**POLS 2305 14: Introduction to American Politics,**

**Spring 2020**

**Instructor**: Dr. Andrew Smith

**Class Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 – 10:45 AM

**Class Location:** ELABN 125

**Office**: ELABN 230

**Office Hours**: 1:30 – 3:30 PM Tuesdays and Thursdays, or by appointment

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***Introduction***:

Over the past one hundred years, American government has evolved dramatically to meet the changing needs of the public. Many of the things we enjoy or discuss in our daily lives – from local museums to national parks, from student loans to gay marriage – would not exist without the various levels of American government. The federal government in particular has expanded its role in American life and now influences everything from education policy to gun laws. Coupled to this rise is a belief that government functions best when the people are active.

However, over the past thirty years, trust in government has eroded and voter turnout has declined. The political climate is increasingly polarized, as more and more people demonize the other side and refuse to hear opposing views. Furthermore, there is the question of whether government – particularly the federal government – is causing more problems than it solves. Finally, there are new clashes over individual rights and liberties, ones that the Founding Fathers could never have foreseen. So how did we get here, and where does American politics go from here? In Intro to American Politics, we will examine this question and many more, as we seek to better understand American government – focused on the federal level – and learn more about what government can and cannot do.

***Learning Objectives for Core Curriculum Requirements***:

This course fulfills a core area requirement in Government/Political Science:

(i) Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and federal and state laws and policies.

(ii) Courses in this area involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.

(iii) The following four core objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement: *Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.*

The core objectives are defined as:

*Critical Thinking*

Students will demonstrate comprehension of a variety of written texts and other information sources by analyzing and evaluating the logic, validity, and relevance of the information in them to solve challenging problems, to arrive at well-reasoned conclusions, and to develop and explore new questions.

*Communication Skills*

Students will demonstrate the ability to adapt their communications to a particular context, audience, and purpose using language, genre conventions, and sources appropriate to a specific discipline and/or communication task.

*Personal Responsibility*

Students will demonstrate an awareness of the range of human values and beliefs that they draw upon to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

*Social Responsibility*

Students will recognize and describe cultural diversity, the role of civic engagement in society, and the link between ethics and behavior.

***Reading Material***:

Haus, David; Haskins, Joe, Jr.; and Faykosh, Joe. 2019. *American Government*. Top Hat Publications

This book is available only on the Top Hat website (<https://app.tophat.com/e/111203>). As Top Hat usage is mandatory, the textbook is also mandatory, as interaction with the textbook is part of your participation grade. The enrollment code for this course is 111203, and there is a mobile app (free) you will need to download as well. Once you have paid the enrollment fee (which should include the fee for the textbook), you will be able to access Top Hat for all of your other courses as well. You should have already received an enrollment email at the beginning of the semester; if not, then you need to see me ASAP. **You may not use earlier editions of the textbook; the bookstore and Top Hat will not be able to support earlier editions of the textbook**

From time to time I will post readings as a supplement to the material presented in class. Unless otherwise noted, you may find these readings in their respective learning modules on Blackboard (mycourses.utrgv.edu), under “Course Materials”

***Grades and Grading***:

A (90-100), B (80-89), C (70-79), D (60-69), F (0-59)

***Grade Breakdown***:

Attendance: 20%

Quizzes: 30%

Participation: 15%

Service Learning: 20%

Final Presentation: 15%

***Quizzes***:

A total of 30% of your overall grade will come from quizzes, which will be administered once a week, featuring material covered in class and in the textbook during the previous week. The purpose of these quizzes is to help you better retain the material. The format of the quizzes will be multiple-choice/true-false questions, plus bonus point questions, and once you begin the quiz you will have 10 minutes to complete everything. There will be opportunities for makeup quizzes; however, these are at my discretion, **you have only one week after the quiz to take the makeup**, and if you’re requesting too many makeups I reserve the right to refuse to let you take them. Additionally, if you are more than 10 minutes late to class, you will not be able to take the quiz that class period and will have to do a make-up, and if you are consistently more than 10 minutes late you will not be allowed to take a makeup and will receive a zero.

