>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mqrhn8khGLM>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zer6FapK49E>

**Discussion: Structural Racism as Policy**

- Reconstruction
- Tulsa Massacre
- Redlining, housing segregation, and racial wealth gaps
- School to prison pipeline

More information:

- <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/2020/06/remembering-red-summer-white-mobs-massacred-blacks-tulsa-dc/>
- <https://decolonialatlas.wordpress.com/2020/06/20/black-massacres-in-the-u-s/>
- <https://www.blackpast.org/special-features/racial-violence-united-states-1660/>

March

5

Civil Rights

*Watch:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkD6QfeRil8>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGqWRyBCHhw>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoIuFkIH9OQ>

*Readings Due:*

- <https://theintercept.com/2020/09/17/forced-sterilization-us-history/>
- <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/unwanted-sterilization-and-eugenics-programs-in-the-united-states/>

**Discussion: Eliminating the ‘Other’**

- Immigration
- Eugenics and forced sterilization
- Assimilation and family separation
- Reconciling ideals and practice, past with present

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**Midterm Exam I**

12- 14

**Spring Break**

- 19 Congress  
*Reading due:* Barbour and Wright Chapter 7
- Powers of Congress
  - Representation
  - Electoral System and Incumbency
  - Gerrymandering and Lobbying
  - Lawmaking
- 21 The Presidency and Bureaucracy  
*Reading due:* Barbour and Wright Chapter 8 and 9
- Presidential powers and the Constitution
  - Executive privilege
  - Impeachment
  - Treaties and executive orders
  - Federal bureaucracy
  - Principal-agent models and delegation
- 26 The Federal Judiciary  
*Reading due:* Barbour and Wright Chapter 10
- Precedent and decision-making
  - Judicial review
  - Separation of powers
- (Assign Working Groups)
- 28 **Working Groups**
- Creating antiracist policies and practices in
    - Education
    - Healthcare
    - Foreign policy
- Goal:**
1. Identify current limitations and problems in area (prior to class as individual homework)
  2. Brainstorm possible solutions as group to present to class
- 29 Presentation of Working Groups Recommendations  
 Review Exam II
- April 2 **Midterm Exam II**

4

### Public Opinion

*Reading due:* Barbour and Wright Chapter 11

- Political ideology and partisanship
- Political psychology
- How to measure public opinion
- Political Compass

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### Public Opinion

*Watch:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJLDgb8m3K0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NflULVECAFQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFC-0FR2hko>

#### **Discussion: How Responsive Should the Government Be?**

- Who should it listen to if there is conflict?
- What about polarization?
- What is the responsibility of media to reflect or shape public opinion?

#### **Due: Political Compass Coordinates**

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### Public Opinion, Social Influence, Cognitive Bias and Fallacy

*Watch:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFC-0FR2hko>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNmwwntMF5A>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zk1o2BpC79g>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFdCzN7RYbw>

- False equivalence
- Misinformation
- Confirmation bias
- Echo chambers and filter bubbles
- Groupthink
- How does the science of persuasion impact political behavior and public opinion?

16

### Political Parties

*Reading due:* Barbour and Wright Chapter 12

- Source of political parties
- Party systems
- Duverger's law

	18	Voting, Campaigns, and Elections <i>Reading due:</i> Barbour and Wright Chapter 14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who votes?</li> <li>• How do voters decide?</li> <li>• Median voter theorem</li> <li>• Campaigns</li> <li>• Electoral College</li> </ul>
	23	Voting, Campaigns, and Elections <i>Watch:</i> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGEMscZE5dY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGEMscZE5dY</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ScU2oWfWReg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ScU2oWfWReg</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajavsMbCapY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajavsMbCapY</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHcGqpoUweA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHcGqpoUweA</a> <b>Discussion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women’s suffrage movements</li> <li>• Should we eliminate the Electoral College?</li> <li>• Should (ex-)felons be allowed to vote?</li> </ul> <p><b>Due:</b> Contact information for your Congressional representatives</p>
	25	Texas Politics <i>Watch:</i> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBNZYKU3QyY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBNZYKU3QyY</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRGHsNLI34o">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRGHsNLI34o</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzfdINufpSE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzfdINufpSE</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slavery in Texas</li> <li>• Texas Constitution</li> <li>• Texas Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches</li> <li>• Civil rights in Texas</li> </ul>
	30	Texas Politics <b>Finalizing Texas Policy Memo</b>
May	2	Review for Final Exam <b>Due: Texas Policy Memo</b>
	4	Dead Day
	7-11	Exam Week

