



**POSC 1113 AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
Fall 2020**

Instructor: Dr. Jeremy Matthew Berkowitz
Section # and CRN: CRN: 1113 Section: Z11
Office Location: Woolfolk 204
Office Phone: N/A
Email Address: jeberkowitz@pvamu.edu
Office Hours: Monday 2-4 PM, Tuesday: 11-12 AM, Wednesday 2-4 PM, Thursday 11-12 AM and by appointment
Mode of Instruction: Online Synchronous

Course Location: N/A
Class Days & Times: Tuesday / Thursday 1:20-2:40

Catalog Description: Surveys the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution; the structure and powers of the national government including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches; federalism; areas of political participation; the national election process; public policy civil liberties and civil rights.

Prerequisites: None.
Co-requisites: None.

Required Texts: Krutz, Glenn. 2019. *American Government*, 2e. Houston, TX: OpenStax. This text is [available for FREE online](#).

Recommended Texts: None.

Student Learning Outcomes

	Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:	Program Learning Outcome # Alignment	Core Curriculum Outcome Alignment
1	Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the U.S.	SLO #5	Critical Thinking
2	Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.	SLO #3	Critical Thinking
3	Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in the United States.	SLO #1	Critical Thinking
4	Differentiate the structure and powers of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government	SLO #3	Critical Thinking
5	Assess the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.	SLO #3	Critical Thinking
6	Analyze the election process in the United States.	SLO #3	Critical Thinking
7	Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the United States.	SLO #5	Social Responsibility
8	Write a research paper on a divisive constitutional Issue for the United States.	SLO #2	Communication
9	Write an essay exam on the debates and divisions surrounding a key policy issue in the United States.	SLO #2	Communication
10	Properly document a research paper with a reference list and in-text citations.	SLO #2	Personal Responsibility

Major Course Requirements

Method of Determining Final Course Grade

Course Grade Requirement	Value (in points)	Total (value of grade)
1) Exam One (drop lowest score of exams 1-3)	100	20%
2) Exam Two (drop lowest score of exams 1-3)	100	20%
3) Exam Three (drop lowest score of exams 1-3)	100	20%
4) Exam Four	100	20%
5) Writing Assignment #1: Essay Quiz	100	15%
6) Writing Assignment #2: Research Paper	100	20%
7) Plagiarism Test Certification	100	05%
Total Percentage:		100%

Grading criteria and conversion: A=90→100; B=80→89; C=70→79; D=60→69; F=below 60

Detailed Description of Assignments: (Consult the Calendar below for all due dates!)

Assignment Title

Description

1. – 4. Exams
(60% of final course grade)

All four exams will contain 50 multiple choice questions, and are NOT cumulative. These exams will be held online and may require use of the [Respondus Lockdown Browser](#). Respondus does not allow use of Safari, Firefox, Chrome, or Internet Explorer. Click here if the hyperlink above fails: <http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/information.pl?ID=975813429>.

If you are unable or do not wish to download Respondus on your device, the following campus facilities offer access to the Respondus Lockdown Browser: JB Coleman Library (rooms 210 and 210B and the Student Success Center on the third floor), MSC (1st floor main lab), Farrell Hall (1st floor main lab), Delco (room 301), Hobart Taylor (room 1A109), and E.E. O'Banion ("New") Science (room 123).

Exams must be taken as scheduled in the Semester Calendar. No makeup examinations will be allowed except under documented emergencies (See Student Handbook). The lowest score between exams 1-3 will be dropped, but the final exam grade will not be dropped.

5. Writing Assignment #1:
Online Essay Quiz
(15% of final course grade)

This assignment will require you to read an assigned scholarly article and answer a series of short essay-style questions on the reading. The reading and the assignment (which will be in the form of an eCourses quiz) will be uploaded to eCourses at 12:00 PM Tuesday, September 29th, and the assignment will be due 11:59 PM Thursday, October 1st.

CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

1. You are expected to read the scholarly article carefully and use the information in the article to answer the questions. You will not have early access to the article.
2. You will have an unlimited amount of time within the 60-hour time period to answer the questions. You are encouraged, but not required, to write your initial answers in an external word processing software to avoid internet connectivity issues. Once you submit your quiz, you cannot retake the quiz or edit your answers further.
3. Failure to submit your answers using the eCourses quiz assignment during the 60-hour time period will result in a grade of 0.
4. You **WILL NOT** be allowed to use sources outside of the scholarly article to answer the questions. You may directly quote the article to support your answers, but you will be expected to use the [Chicago Manual of Style's](#) parenthetical citation style if you do so. Failure to use this style will be penalized (-10 points).

**6. Writing Assignment #2:
Research Paper**
(20% of final course grade)

In the landmark case, *Shelby County V. Holder (2013)*, the US Supreme Court struck down major provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act relating to the procedure of “pre-clearance.” Since the ruling, states like Texas, Georgia and North Carolina, can now make changes to their voting laws, such as photo ID requirements, that do not need to be pre-approved by the federal government. Supporters of this ruling say the pre-clearance rules are no longer needed and besides, states need new laws to protect against voter fraud. Opponents say that these laws are just a new form of voter suppression tactics that hit the poor and racial minorities hardest. Based on this, your paper must meet the following content, format and submission requirements:

CONTENT REQUIREMENTS:

1. Describe the provisions (parts) of the *Voting Rights Act* that discuss the issue of “pre-clearance”.
2. Compare and contrast the views of those who think the federal government should have the power of “pre-clearance” and those who do not. Include at least three points of comparison.
3. Using evidence from any election in 2014 or later, **argue** whether or not you believe the federal government should have the power of “pre-clearance” relating to election laws. Include at least three reasons and/or examples to make your point.
4. List at least two things you could do in order to engage in the political process in pursuit of your position in (3) above.
5. Cite at least three (3) reliable, quality references within the body of the paper using the *Chicago Manual of Style’s* parenthetical citation style. One of the citations **MUST** come from the class textbook (-10 points if this is not done). You must have at least three parenthetical citations in the body of the paper that correctly match the sources properly formatted in the Works Cited Page.

A paper with no parenthetical source citations in its body will receive a grade of 0.

A paper with no works cited section (a.k.a. list of reference list, a.k.a. bibliography) at the end of the body will receive a grade of 0.

FORMAT REQUIREMENTS:

1. Typed, 2-3 pages (not counting Works Cited Page), 12-point font, double-spaced.
2. Your name, instructor name, POSC 1113, and the date.
3. A title is required, but a separate title page is not necessary.
4. An introduction with a thesis/statement of purpose in the first paragraph: “This paper will...”
5. A logically organized and sequenced body followed by a clearly stated conclusion.
6. Use of the *Chicago Manual of Style’s* parenthetical citation format. Students must be very careful and pay attention to details when they examine and cite internet sources. A paper with no parenthetical source citations and/or no Works Cited page at the end will receive a grade of 0; no second chances will be allowed.
7. Use of footnotes or endnotes is **prohibited**.
8. Using encyclopedias, like Wikipedia, Ballotpedia, history.com, kids.law.com, etc. is **prohibited** (-10 points).
9. **Use of word mixers like Spinbot is prohibited and will result in a grade of 0; no second chances will be allowed.**

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. Your paper must be submitted via the Turn It In link found in eCourses. You do NOT need a code; log into eCourses and click on the link that says, “Assignment #2: Research Paper,” then click on the submission tab and follow the prompts to upload your paper.
2. Your paper must ALSO be submitted via the Taskstream link found in eCourses.
3. Papers will be graded only after they are submitted to both Turn It In **and** Taskstream.
4. Late submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances, so plan accordingly.
5. A paper placed in my office, in my mailbox or emailed will not be accepted for grading.

Papers are graded according to the following four criteria: 1) content; 2) organization; 3) quality

of writing; and 4) quality of research sources and reference citation formats.