***Class Participation***:

15% of your final average is dedicated to the discussion of important issues in American politics and policy. One part of your discussion grade is the in-class discussion of important issues and the asking of questions in response to the lectures. These discussions and questions are not graded, per se. Rather, they are used to be a holistic augmentation to your online discussion grade, and students who consistently participate will receive a more positive participation grade for the course.

The other part to your participation grade is online. During the semester, I will post discussion threads on Blackboard and review questions on the flipped lectures on Top Hat. You must respond to a thread or questions **at least 5 times** during the semester, in order to get credit for this portion of the participation grade. For the Top Hat questions, you will have 10 seconds to answer a question related to the slides you just viewed. There are five questions, and if you get all 5 correct, that counts as one of your 5 responses. For the Blackboard discussion posts, posting can take the form of either responding to the thread question or replying to someone else’s comment; these will be graded on a 0-5 scale. Regardless of the response type, appropriate responses will be detailed, directly answer the question asked, provide evidence (primarily from the readings), and contain sources if statistics or quotes are cited.

You may do any combination of the above to fulfill your participation requirement. For example, if you get all 5 review questions right on the Elections and Voting Part I Flipped Lecture, reply to 2 discussion threads, and respond to 2 people’s comments in the discussion threads, you would fulfill your participation requirement, and your grade would be the average score of your participation. **All review questions close 2 weeks after the lecture is posted, and all discussion posts close at 11:59 PM on 4/24. Failure to complete online participation by April 24th results in a zero for your participation grade regardless of your in-class participation.** For a score rubric for the discussion posts, please consult Blackboard, under “Course Materials”.

***Statement of Civility and Inclusivity***

This class will address topics in American politics which may be controversial or contentious. The reason we discuss these issues is because students need to be exposed to areas outside of their comfort zone and because a lack of engagement with ongoing controversies is a disservice to students and the general population. Students are warned at the onset that there will be issues with which you will disagree with the views of your classmates and even the professor, and there will be issues discussed which may be sensitive to students because of their personal views or experiences.

The key with participation, as well as all other aspects of this course, is to **respect one another**. I do not care whether you leave this course believing in one theory of politics over another or whether you support or oppose gun control. I do care whether you can defend your position, whether you understand the readings, and whether you can formulate your own views. Therefore, it is expected that everyone in the class will be respectful of those whose opinions may differ from your own, and it is expected that you will not resort to personal attacks, mudslinging, and overgeneralizations. Violating this policy will reflect poorly on your discussion and final grades, and particularly abusive or outrageous behavior toward your classmates will result in dismissal from the class. I also reserve the right to fail you automatically for extreme or consistent egregious behavior and pursue other measures as I deem necessary.

***Service-Learning Project***:

In order to fulfill the Social Responsibility learning objective, 20% of your final grade will consist of participating in a service-learning project. By the second week of class, you will need to establish an account with Engagement Zone and sign an official waiver of liability for the university. You will be required to volunteer **at least 5 hours per month** at local civic organizations (Women United, League of Women Voters, etc.), but you are free to volunteer more hours if you wish. Although you will be allowed to participate with non-partisan political organizations, such as the League of Women Voters, you will not be allowed to participate with openly partisan organizations (political parties, et al). You may not work with organizations which operate solely on campus. Be advised that many organizations will require an orientation session and/or background check for new volunteers, as well as an application. It is your responsibility to complete these items, and I strongly advise you contact at least one organization within the first couple of weeks of class. **It is your responsibility to inform me of difficulties signing up for and volunteering with an organization.** **Falsifying information about your participation is considered academic dishonesty and will be punished as such.**

In order for your hours to count, you must respond to the reflection question each time you complete a volunteering session with the organization (which will be posted to this class’s page on the Engagement Zone website). **If you fail to answer the reflection question every time you volunteer, the hours will not count.** At the end of the month, I will tally your volunteer hours to make sure you are doing the required number of hours per month. **Failure to complete at least 5 hours per month will result in a zero for both the service-learning paper and presentation.**

At the end of the semester, you will write a short (approximately 3-5 double-spaced pages in length) assessment of your service. The primary goal of the paper is to encourage self-reflection on your service and how you believe your service helped the community. The best papers will have concrete examples of times in which your service had tangible benefits to others, and you are welcome to use quotes from volunteer coordinators, those assisted, and others who can testify to your service. You should also include a discussion of how your service participation related to the concepts discussed in class (i.e. how volunteering to help refugees relates to immigration policy in the US). The assessment will be due **on May 3rd by 5 PM on Blackboard**.