## Grading Rubric for Written Assignments

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

4=A    3=B    2=C    1=D    0=F

Writing Characteristic	Performance Descriptions	Performance Level
<b>Follows Directions</b>	4= responds fully and appropriately to the assignment in timely fashion 3= responds reasonably well to assignment in timely fashion 2= responds acceptably to assignment in timely fashion 1= some significant failure to respond to assignment, or untimely 0= wholly fails to respond to assignment, and/or untimely	
<b>Thesis</b>	4= easily identifiable, clear and concise, insightful, and appropriate for assignment 3= identifiable, clear, and appropriate 2= somewhat difficult to identify, unclear, and/or slightly inappropriate for assignment 1= very difficult to identify, unclear, and/or inappropriate for assignment 0= unidentifiably, unclear, and/or wholly inappropriate for assignment	
<b>Use of Evidence</b>	4= appropriate source information (typically primary) used to support thesis and buttress all arguments made in essay, excellent integration of quoted/paraphrased material into writing. 3= appropriate source information used to support thesis and to buttress most arguments, good integration of sources into writing 2= sometimes weak use of source information (excessively secondary), inadequately supports thesis and/or sub-arguments, weak integration of quoted/paraphrased material into writing 1= very weak use of source information (excessively secondary), fails to support thesis and/or sub-arguments, very weak integration of material into writing 0= wholly failures to use sources appropriately	
<b>Analysis, Logic and Argumentation</b>	4= all ideas progress logically from an identifiable thesis, compelling justifications are offered to support thesis, counter-arguments are anticipated and addressed, appropriate connections are made to outside material 3= thesis is generally supported by logically compelling assertions and appropriate connections 2= insufficient support for some arguments, assertions are vague or lack focus, support offered is sometimes irrelevant, tangential or repetitive 1= lacks support for arguments, unfocused, uses irrelevant information to support thesis 0= wholly fails to related evidence to thesis statement	
<b>Organization</b>	4= coherent and clear, all paragraphs support thesis statement, each paragraph supports its topic sentence, excellent transitions 3= mostly coherent, generally supports thesis, good transitions 2= often lacks coherence, mixed support for thesis, transitions often missing or weak 1= incoherent, lacks support for thesis, transitions weak and often missing 0= wholly incoherent, unsupportive of thesis and lacking in transitions	
<b>Clarity and References</b>	4= excellent command of language, proper use of grammar/writing conventions, few to no misspelled words, correct word choice, excellent variety and complexity of sentence structure, uses proper citation format 3= good command of language, generally proper use of grammar/writing conventions, minimal misspelled words, largely good word choice, some variety and complexity in sentence structure, generally uses proper citation format 2= generally proper use of grammar/writing conventions, but with simple sentences generally lacking variety/complexity in structure, acceptable citation format 1= weak use of language, poor grammar, and numerous mechanical errors undermine coherence, weak citation format 0= extremely weak use of language/poor grammar, and pervasive errors seriously undermine coherence, improper citation format	
<b>Grade</b>		/24
<b>Additional Comments:</b>		



## **How to write a policy memo**

A policy memo is a document that provides analysis and recommendations for a particular audience regarding a particular situation or problem. A well-written policy memo reflects attention to purpose; it is well organized; and it has a clear, concise style.

### Determining and responding to your audience

In most cases, you will know the audience for your work because (1) you have been hired by that individual or organization or (2) your instructor provides that information to you. Think carefully about the needs and expectations of your audience. For example, if your audience is an elected official seeking analysis on a highly technical matter, you should generally assume that the official lacks substantial technical expertise. You will need to define technical terms and provide enough background about the situation you are discussing that such a “lay” audience can grasp your arguments. On the other hand, if you are writing for a technically trained audience, you will waste time and energy providing background information that your readers already know.

