GOV 312L: Issues and Policies in American Government: American Political Parties  
Texas Common Number: GOVT 2302

The course is designed specifically for undergraduates who need to satisfy the second half of the six semester–hour degree requirement in government imposed by the Texas legislature. This requirement was imposed by the state legislature to ensure that college graduates would have the understanding necessary for participation in a free republic. Government 310L offers the nuts and bolts of contemporary politics at both the federal and the state level; Government 312L digs a little deeper into our foundations by considering American political parties as a function of the electoral arrangements and social cleavages that exist in the United States.

This course has three goals:

1. Provide students with a basic factual and descriptive framework of American political parties
2. Allow students to develop a theoretical framework, analyze complex political phenomena, and comment on current debates about the parties
3. Acquaint students with the world of political scientists

Prerequisites

Completion of twenty-four semester hours of college coursework, plus Government 310L.

Required Materials

The readings for this course come from the following text:

ISBN-10: 0205793193

Course Organization

This course is divided into four learning modules containing a total of eight lessons. Each lesson contains a statement of lesson objectives, a reading assignment, written instructor commentary, self-assessment exercises, and an assignment to be completed and submitted to the instructor for grading. All lessons within a learning module must be completed before moving onto the next module. The instructor is available via a message center to provide feedback and respond to questions regarding assignments.
Topics include:

**Module 1**
Lesson 1: Examining Political Parties
Lesson 2: Party in the Electorate

**Module 2**
Lesson 3: Party Organization
Lesson 4: Party Activists

**Module 3**
Lesson 5: Nominating Candidates
Lesson 6: Financing Campaigns

**Module 4**
Lesson 7: Party in Government
Lesson 8: Party and Theories of Politics

**Grading**

This course contains eight instructor-graded assignments (essay-based, each of equal weight), a midterm exam, and a non-comprehensive final exam. Both exams must be taken in a proctored location, with arrangements to be made by the student.

- Instructor-Graded Assignments 40%
- Midterm Exam 30%
- Final Exam 30%

In addition to earning the minimum number of points on assignments to receive a passing grade, students must earn a score of at least 60% on the final exam in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

This course is independent study and is self-paced. Students have five months upon registration in which to complete all coursework, plus an additional thirty days in which to take the final exam.

**University Extension**

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