***Final Presentation***

In lieu of a final exam, you will deliver a final presentation on your service-learning experience, in which you will present your evaluation of your service, following the criteria described for the paper. These presentations will be no more than 5 minutes in length and must be in PowerPoint format. You may use pictures and videos to provide examples of your service in action, as well as quotes.

You have 2 options for this presentation. The first is to present in my office on our scheduled exam day, May 7th. I will send around a sign-up sheet in April, in which you will sign up for a designated presentation time. I ask that, when you sign up, you keep in mind any exams that you have that day and only sign up for a time in which you will be available, as failure to show up for your appointed time will result in a zero for your presentation grade. If you need to make alternate arrangements, you must let me know ASAP and no later than 48 hours before your scheduled presentation. You will also be required to upload your presentation to Blackboard **by 11:59 PM on May 6th**, so that I can have a backup in the event of a technical issue; otherwise, you will lose 10 points on your presentation grade.

The second option is to record your presentation and upload it to Blackboard. This presentation follows the same format as above, but in addition to the bullet points you must also have at least audio of yourself doing the presentation; **turning in nothing but a PowerPoint will result in a zero for your presentation grade**. This recorded presentation must also be **uploaded to Blackboard by 11:59 PM on May 6th or you will receive a zero**. I will listen to the presentation and grade using the format above. Either option will be graded the same way, so for a more detailed explanation of grading the presentation, see the rubric posted to Blackboard, under Course Materials.

***Lectures and Attendance***:

Because attendance and participation comprise a total of 35% of your overall grade, attendance is mandatory. At some point during a class, I will pass around a sign-in sheet for you to sign. If you fail to sign the sheet, I will simply assume you weren’t there (even if you took the quiz). **Having someone sign your name is a form of academic dishonesty and will be punished as such.** Also, if you leave early without an excuse, you will be counted with an unexcused absent (even if you signed the attendance sheet). If you miss more than 50% of the classes, you fail automatically. If there is a legitimate reason for you to miss class (hospitalization, funeral, etc.), I must be notified no later than 2 hours before class, and even then if it looks like you’re missing a lot of classes, I am going to insist that you take an incomplete or drop the class.

Furthermore, I have a low tolerance for lateness. After a couple of tardies if you are more than 10 minutes late to class, you will be counted absent. Please show up on time, as your lateness distracts the class and prevents you from obtaining full comprehension of the material. If you have a legitimate reason why you may be late (job, class in Brownsville, etc.), you must let me know ASAP (at the start of the semester, in the case of consistent lateness).

***PowerPoints and In-Class Technology***

The course is designed to be a “flipped” course. What this means is that some lectures will be presented in Top Hat, and some lectures will be in-class. Those lectures which are flipped will be denoted in the syllabus. Flipped lectures are mostly designed to educate you on basics definitions and concepts, while class lectures are designed to explore controversies and modern issues in more depth (and to allow you ample opportunity to ask questions and make comments on the material). Flipped lectures will be posted to Top Hat no later than 24 hours before each class, while in-class lectures will be posted to Top Hat no later than 1 hours before class. Feel free to print off these PowerPoints and bring them to class for notetaking.

With regard to technology in the class, you are allowed to bring your laptops and tablets to take notes in class. However, I reserve the right to ban these devices if it is clear that they are being misused (checking social media, working on fantasy sports, etc.). I also reserve the right to stop posting the in-class PowerPoints if attendance falls off or if people are tuning out during class. **Cell phones are not allowed, period**.

***Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism***:

This is the quickest way to fail this class and get yourself in serious trouble with the university. Cheating and lying will not be tolerated in my class, period. Anyone caught cheating or lying per university rules will suffer the consequences, which are at my discretion. All assignments are closed-book. See the Office of the Dean website for a comprehensive definition of academic dishonesty: <http://www.utrgv.edu/srr/students/academic-dishonesty/index.htm>.