### Organizing an effective policy memo

#### Introduction

One distinguishing characteristic of a policy memo is that a summary of the document’s conclusion(s) and recommendation(s) is placed right at the beginning of the memo. Remember that the purpose of the document is generally to provide your audience advice about a particular decision, project, or policy stance. Thus, you open the memo by summarizing the problem or situation about which you are writing, and by providing a very brief summary of the conclusions/recommendations you have reached during your analysis. The rest of the memo is designed to support the conclusions or recommendations you present.

#### Background

Keeping in mind that different audiences need different amounts of background information (see above), follow your introduction with a concise summary of any historical or technical that your audience needs to understand the arguments you are building. (It may be that no background information is needed at all.)

#### Supporting arguments or analysis

Once you have set the stage for your audience, show how this information leads logically to the conclusions/recommendations you have provided.



## Style and format

Your prose should be simple, clear, and easy to read; you will confuse, not impress, your readers with sophisticated vocabulary. Your reader should be able to describe your conclusions and the general arguments you used to reach them after only one reading of your memo.

Some tips on achieving an effective writing style:

1. Choose the simplest words available to express your ideas. When discussing technical information, avoid the use of jargon--or at least define your terms clearly.
2. Make your sentences "active"; avoid phrases such as "there are" or "it is."
3. Use one paragraph to develop one idea or argument. Make that idea or argument explicit within the first one or two sentences of the paragraph.
4. **PROOFREAD CAREFULLY.** Don't distract your readers from the content of your memo with poor spelling or grammar.

The format of the memo should be as follows:

1. Memos must be typed on 8.5 X 11" with margins of one inch on all sides.
2. Paragraphs should be single-spaced and should be separated by a double space.
3. You may use any standard conventions for the layout of your memo, including numbering, bullets, indentation, etc. Do address the memo to your audience at the top of the page. See the attached sample for a suggested layout.

## Length

The length of your policy memo assignment is no more than 3 pages. Do not exceed this length limit! I am enforcing this rule for several reasons:

1. You will likely continue to write persuasive documents for clients and/or colleagues in the future. Like you, most of these people are busy. They rarely have time to review lengthy documents; these generally wind up unread in a filing cabinet or the trash. I'm hoping to help you craft documents that are concise and of use to your clients or colleagues.
2. Confining yourself to a particular page limit encourages careful editing, establishing priorities, and paring your arguments down. In general, these practices also improve the flow and impact of your writing.
3. Tightly written policy memos have a much better chance of influencing others toward a particular point of view.

## Revisions and suggestions

Despite their length, **memos contain the same amount of work and research as a full-length research paper**. As such, most memos often start as a research paper, which is edited down to its most important components. As such, I recommend treating the memo project as a research paper with additional editing requirements to make it incredibly concise and well-organized.

I strongly recommend that you exchange your memos with other students in the class for proofreading and editing before you submit them. You can help one another with suggestions for clarity and content of your assignments. **Your memo must include in-text citations and references** (though the references do not count toward the page limitation).

## (Sample) MEMORANDUM

**TO:** President of the United States

**FROM:** [names]

**SUBJECT: Re-organizing the Government to Combat the WMD Threat**

**DATE:** xx / xx / xxxx

The proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons is the most serious threat to U.S. security today, and will remain so far into the future. Whereas combating proliferation is an inherently government-wide mission, the existing national security architecture has resulted in a series of agency-specific efforts that are often poorly coordinated and fail to take advantage of important synergies. Re-organizing the government to meet the WMD threat therefore requires reforms that strengthen White House management of nonproliferation programs, expand interagency counterproliferation capabilities, and improve WMD-related intelligence.

### **Strengthen White House Management of Nonproliferation Programs**

The Departments of Energy (DOE), State, Defense (DOD), Commerce, and Homeland Security (DHS) all contribute to U.S. nonproliferation efforts, but receive insufficient top-level program guidance and coordination. For example, DOE did not learn of Libya's decision to abandon its nuclear program until it was revealed in the press. Moreover, DOE had no plan in place to dismantle Libya's nuclear assets despite its central role in performing such activities. Finally, proliferation detection R&D projects are currently managed by a community of end users that have overlapping needs but rarely communicate with each other.