7. Plagiarism Test Certification (5% of final course grade)

To receive full credit for this assignment, you must register for, take, and submit the [10-question Plagiarism Certification Test](#). You may retake the test as many times as necessary. Click here if the link did not work: <https://plagiarism.iu.edu/mainLogin.php?action=register&testLevel=UG>.

Additional Instructor/Program Policies: Please Read Carefully!

Political Science Program Policy on Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious academic crime and the Political Science Program has a strict, rigorous enforcement policy for students who commit plagiarism. In general, plagiarism is using another person's words, statistics, and/or ideas as if they were your own. Plagiarism, which is formally defined in the University Rules and Procedures section of this syllabus, can come in many forms, such as directly quoting a source without quotation marks, taking another student's work, directly quoting a source without giving a reference citation, paraphrasing a source without giving a reference citation and so forth. It is incumbent on students to seek help from the instructor or other University resources to avoid even the appearance of plagiarism in their work. If in doubt, CITE THE SOURCE! Any student caught committing ANY type of plagiarism in a Political Science course will receive one OR MORE of the following punishments, depending on the severity of the offense and in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct:

1. Grade Penalty (an F for the assignment or for the course) in addition to cancellation of any extra credit points
2. Letter of Reprimand
3. Probation
4. Suspension
5. Dismissal from Academic Program
6. Expulsion from the university.

Students must consult the University's Code of Conduct for other forms of academic dishonesty and punishments.

Electronic Communication Policy: Notes and other course materials are posted on eCourses, which is available at <http://ecourses.pvamu.edu>. You are expected to use this website as a resource for the class. The University also maintains an email account for you. For security purposes, **I will not respond to emails sent to me from addresses that do not come from your official PVAMU email address. I expect you to check your Prairie View A&M email account at least once a day.** If you have problems accessing your account, call (936) 261-2525. Not having access to your Panther Email is not an excuse for missing important information.

Make-up Policy: You will only be allowed to make up an exam or assignment if you have a valid excuse. Valid excuses include *documented* illness, school or business trips, or family crises. Without proper documentation, there will be no makeup assignments. **If granted a make-up, you have a period of three (3) class days to schedule your make-up assignment or exam. After that point, the grade becomes a zero.** Please provide written documentation for why you need to make up an assignment from a university official, doctor, police officer, or coach. Student athletes must notify me **BEFORE** they attend an event to represent the school and **MUST** be proactive in getting their assignments completed. Make up exams may be an essay/short answer test or a modified version of the original exam. Any assigned extra credit cannot be made up.

Grade Groveling Policy: Students concerned about their grades should endeavor to attend all class sessions and complete all work to the best of their ability. Students **earn** high grades, based on demonstrating mastery of the subject matter and not based on what they want or need for their overall GPA. Therefore, no grade groveling will be entertained and no "do-overs" allowed.

Attendance Policy: For this class, students are allowed three unexcused absences **BEFORE** the mid-term, after which the mid-term course grade will be reduced by a full letter. Students are then allowed three additional unexcused absences **AFTER** the mid-term, after which **the final course grade will be reduced by a full letter**. Students can, and are encouraged to, monitor their attendance records through the Attendance link in eCourses.

Late/Tardy Policy: Attending classes, even online classes, on time is important. Class will start at the scheduled time and will end at the scheduled time. If you log into the classroom more than 9 minutes late (in the 10th minute or later), you will be asked to leave class and you will be counted absent.

Taskstream Policy

Taskstream is a tool that Prairie View A&M University uses for assessment purposes. At least one of your assignments is **REQUIRED** to be submitted as an "artifact," an item of coursework that serves as evidence that course objectives are met. More information will be provided during the semester, but for general information, you can visit Taskstream via the link in eCourses.