***Extra Credit***:

You will receive bonus points to your final average if you perform designated extra credit assignments throughout the semester. You may receive no more than **3** bonus points (1 point for each assignment, so no more than three assignments). Extra credit is assigned by me and may consist of anything that comes to mind that I believe relates well to what we’re discussing in class (lectures, movies, etc.).

***Accommodations for Students with Disabilities***:

If you have a learning, mental, or physical disability that may require individualized accommodation, you must inform me of your need ASAP – preferably at the beginning of the semester. Please contact the Student Accessibility Services office, located at University Center 108 here in Edinburg (Cortez 129, if you are in Brownsville), in order to register with them (this is the only way I will be able to grant you academic accommodation). You can also contact the Edinburg office at (956) 665-7005 (the Brownsville office is (956) 882-7374) or at [ability@utrgv.edu](mailto:ability@utrgv.edu).

***DACA Support for Undocumented Students***

For those students who are undocumented, The DREAM Resource Center – located in the Center for Diversity and Inclusion – provides a safe, confidential space for students to obtain resources and services. The office is located in the University Center Room 206A on the Edinburg campus (Student Union Room 1.20 on the Brownsville campus). You can also contact the center at (956) 665-2260 or at [diversity@utrgv.edu](mailto:diversity@utrgv.edu) or [dreamer@utrgv.edu](mailto:dreamer@utrgv.edu). All conversations related to your status are confidential and will not be made public without your consent, by me or anyone else. This university strives to be a safe space for all students, regardless of their citizenship status, and we will do everything to help you receive the resources you need to be successful in college.

***Pregnancy, Pregnancy-related, and Parenting Accommodations***:

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination, which includes discrimination based on pregnancy, marital status, or parental status. Students seeking accommodations related to pregnancy, pregnancy-related condition, or parenting (reasonably immediate postpartum period) are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services for additional information and to request accommodations. If you will need to miss class for anything related to these matters, you will have to receive accommodation from SAS and inform me ASAP of your needs, so that we may work together to accommodate you.

If you do have a small child or children, and you are a full-time student, UTRGV has an on-campus Child Development Center, which serves children age 3 months to 5 years and provides students with meals, learning activities, and child care. If you are interested in the preschool, please visit <https://www.utrgv.edu/en-us/student-experience/student-services/child-development-center/> or email the center at [childcare@utrgv.edu](mailto:childcare@utrgv.edu) for more information.

If you are having trouble finding a babysitter or child care for your child, you are free to bring them to class with you. I do ask that you only do so if you absolutely cannot get child care for that class, and I ask that you make sure your child is on their best behavior (quiet, not disruptive, etc.). If you cannot guarantee this, I ask that you not attend class that day (if you provide evidence that you cannot find child care, I will count the absence as excused), and if you are consistently having trouble finding child care, you should contact either Student Accessibility Services or the Dean of Students to learn other ways to work around this issue.

***Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Violence***:

In accordance with UT System regulations, I am a “Responsible Employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which I become aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. I also reserve the right to pursue action beyond the official university protocol (e.g. going to public law enforcement with concerns or evidence), with the consent of the victim. More information can be found at [www.utrgv.edu/equity](http://www.utrgv.edu/equity), including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

***University-Sponsored Clubs or Programs***

If you are a student-athlete, band member, or otherwise affiliated with a university-sponsored club or event that will require travel during the semester (and for which you do not have control over the scheduling), please let me know ASAP – preferably at the beginning of the semester – so that we can make alternate arrangements for you.

***FERPA Release***:

In accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), all academic information related to this course is confidential. Consequently, I cannot reveal any information about your grade, attendance, etc. to anyone who is not an authorized university employee. If you have someone whom you want to have access to your information, you will need to sign a FERPA waiver and turn it in to me. You can find that document at <https://www.utrgv.edu/_files/documents/student-enrollment/utrgv%20-%20ferpa%20release.pdf>.

***Mandatory Course Evaluation Period***:

Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (<http://my.utrgv.edu>); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. The course evaluations will open at midnight CST on April 9th and close at 11:59 PM CST on April 29th.

