Government 2301

Internet (WebCT)

Alvin Community College

Tim Reynolds

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ADA POLICY: Alvin Community College will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the policy of Alvin Community College to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals who are students with disabilities. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the Counseling Center in a timely manner to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An education and knowledge are tangible commodities that can be acquired and sold, but they are unique in that once attained they cannot be taken away. As our economy changes from an industrial to service based, information is a major source of power and influence. Nevertheless, it is increasingly the case that many individuals will not maintain only one career throughout their employment years. Consequently, the process of learning is an essential adaptive mechanism.

This self-paced introductory course in government allows the student to take on the responsibility of working through the philosophy, structure, and policies of our government. While this format offers the student added flexibility in terms of when and where the learning occurs, it requires additional self-discipline on the part of the student. Completion of the course is your responsibility.

The material covered in this self-paced Government 2301 is the same as that presented in a lecture course minus the discussion of current issues. In order to expose the student to current topics and alternative ways of interpreting political issues some additional reading on current topics is recommended.

The Instructor will be available throughout the semester for advice, consultation and guidance. You are encouraged to either drop by during office hours or make an appointment to see me in order to discuss the substance or procedures of the course.

Unfortunately, some students perceive government to be boring, uninteresting, and a relatively less demanding required course. In reality, governing is a difficult task and the government is a pervasive actor in our society. The more you are able to understand the role of government and politics in our society, the better equipped you will be able to deal with many aspects of living in 21st century America and our position politically in the global organization of nation states. Consequently, it will be necessary for you to put forth considerable effort in order to develop a command of the subject. This is more so the case with a self-paced course.

General Objectives
I. The fundamental goals of this course are as follows:
   A. Understand the basic values, principles, structure and ideals that are the basis for our form of government.
   B. Understand the importance of constitutional law in contrast to other forms of government.
   C. Understand the political purpose of Federalism as part of the organizational structure of our form of government.
D. Understand the basis protections and safeguards citizens have in order to prevent an oppressive form of government, i.e., civil liberties and civil rights.

E. Understand the various actors in society that influence the political process, e.g., interest groups, the media, political parties and public opinion.

II. Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to:

A. Understand the important aspects of our form of government, i.e., the advantages and disadvantages.
B. Understand how the political system works and how government responds to that system.
C. Analyze government policies designed to achieve certain goals and deal with specific problems.
D. Read and better understand current political issues and governmental policies in relation to the effect that they will have on the student’s personal opportunities and experience.

Course Outline

I. Introduction to Political Perspective and Values
   A. Pluralist and Economic Rule Models
   B. Freedom and Equality

II. Federal and State Constitution
   A. The U.S. Constitution
   B. The Texas Constitution

III. Relationship between the State and Federal Governments
   A. Federalism
   B. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

IV. The Political Process (part I)
   A. Public Opinion
   B. The Media
   C. Political Parties

V. The Political Process (part II)
   A. Political Parties
   B. Elections
   C. Interest Groups

Course Requirements - Upon completion of the reading assignments and the student will be required to take an exam. The student has two options for the exam format: 1) all multiple-choice questions, or 2) all essay questions. The multiple-choice questions are “test bank” questions written by the publishers of the textbook selected by the instructor or by the instructor. The essay questions will come from the most important topics covered in the readings. There are four exams and the student’s final grade is an average of those four exams. There will not be a comprehensive final exam. The grading scale will be as follows: A=90-100 B=80-89 C=70-79 D=60-69 F=below 60

In order to receive a grade and credit for this self-paced government course the student must complete all four of the exams by the designated deadline. Failure to complete the course work will result in an "F." Upon the student’s request or the instructor’s recommendation, the participant may be dropped from the course through the Counseling Center with a grade of "W" before the official drop deadline. Withdrawal grades will not be given after that date.