Semester Calendar

Week One: 8/24 – 8/28

Readings:
Assignment(s):

American Government and The US Constitution

Chapter 1, and begin Chapter 2

Week Two: 8/31 – 9/4

Readings:
Assignment(s):

The US Constitution and Federalism

Finish Chapter 2 and Chapter 3
Plagiarism Test Certification due Thursday, 9/3

Week Three: 9/7 - 9/11

Readings:
Assignment (s):

The Legislative Branch – Congress

Chapter 11

Week Four: 09/14 – 09/18

Readings:
Assignment (s):

Review and Exam 1

Chapters 1, 2, 3, 11.
Exam 1 on Thursday, 9/17.

Week Five: 9/21 – 9/25

Readings:
Assignment (s):

Civil Liberties

Chapter 4

Week Six: 9/28 – 10/2

Readings:
Assignment (s):

Civil Rights

Chapter 5
Reading for Writing Assignment #1 posted Tuesday, 9/29
Writing Assignment #1, essay quiz: due Thursday, 10/1

Week Seven: 10/5 - 10/9

Readings:
Assignment (s):

Public Opinion and the Media

Chapter 6 and Chapter 8

Week Eight: 10/12 – 10/16

Readings:
Assignment (s):

Review and Midterm (Exam 2)

Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 8
Exam 2 on Thursday, 10/15.

Week Nine: 10/19 – 10/23

Readings:
Assignment (s):

Voting and Elections and Political Parties

Chapter 7 and Chapter 9

Week Ten: 10/26– 10/30

Readings:
Assignment (s):

Interest Groups and the Federal Courts

Chapter 10 and Chapter 13

Week Eleven: 11/2– 11/6

Readings:
Assignment (s):

Review and Exam 3

Chapters 7, 9, 10 and 13
Exam 3 on Thursday, 11/5.

Week Twelve: 11/9 – 11/13

Readings:
Assignment (s):

The Presidency and the Bureaucracy

Chapter 12 and Chapter 15
Writing Assignment #2, research paper: due Thursday, 11/12.

Week Thirteen: 11/16 – 11/20

Readings:
Assignment (s):

Domestic Policy

Chapter 16

Week Fourteen: 11/23 – 11/27

Foreign Policy

Readings: Chapter 17
Assignment (s): Thanksgiving Holiday 11/25 – 11/27

Weeks Fifteen AND Sixteen: 11/30 – 12/9

Readings:

Assignment(s):

Last class day, review and Final Exam Period

Chapters 12, 15, 16, and 17.

Go to www.pvamu.edu/registrar to see the final exam schedule

Student Support and Success

John B. Coleman Library

The library and its partners have as their mission to provide resources and instructional material in support of the evolving curriculum, as a partner in Prairie View A&M University's mission of teaching, research, and service and to support the University's core values of access and quality, diversity, leadership, relevance, and social responsibility through emphasis on ten key areas of service. It maintains library collections and access both on campus, online, and through local agreements to further the educational goals of students and faculty. <https://www.pvamu.edu/library/> Phone: 936-261-1500

The Learning Curve (Center for Academic Support)

The Learning Curve offers Tutoring via peer tutoring. The services include workshops (i.e., Save My Semester, Recalculate Your Route), seminars (i.e., Tools You Can Use: TI-84), group review sessions (i.e., College Algebra Topic Reviews, GRE Preparation), group study opportunities (i.e., TSIA, HESI, Study Break, Exam Cram), and test-taking strategies (How to take Notes, Study Buddy, 5 Day Study Guide). The Learning Curve is a nationally certified tutoring program through the National Tutoring Association. The peer tutors are trained and certified by the coordinator each semester. Location: J.B. Coleman Library Rm. 207F. Phone: 936-261-1561

The Center for the Oversight and Management of Personalized Academic Student Success (COMPASS)

The Center for the Oversight and Management of Personalized Academic Student Success (COMPASS) is designed to help Prairie View students in their second year and beyond navigate towards graduation by providing the following services: Academic Advisement, Targeted Tutorials for Personalized Learning, Campus-Wide Referrals, and Academic & Social Workshops. Location: J.B. Coleman Library Rm. 306. Phone: 936-261-1040

Writing Center

The Writing Center provides student consultants on all aspects of the writing process and a variety of writing assignments. Writing Center consultations assist students in such areas as prewriting, brainstorming, audience awareness, organization, research, and citation. Students taking on-line courses or courses at the Northwest Houston Center or College of Nursing may consult remotely or by email. Location: Hilliard Hall Rm. 121. Phone: 936-261-3724.