***University Assessment***:

There will be a short exam that students are required to take. Because this is a University requirement, **students will not receive any extra credit for this course (even if they have already earned it) AND will be docked a full letter grade from their final average unless this short exam is completed at the end of the semester**. The university assessment exam will open on April 23rd at midnight CST and close on May 7th at 11:59 PM CST.

***Inclement Weather Policy***

This class will follow the university’s inclement weather policy, with regards to weather: if the campus is closed there will be no class, and if campus is open there will be class. Having stated that, if you live away from campus please use common sense with regard to road conditions. If it is too dangerous for you to safely make it to campus, please notify me ASAP so that your absence will be excused.

***Food Security Resources for Students***:

Any student who faces challenges securing their food and believes this may affect their performance in the course (it will) is urged to contact the VP for Student Success for support. Furthermore, please be aware of resources on campus, such as the Student Food Pantry, that can assist you in accessing food and other non-perishable resources. You can learn more about the Student Food Pantry, and other resources for students, at http://www.utrgv.edu/advising/one-stop-shop/connect-to-your-student-resources/index.htm

***Mental and Physical Health***

College can be a very scary and troubling time, particularly if you are a first-year student. Please understand that you are not alone, and there are resources available to help you with any crisis or concerns you may have. For mental health, the best on-campus resource is the Student Counseling Center, located at EUCTR 109 in Edinburg or BSTUN 2.10 in Brownsville. The Counseling Center offers a myriad of resources for free to students who have paid the health fee for the semester, and all information is confidential. If you would like their help, you can contact them at (956) 665-2574 in Edinburg ((956) 882-3897 if you are in Brownsville) or check their website at http://www.utrgv.edu/counseling/services/counseling/index.htm.

Physical health is also an important aspect of college, as poor physical health can (and often does) impact your success in the classroom. The Student Health Center offers primary care physicians and a full array of medical services, almost all of which are free of charge to students who have paid the health fee for the semester. If you would like their help, you can contact them at (956) 665-2511 if you are in Edinburg ((956) 882-3896 if you are in Brownsville) or visit their website at http://www.utrgv.edu/health-services/.

***Academic Help and Career Guidance***

If you need academic (non-disability) help, there are several resources available to you at UTRGV, in addition to my office hours. University Resources include the Learning Center, Writing Center, Advising Center and Career Center. The centers provide services such as tutoring, writing help, critical thinking, study skills, degree planning, and student employment. Locations are:

* Learning center: BSTUN 2.10 (Brownsville) or ELCTR 100 (Edinburg)
* Writing center: BLIBR 3.206 (Brownsville) or ESTAC 3.119 (Edinburg)
* Advising center: BMAIN 1.400 (Brownsville) or ESWKH 101 (Edinburg)
* Career center: BCRTZ 129 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 2.101 (Edinburg)

***Schedule (subject to change as I see fit)***:

1/14 – Introduction to Class; introduce one another and the class; go over the syllabus; discuss how to sign up for a service organization.

1/16 –Foundations of American Government and Constitutional Convention. **Presentation by Engagement Zone on signing up for service-learning organization**

**Flipped Lecture**: discuss the philosophical influence on the Founding Fathers and how they impact us today; discuss the beginnings of American government and why it failed

**In-Class Lecture**: explore the policy issues at the Constitutional Convention and those surrounding ratification.

**What you need to read**: Chs. 2 and 4; Thomas Paine’s “Common Sense” (Blackboard; optional, but worth the read); *Federalist #10* (Blackboard; optional); *Federalist #51* (Blackboard; optional)

1/21 - **Quiz 1 (Foundations of American Government and Constitutional Convention)**; Elections and Voting, Part I

**Flipped Lecture:** discuss how you vote and the different types of elections in America; observe how the criteria for voting have evolved over the decades

**In-Class Lecture**: examine why voter turnout in the US is small; discuss issues of voting access, such as voter ID laws

**What you need to read**: Ch. 7

**What you need to watch**: campaign ads (Blackboard)

**Sign up with volunteer organization in Engagement Zone**

1/23 – Elections and Voting, Part II

**Flipped Lecture**:discuss the increased role of interest groups and money in elections; examine how candidates are chosen; discuss the role of political parties in American life