Arrangement of Course

1. All reading materials necessary for the course are available for purchase in the bookstore or on WebCT.
2. There are no class sessions. **This is a self-paced course with the student having the responsibility to plan, study and complete the exams by the designated deadline dates and time for examination, i.e., within the constraints of the official semester calendar.**

3. Students are encouraged to visit with the instructor during office hours, either in person, by phone or e-mail. E-mail will be answered within 24 hours Monday through Thursday and 72 hours of Friday for the Fall and Spring semesters and 96 hours for Thursday during the Summer semesters.

   **Office Location:** C222  
   **Office Hours:** During posted schedule or by appointment.  
   **Phone Number:** 281-756-3638  
   **E-mail address:** treynolds@alvincollege.edu  

4. Upon completion of each of the sections given for the course, the students will take the exams on WebCT during the designated four ten day time periods.

**REQUIRED TEXT and READING ASSIGNMENTS:** Contact the Instructor for the current required reading material information and reading assignments.

If you have a disability that requires an academic accommodation, please make an appointment with the Counseling Center to see the Advisor for Students with Disabilities.

All students will be able to access their WebCT account as of the first day of class by noon. Every student who enrolls after this day will be added in by the next day by noon. If a student is having a problem, please have them contact the Distance Education Department at 281-756-3728 or de@alvincollege.edu and we will help them.

The student's username and password will be the following:

   **USERNAME:** firstname.lastname  
   **PASSWORD:** alvin

**NOTE:** Please do not forget the period in-between the two words. If you have multiple last names (example: De Los Santos) these will be combined into one word. Hyphens will be left in as they are. Please check your fee statement to see how our system spells your name, as this is what we base these accounts off of.

**CAUTION:** If you have ISP or connection problem while you are taking an exam, you should immediately e-mail the instructor explaining the problem and then try to log on again. If you do not follow these instructions, your grade will be based on what is submitted. **It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to have a reliable computer and ISP.**

**Information and Instructions for WebCT Essay and Multiple Choice Exams**

The WebCT exams have been designed to provide an alternative for students who are either physically unable to reach the ACC campus or due to schedule or geographic considerations on campus exams are not convenient. The WebCT exams are NOT designed to make the completion of the course less rigorous. The WebCT exams are comprehensive, require in depth knowledge of the subject and demand a clear ability on the part of the student to display their thorough understanding of the material.
WebCT Internet exams allow the use of the assigned textbooks and reading material. Nevertheless, it is mandatory that the WebCT essay exam answers be in YOUR OWN WORDS and NOT QUOTES from the book or the assigned reading material or duplication or quotes from other sources related to the material and NOT based on input from other students. (CAUTION: this includes DEFINITIONS.*see below) Although there is a correct answer, YOUR answer should be uniquely different from the book and the answers of other students and there should be no collaboration with others. In order to determine YOUR competency in the subject, evaluate YOUR ability to express YOUR understanding of the material and award YOU a grade, ALL OF THE RESPONSE transmitted to the instructor should be YOURS and YOURS ALONE. If there is any concern with regards to the authenticity of YOUR knowledge and command of the subject matter, YOU will be contacted by the instructor. IF YOU COPY QUOTES FROM THE READING ASSIGNMENTS (or any other source including another classmate) YOU WILL RECEIVE AN F FOR THE SEMESTER GRADE. YOUR CONFIRMATION ON THE AUTHENTICATION STATEMENT VERIFIES THE AUTHENTICITY OF YOUR WORK. IF YOU ASSERT THAT THE WORK IS AUTHENTIC AND IT IS LATER FOUND TO HAVE ORIGINATED FROM ASSIGNED READING MATERIAL OR SOME OTHER SOURCE, YOUR GRADE WILL BE CHANGED TO AN F. ALVIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE MAINTAINS CAMPUS WIDE ACCESS TO PLAGIARISM SOFTWARE. Your exam will be submitted to turnitin.com.