Student Counseling Services

The Student Counseling Services unit offers a range of services and programs to assist students in maximizing their potential for success: short-term individual, couples, and group counseling, as well as crisis intervention, outreach, consultation, and referral services. The staff is licensed by the State of Texas and provides assistance to students who are dealing with academic skills concerns, situational crises, adjustment problems, and emotional difficulties. Information shared with the staff is treated confidentially and in accordance with Texas State Law. Location: Owens-Franklin Health Center Rm. 226. Phone: 936-261-3564

Testing

The Department of Testing administers College Board CLEP examinations, the HESI A2 for pre-nursing majors, LSAT for law school applicants and MPRE for second-year law students, the Experiential Learning Portfolio option, the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Assessment, which determines college readiness in the state, and exam proctoring, among other service such as SAT and ACT for high school students. Location: Delco Rm. 141. Phone: 936-261-4286

Office of Diagnostic Testing and Disability Services

As a federally-mandated educational support unit, the Office of Disability Services serves as the repository for confidential disability files for faculty, staff, and students. For persons with a disability, the Office develops individualized ADA letters of request for accommodations. Other services include: learning style inventories, awareness workshops, accessibility pathways, webinars, computer laboratory with adapted hard and software, adapted furniture, proctoring of non-standardized test administrations, ASL interpreters, ALDs, digital recorders, livescribe, Kurtzweil, and a comprehensive referral network across campus and the broader community. Location: Evans Hall Rm. 317. Phone: 936-261-3585

Veteran Affairs

Veterans Services works with student veterans, current military and military dependents to support their transition to the college environment and continued persistence to graduation. The Office coordinates and certifies benefits for both the G.I. Bill and the Texas Hazlewood Act. Location: Evans Hall Rm. 323. Phone: 936-261-3563

Office for Student Engagement

The Office for Student Engagement delivers comprehensive programs and services designed to meet the co-curricular needs of students. The Office implements inclusive and accessible programs and services that enhance student development through exposure to and participation in diverse and relevant social, cultural, intellectual, recreational, community service, leadership development and campus governance. Location: Memorial Student Center Rm. 221. Phone: 936-261-1340

Career Services

Career Services supports students through professional development, career readiness, and placement and employment assistance. The Office provides one-on-one career coaching, interview preparation, resume and letter writing, and career exploration workshops and seminars. Services are provided for students at the Northwest Houston Center and College of Nursing in the Medical Center twice a month or on a requested basis. Distance Learning students are encouraged to visit the Career Services website for information regarding services provided. Location: Evans Hall Rm. 217. Phone: 936-261-3570

University Rules and Procedures

Disability Statement (Also See Student Handbook):

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Evans Hall, Room 317, or call 936-261-3585/3.

Academic Misconduct (See Student Handbook):

You are expected to practice academic honesty in every aspect of this course and all other courses. Make sure you are familiar with your Student Handbook, especially the section on academic misconduct. Students who engage in academic misconduct are subject to university disciplinary procedures.

Forms of Academic Dishonesty:

1. Cheating: deception in which a student misrepresents that he/she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he/she has not mastered; giving or receiving aid unauthorized by the instructor on assignments or examinations.
2. Academic misconduct: tampering with grades or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of a scheduled test.
3. Fabrication: use of invented information or falsified research.
4. Plagiarism: unacknowledged quotation and/or paraphrase of someone else's words, ideas, or data as one's own in work submitted for credit. Failure to identify information or essays from the Internet and submitting them as one's own work also constitutes plagiarism.