**In-Class Lecture**: discuss state and local elections and why they are more important than you may think; discuss gerrymandering and redistricting

**What you need to read**: Ch. 6, Sections 6.3 – 6.5; NPR article on “corporation personhood” (Blackboard); Cato Institute defense of *Citizens United* (Blackboard; optional); possible fallout from *Citizens United* (Blackboard; optional)

1/28 – **Quiz 2 (Elections and Voting)** The Media: The Fourth Estate

**Flipped Lecture**: examine the role of the press in American politics; discuss how the media’s framing of events impacts public opinion and policy in America

**In-Class Lecture**:discuss the “fairness doctrine” and contemporary issues involving reporting

**What you need to read**: Ch. 8

1/30 – Public Opinion: Molding American Policy

**Flipped Lecture**: explore how public opinion is determined; look at some of the factors that go into people’s views on policy

**In-Class Lecture**: Examine how policymakers respond to changing public opinion; look at possible problems with polling and other methods of assessing public opinion

**Last Day to Drop Class Without It Appearing on Transcript**

2/4 – **Quiz 3 (Syllabus Only!)**; Congress: The Only Inherently Criminal Class in America

**Flipped Lecture**: discuss the structure and powers of Congress; learn how a bill becomes a law

**In-Class Lecture**: Explore contemporary issues in Congress, such as term limits and filibusters; learn about the impeachment process

**What you need to read**: Ch. 10

2/6 – The Judiciary: Judging You

**Flipped Lecture**: examine the structure and functions of the federal judiciary; discuss differences between criminal and civil systems

**In-Class Lecture**:explore judicial elections and state judicial systems

**What you need to read**: Ch. 11 and Ch. 14, Section 14.6; *Federalist 78* (Blackboard; optional); *Marbury v. Madison* (Blackboard; optional)

2/11 – **Quiz 4 (Congress and Judiciary)**;The Presidency: Hail to the Chief,

**Flipped Lecture**: examine how the presidency has evolved through history; discuss the powers and duties of the president; look at how the differences in expectations and reality can affect how Americans view the president

**In-Class Lecture**: explore contemporary issues of presidential power, such as presidential pardons

**What you need to read**: Ch. 9

**What you need to watch**: short presidential speeches (Blackboard)

**Service-Learning hours for January due on Engagement Zone**

2/13 - Public Administration: Why We Can’t Have Nice Things

**Flipped Lecture**: examine the structure and functions of the modern federal bureaucracy

**In-Class Lecture**: observe how bureaucratic action affects our daily lives; discuss the US Census and why it’s important

2/18 – **Quiz 5 (Presidency and Public Administration)** Foreign Policy: America Abroad, Part I

**Flipped Lecture**: look at how the president and Congress often work together on foreign policy and what happens when they don’t

**In-Class Lecture**: begin discussing current issues in foreign policy

**What you need to have read**: Ch. 13

2/20 – Foreign Policy, Part II

**Flipped Lecture**: look at international organizations and their effectiveness in addressing international crises

**In-Class Lecture**: continuing discussing current issues in foreign policy

2/25 - **Quiz 6 (Foreign Policy)** Federalism

**Flipped Lecture**: examine what federalism is and what it entails; observe how our understanding of the power of the federal government versus the power of the state governments has changed dramatically

**In-Class Lecture**: discuss whether the federal government should have so much power by looking at specific issues, such as drug laws

**What you need to read**: Ch. 3

2/27 –State and Local Governments

**Flipped Lecture**:explore the different types of state governments and what they do; observe the powers of the different governors; explore the different types of local governments and their functions; examine the relationship between state and local governments

**In-Class Lecture**: discuss issues facing state and local governments, such as environmental policy and Medicaid expansion; examine the role of civic engagement and non-profits in the community

3/3 – **Quiz 7 (Federalism and State and Local Governments)**;Public Policy

**Flipped Lecture**: discuss how government policy is implemented; examine how laws and policies are evaluated and reevaluated and the factors that shape those evaluations

