



GOVT 2305  
U.S. GOVERNMENT  
ROY EDWARD CASAGRANDA, PhD  
Professor of Government

Fall 2023 August 21 – December 10  
Section: 68370-106  
Time: MW 9:00 am - 10:20 am  
Classroom RG10, rm 1314  
(Google Meet <https://meet.google.com/nsi-rnow-gou>)  
Lecture Play list: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLG1NADbefbEOt02mFE-6\\_2zGsr1uFHMuz](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLG1NADbefbEOt02mFE-6_2zGsr1uFHMuz)  
Google Classroom: <https://classroom.google.com/c/NjE4Nzk5ODU4MDcw?cjc=5ori3eI>  
code: 5ori3eI  
Office: RG30 3118  
MTWTh 10:20-10:30 am  
Office Hours: MTWTh 11:50-12:00 noon  
MTWTh 1:20-2:30 pm  
You must make an appointment to meet with me.  
Ask at the end of class.  
Websites: <http://gov.casagranda.com>  
<https://theaustinschool.com>  
Textbook: *OER*  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c13lbgva4XEU73koVV00JWaPyT1h224s/view>

"So strong is this propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities, that where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts. But the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property."

Federalist Paper #10

## COURSE OBJECTIVES AND DESCRIPTION

I do not lecture from the textbook, but I do test you on that material. This is a sophomore level college course and it is treated as such. The material will not be spoon-fed. You are expected to be an autonomous, self-directed, adult capable of academic level analysis, academic writing, and adult conversation of a sophomore in college. You are expected to keep up with the readings, attend lectures or listen to the recordings, keep up with due dates, and otherwise function like an adult. That means catching up on missed material without contacting the professor. Get notes from a classmate. Follow the syllabus. The professor is a resource. Ask the professor intellectual questions. The professor is not your mother.

This course is an introduction to United States government. It includes a framework for understanding US government and politics, the constitutional basis for US government, the processes of US government and politics, the institutions of US government and politics, and the policies of US government. The basic objectives of the course are for the student to:

1. Gain an awareness of the principles that guided the founders of the U.S. and the manner in which our definition of these

principles have changed over the years.

2. Understand the basic structure of the U.S. government.
3. Develop an awareness of the political process and its impact on government.
4. Become aware of the ways in which government affects/is affected by its citizens.
5. Think in political terms as part of the process of becoming a more effective citizen.
6. Develop independent critical thinking skills.
7. Understand the theoretical nature of what government is.
8. Critically explore such concepts as republic, democratic theory, and liberalism.

The course will begin with a theoretical overview of politics. This beginning will include a discussion about what the very nature, role, and functions of government are. We will explore the difference between the political, economic, and normative sphere of action and how they interact to create politics.

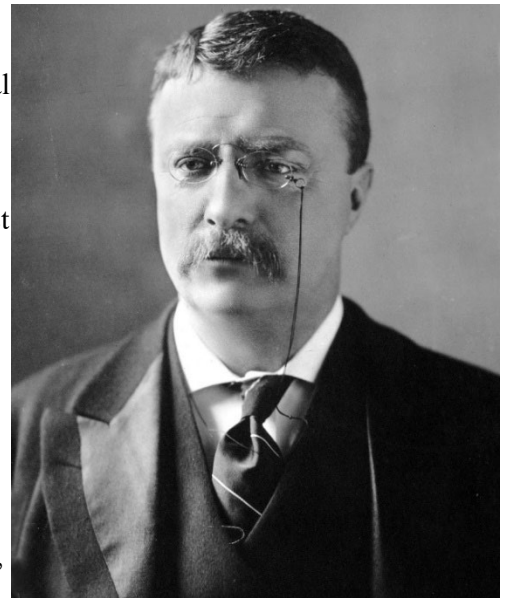
In the second part of the course we will look at the evolution of the U.S. political system through the lens of political history. The objective here will be to discover what we have and how we got it.

Next, we will focus on the political process by looking at public opinion, interest groups, political parties, elections, voting, and the media. In the process we will explore such concepts as single member district representation, republic, proportional representation, and campaign financing.

We will consider US foreign policy.

Then we will look at the institutions of the U.S. government, namely the Congress, the Presidency, the Supreme Court, and the federal bureaucracy.

While this is primarily a lecture course, the class may also include videos, transparencies, role-playing simulations, internet activities, writing assignments, and classroom discussions. Students must attend and participate regularly.



*It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.*

Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919)

## CLASS POLICIES

### LECTURES

This is a fully online live lecture course. It is in principle exactly like my face to face sections except that it is conducted online. As such it is not busy worker intensive, but that puts the burden to perform on you, the college student. You are not required to attend lectures live. They will be uploaded to the [Austin School YouTube Channel](#), where you can watch them at your convenience. Some of you will be inclined to treat the lectures as optional. This is a mistake. Your essays are graded on your ability to synthesize and analyze the lecture material. In other words, if you do not keep up with the lectures there is little chance that you will be able to get passing grades on the Exams. You are not expected to agree with the lecture material, but you must address it to get a passing grade. Answers that ignore the lecture material will be given a failing grade. Additionally, attending the lecture live, will give you access to a large quantity of [auxiliary points](#).