Nonacademic Misconduct (See Student Handbook)

The university respects the rights of instructors to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires campus conditions that do not impede their exercise. Campus behavior that interferes with either (1) the instructor's ability to conduct the class, (2) the inability of other students to profit from the instructional program, or (3) campus behavior that interferes with the rights of others will not be tolerated. An individual engaging in such disruptive behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Such incidents will be adjudicated by the Dean of Students under nonacademic procedures.

Sexual Misconduct (See Student Handbook):

Sexual harassment of students and employers at Prairie View A&M University is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Any member of the university community violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

Title IX Statement

Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) is committed to supporting students and complying with the Texas A&M University System non-discrimination policy. It seeks to establish an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you experience an incident of sex- or gender-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual assault or attempted

sexual assault, we encourage you to report it. While you may talk to a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, the faculty member must report the basic facts of your experience to Ms. Alexia Taylor, PVAMU's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you privacy or confidentiality, there are individuals who can meet with you. The Title IX Coordinator is designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies and can assist you with understanding your options and connect you with on- and off-campus resources. The Title IX Coordinator can be reached by phone at 936-261-2123 or in Suite 013 in the A.I. Thomas Administration Building.

Class Attendance Policy (See Catalog for Full Attendance Policy)

Prairie View A&M University requires regular class attendance. Attending all classes supports full academic development of each learner whether classes are taught with the instructor physically present or via distance learning technologies such as interactive video and/or internet.

Excessive absenteeism, whether excused or unexcused, may result in a student's course grade being reduced or in assignment of a grade of "F". Absences are accumulated beginning with the first day of class during regular semesters and summer terms. Each faculty member will include the University's attendance policy in each course syllabus.

Student Academic Appeals Process

Authority and responsibility for assigning grades to students rests with the faculty. However, in those instances where students believe that miscommunication, errors, or unfairness of any kind may have adversely affected the instructor's assessment of their academic performance, the student has a right to appeal by the procedure listed in the Undergraduate Catalog and by doing so within thirty days of receiving the grade or experiencing any other problematic academic event that prompted the complaint.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Minimum Recommended Hardware and Software:

- Intel PC or Laptop with Windows 7; Mac with OS X; Smartphone or iPad/Tablet with Wi-Fi
- High speed Internet access
- 8 GB Memory
- Hard drive with 320 GB storage space
- 15" monitor, 800x600, color or 16 bit
- Sound card w/speakers
- Microphone and recording software
- Keyboard & mouse
- Most current version of Google Chrome, Safari, Internet Explorer or Firefox

Note: Be sure to enable Java & pop-ups in the Web browser preferences

Participants should have a basic proficiency of the following computer skills:

- Sending and receiving email
- A working knowledge of the Internet
- Proficiency in Microsoft Word (or a program convertible to Word)
- Proficiency in the Acrobat PDF Reader
- Basic knowledge of Windows or Mac O.S.

Netiquette (online etiquette):

Students are expected to participate in all discussions and virtual classroom chats as directed. Students are to be respectful and courteous to others on discussions boards. Foul or abusive language will not be tolerated.

Technical Support:

Students should go to <https://mypassword.pvamu.edu/> if they have password issues. The page will provide instructions for resetting passwords and contact information if login issues persist. For other technical questions regarding eCourses, call the Office of Distance Learning at 936-261-3283

Communication Expectations and Standards:

Emails or discussion postings will receive a response from the instructor, usually in less than 48 hours. Urgent emails should be marked as such. Check regularly for responses.

Discussion Requirement:

Online courses often require minimal to no face-to-face meetings. However, conversations about the readings, lectures, materials, and other aspects of the course can take place in a seminar fashion. This will be accomplished using the discussion board. The exact use of discussion will be determined by the instructor.

It is strongly suggested that students type their discussion postings in a word processing application and save it to their PC or a removable drive before posting to the discussion board. This is important for two reasons: 1) If for some reason your discussion responses are lost in your online course, you will have another copy; 2) Grammatical errors can be greatly minimized using the spell-and-grammar check functions in word processing applications. Once the post(s) have been typed and corrected in the word processing application, it/they should be copied and pasted to the discussion board.