ESSAY EXAM OPTION:

The method of determining your understanding of the subject matter on the essay exams will be as follows:

1) Each essay exam is composed of seven questions.
2) You will be REQUIRED to answer FIVE of the seven questions.
3) Each question is worth 20 points and each question will have FIVE parts, i.e., a), b), c), etc.
4) You MUST clearly label each part of your answer corresponding to each part of the question, i.e., a), b), c) etc. (If you do not label the parts of the answer, you will NOT be awarded points and you will not be allowed to do so later.)
5) DO NOT capitalize your entire answer! Your exam WILL NOT be graded.
6) The total time allowed per essay exam is five hours.
7) You will be able to look at each question ONLY ONCE and you need to decide at that point if you are going to answer the question or move on to the remaining questions.
8) You can ONLY eliminate TWO questions. There will NOT be an opportunity to return to a question once it has been answered or eliminated. The authentication statement confirmation is not a graded question.
9) The number of points you are awarded per question is dependent on the amount of DETAIL you submit, i.e., partial answers will mean partial credit.
10) Each of the four exams will be available at a predetermined and limited (ten day) time period. You will need to obtain a unique password from the instructor for each exam, i.e., to log on to take the exam. DO NOT RELY ON PASSWORDS OBTAINED FROM OTHER STUDENTS. THE PASSWORDS MAY CHANGE DAILY. IF YOU POST THE PASSWORDS ON THE WEBCT E-MAIL OR CHAT SITE, THE INSTRUCTOR WILL CHANGE THE PASSWORDS. IF the passwords have been changed, you should e-mail the Instructor.
11) Your exam will be graded within a week of the end of the submission deadline for each exam. You should request your grade by e-mail from the instructor at: treynolds@alvincollege.edu

**MULTIPLE CHOICE EXAM OPTION:**

Multiple-choice exams are also available for each exam. The exams are composed of 100 to 150 questions for the Government courses. Five hours is the time limit per exam.

Practice quizzes for the multiple choice exams are available at publishers' websites.

**Internet Exam Advice:**

You will need a reliable computer and Internet access. DO NOT expect the WebCT based exams to be less difficult than an on campus lecture class or TBA Learning Lab or office administered exams. YOU WILL BE DISAPPOINTED, if that is your expectation. You should read ALL of the assigned material BEFORE attempting an exam. BE FULLY familiar with the information in the assigned reading and THINK about what the material MEANS. ALL of the essay questions require you to EXPLAIN the information, i.e., not just recite facts. Some answers will NOT be in the reading assignment, but REQUIRE YOUR ability to analyze and synthesize the material. Parts or all of the questions will change daily. You should request feedback from the instructor after completing the exam.

If you decide to take the WebCT exams and accept these requirements, you will need to access WebCT from the www.alvincollege.com website. **It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to have a RELIABLE COMPUTER and INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER.**

**Footnote**

*For example, a textbook definition of central bank: an institution that oversees and regulates the banking system and controls the monetary base. Alternative wording: the government's bank in a nation with the authority to impose legal requirements on commercial banks and manipulates the money supply in order to stimulate or slow down the economy. **THE POINT** of rewording information from the book or other sources is to clarify IF the student understands the meaning of the concept, relationship or definition.

**WebCT Internet Exam Schedule**

The four exams are scheduled during four designated ten day time periods evenly dispersed through the semester based on the time constraints of the semester. Contact the Instructor for the specific scheduled dates for the semester your registered.

All exams are available from 12:00 a.m. (midnight) on the beginning date through 11:59 p.m. on the ending date. **YOU MUST LOGON by 7 p.m. in order to COMPLETE YOUR ENTIRE SUBMISSION BY THE DEADLINE, i.e., 11:59 p.m.** You need to obtain a uniquely different password from the Instructor for each exam, i.e., to log on to take the exam. DO NOT POST THE PASSWORDS ON WebCT chat or discussion sites. IF the passwords are posted, THEY WILL BE CHANGED. IF the passwords are changed you should contact THE INSTRUCTOR for new passwords.

You will need to e-mail the Instructor after each exam in order to obtain your grade.