**In-Class Lecture**: focus on specific public policies affecting your day-to-day lives, such as student loans

**What you need to read**: Ch. 6, Section 6.2

**Service-Learning hours for February due on Engagement Zone**

3/5 – Immigration Policy

**Flipped Lecture**: look at the immigration process in the United States and how it compares to other countries

**In-Class Lecture**: explore issues related to immigration policies, such as the proposed border wall and sanctuary cities

**What You Need to Watch**: *Torn Apart: Separated at the Border* (Blackboard)

**3/10 through 3/19 – No Class (Spring Break)**

**Post-Spring Break Schedule (all lectures online only)**

3/24 – **Quiz 8 (Public Policy and Immigration Policy)**;1st Amendment: Freedom of, and from, Religion. Learn the difference between civil rights and civil liberties; examine what is meant by freedom of religion; examine how the courts and governments have decided on the meanings of the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses over the century; look at modern instances of conflict between religious groups and governments

**What you need to read**: Ch. 5, Section 5.4; *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* (Blackboard; optional)

3/26 –Free Speech: What You Can and Can’t Say in the USA; look at what is and is not considered protected speech; discuss how restrictions on free speech have evolved over time; Look at modern controversies over freedom of speech, such as social media “trolls;” explore the meaning of freedom of the press; look at what is and is not obscene and how the definition of obscene has changed over the decades; look at the difference between slander and libel and who is (not) a “public figure”

3/31 – **Quiz 9 (1st Amendment)**; The Right to Privacy; learn how the right to privacy was not written into the Constitution but was nonetheless valued; examine how the right to privacy has evolved over the decades; discuss issues related to privacy, such as abortion

**What you can read**: “Colleges Are Turning Students Phones into Surveillance Machines” (optional)

4/2 – The 2nd Amendment; learn how our understanding of the 2nd Amendment has changed over the decades; explore contemporary issues regarding the right to bear arms, such as mass shootings

4/7 – **Quiz 10 (Right to Privacy and 2nd Amendment)** Civil Liberties, Part I; examine your rights in the event of a police search; look at the Exclusionary Rule and exceptions to it; discuss how evolving technology presents new challenges in terms of restrictions on searches and seizures

4/9 – Civil Liberties, Part II; examine the evolution of the rights of those accused of crimes; look at modern instances of accused rights, such as the death penalty

**Last day to drop or withdraw from class**

4/14 – **Quiz 11 (Civil Liberties)**;Civil Rights in America, Part I: African Americans; examine the evolution of civil rights for African-Americans since the founding of the country; look at contemporary issues regarding the rights of African-Americans

**What you need to read**:Ch. 5, Sections 5.1 – 5.2.4

**What you need to watch**: *I Am Not Your Negro* (Blackboard)

4/16 – Civil Rights in America, Part II: Rights of the Hispanic Community; explore the evolution of Hispanic rights since the early 20th century; discuss contemporary issues facing the Hispanic community

**What you need to read**: selections from *Chicano!* and *Borderlands/La Frontera* (Blackboard)

4/21 – **Quiz 12 (Civil Rights in America – African-Americans and Hispanics)** Civil Rights in America, Part III: Women’s Rights; examine the evolution of women’s rights since the founding of the country; look at contemporary issues regarding women’s rights

**What you need to read**: Ch. 5, Section 5.2.5

4/23 – Civil Rights in America, Part IV: LGBTQ+ Rights; examine the evolution of the rights of the LGBTQ+ community since the 1960s; discuss contemporary issues in the LGBTQ+ community

**Discussion posts close at 11:59 PM on April 24th**

**What you need to watch**: *Stonewall Uprising* (Blackboard)

4/28 – **Quiz 14 (Civil Rights in America – Women and LGBTQ+ Rights)** Pop Culture in American Politics; examine how portrayals of government have changed over the past 50 years; look at how movies and TV vary between serious and comedic portrayals of events

**What you need to watch**: selected *Daily Show* clips (Blackboard)

**What you need to listen to**: songs about politics (Spotify; link under “Course Materials” on Blackboard

**5/3 – Service-Learning Paper due by 11:59 PM on Blackboard**

**5/6 – Final presentations uploaded to Blackboard by 11:59 PM**