To prevent future interagency breakdowns, the White House should designate a new senior-level Nonproliferation Policy and Program Director (NPD) to oversee all U.S. government nonproliferation programs. The NPD will chair a new National Security Council Policy Coordinating Committee on Nonproliferation (PCC) that will set overarching nonproliferation goals and priorities, develop an interagency strategic plan to achieve those goals and priorities, identify and assign missions and responsibilities to appropriate agencies, and coordinate program execution. To improve proliferation detection R&D, the NPD and PCC will also design an interagency technology development plan that will integrate and prioritize the needs of various technology end users across the government with the capabilities of the U.S. national laboratory system, private industry, and top universities. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will work with the new NPD and PCC to develop a multi-year interagency nonproliferation program budget, and will apply performance measures to monitor program management and implementation.

Although the NPD and the PCC will require little additional funding, past attempts at White House policy coordination – such as the Office of Homeland Security – have sunk into irrelevance because of agency resistance. To avoid suffering a similar fate, the NPD and PCC must possess clearly delineated authority and high level backing. In particular, the NPD should enjoy unambiguous control over nonproliferation policy and program budgets. The PCC should require agency participation at the Under Secretary level. Most important, the NPD and PCC must receive consistent, visible support from the President.

### **Expand Interagency Counterproliferation Capabilities**

The U.S. military and homeland security communities must be able to rapidly respond to proliferation emergencies. To provide this capability, the United States should create and train “Proliferation Risk Mitigation Teams” – akin to the Department of Homeland Security's Nuclear Emergency Search Teams

(NEST) – comprised of DOD special operations forces (SOF), CIA operatives, and DOE technical specialists. These teams will be capable of securing nuclear storage facilities and other sensitive infrastructure during combat operations or in response to the collapse of central authority in states that possess nuclear assets that are attractive to terrorists. They will also provide logistical and operational support to the Energy Department’s “Global Cleanout” program that seeks to return stockpiles of weapons-usable highly enriched uranium to Russia and the United States. Finally, they will engage in extensive “red-teaming” simulations in order to foster better situation awareness and preparedness.

Operational control of Proliferation Risk Mitigation Teams will pose a major challenge. Congress may object to placing the teams under CIA control in light of the agency’s past abuses. Moreover, DOD will be reluctant to assign SOF personnel to the teams if they will be placed under the command authority of a different agency. Given the types of operations in which the teams are likely to engage, DOD operational control would therefore seem most appropriate. The teams will cost approximately \$500 million annually to train and equip. To provide the necessary funding, the United States should cancel the Missile Defense Agency’s Airborne Laser program, which has been plagued by cost overruns and schedule delays.

### **Improve WMD Intelligence**

The effectiveness of U.S. nonproliferation and counterproliferation efforts ultimately depends on the quality of WMD intelligence. Unfortunately, the U.S. intelligence community has a poor track record of detecting both state-level and sub-state WMD proliferation. It failed to anticipate India’s nuclear test in 1998, produced flawed assessments of the threat from Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, and only belatedly uncovered the nuclear black market smuggling ring of Pakistani scientist A.Q. Khan. In addition, the intelligence community remains unable to provide reliable information on the status of nuclear programs in North Korea and Iran.

To improve community-wide WMD intelligence collection and analysis, the United States should, per the recommendation of the recent WMD commission, create a new National Counter Proliferation Center (NCPC). The Center would report directly to the new Director for National Intelligence and set requirements for WMD-related human, imagery, and signals collection for the entire intelligence community. It would also house an analytical division that would provide high-quality, actionable intelligence assessments to customers across the U.S. government, including the new White House NPD.

The NCPC will require approximately \$1 billion in annual funding. Given this price tag, Congress may resist creation of the NCPC until it can determine whether recent legislation will effectively address current intelligence community deficiencies. Moreover, CIA already operates an analytical unit devoted to WMD intelligence (WINPAC) that will fiercely resist encroachment upon its turf. The NCPC should therefore function as both a consumer and independent reviewer of WINPAC intelligence products while avoiding disruptive turf battles. Competition between WINPAC and the NCPC could result in higher-quality intelligence products from both.

*<end of sample memo>*