You are encouraged to speak during lectures to add to the conversation or ask relevant questions. Do not type messages to the classroom, unless you are sending a link to something that you looked up. Such texting is usually disruptive and slows down the class considerably. If you have something to say, say it. Having said that, because of the awkwardness of this format, we will each at some point talk over someone, including me. Please do not worry or feel bad about this. In face to face conversation we give each other visual cues to indicate that we are done speaking. These are seriously hampered with the online format. We must each do our best to not talk over each other and we must not get upset when it happens.

I reserve the right to make up any canceled class meetings, for whatever reason, with an online lecture. If I do this, it will be held live (if possible) on Google Meet and then uploaded to the class's YouTube playlist (see the top of the first page).

#### STUDENTS ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Students with Disabilities: Each ACC campus offers support services for students with documented physical or psychological disabilities. Students with disabilities must request reasonable accommodations through the Student Accessibility Services Office on the campus where they expect to take the majority of their classes. Students are encouraged to do this three weeks before the start of the semester.

#### VOICEMAIL

I will not check voicemail. If you wish to discuss something, please make arrangements to meet with me during office hours by Google Meet.

#### EMAIL

I do not like email. I realize that we live in a society where people consider email to be a normal means of communication and I will check it, but it is better to see me in person concerning any issue before or after class, during office hours, or by appointment.

I will not respond to email addresses that are clearly not your own. In other words, if you are using your parent's email, then I will not respond to any emails from such addresses. For example, if your name is John Smith and I receive an email that says it's from Paula Smith, then please don't expect a reply from me.

If you do not have your own email address and you are incapable of getting one, such as one provided by ACC, then you will just need to meet me during office hours.

*The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter.*  
Winston Churchill

#### PERSONAL EMAIL, MESSAGING, and FACEBOOK

Do NOT ever message or text the professor using Facebook, his personal email address, or his personal cell phone for questions related to the class. You should view Facebook, personal email, and the personal cell as means of contacting the professor for Austin School business, personal matters, or political activism only.

#### POLICY ON ATTENDANCE and WITHDRAWAL

Each student is expected to attend and participate in each class meeting and to complete the assigned reading PRIOR to each class. Attendance is a direct component of the final grade (see Classroom Participation and Attendance below). In addition, absences limit the student's opportunity to participate fully and will almost certainly impact the student's essay performance. Should it be necessary to miss a class a student should contact other class members for copies of the notes and materials covered in that class. Attendance is required on test days. Should you miss a test day there will be NO makeup exams, instead your final grade will be based on the tests taken. Should you miss two or more exams you should consider dropping the course rather than suffering a failing grade.

Late arrivals and early departures are disruptive so please be on time and plan to stay the entire period unless you have previously spoken to the instructor. Once roll is taken, no late arrivals will be counted as present. Excessive tardiness or failure to follow class policies on cell phones may result in the student being dropped from the course. Do NOT get up during class to throw something away. The professor reserves the right to withdraw (drop) anyone from the class for any reason. This does not mean that you will automatically be withdrawn if you are failing or if you are not attending class. If you wish to drop the course please make sure to do so yourself. The instructor will not do it for you.

If, for any reason, you decide to withdraw from the course you must complete the required forms in the Admissions and

Records office. Make sure to keep up with the official last day to withdraw of the semester. This is the same date for the professor to drop a student, so if you do not drop by this date, there is nothing that the professor can do help you. This may not be the same date for High School students, so be sure to be in compliance with your High School.

#### TECHNOLOGY and TECHNOSKEPTICISM

Laptops and Cell phones and text-messaging devices are not allowed in my classroom. They must be turned off and should not be in evidence in the classroom unless you have prior approval from the instructor. Texting under the desk rarely conceals the activity and usually reflects poorly on the texter.

#### INCOMPLETES

Incompletes will not be given to any student for any reason. If it becomes clear that you will not be able to complete the course please consider dropping the course by the drop deadline. Failure to complete the required coursework will likely result in lower grade or possibly an 'F' grade.

*We enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.  
I hope to bring some of that discomfort of thought to the American people.*  
John Anderson

#### SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

Acts prohibited by the college for which discipline may be administered include scholastic dishonesty, including but not limited to cheating on an exam or quiz, plagiarizing, and unauthorized collaboration with another in preparing outside work. Academic work submitted by students shall be the result of their thought, research, or self-expression. Academic work is defined as, but not limited to tests, quizzes, whether taken electronically or on paper, projects, either individual or group; classroom presentations, and homework.

If a student commits any of these actions, I will seek disciplinary action in the form of an academic penalty, which will likely include a course grade of 'F.'

Look, I take this very seriously and it has a real simple solution. If you want to include text from someone else feel free to cite the original author. It will strengthen your argument and suggest that you have done research on the subject. Otherwise, I am ruthless and will show no mercy when it comes to plagiarism. Failure to comply with this rule is almost certain to cause you to fail the course.

*I'll be the one to protect you from  
A will to survive and a voice of reason*

*I'll be the one to protect you from  
Your enemies and your choices son  
They're one in the same  
I must isolate you  
Isolate and save you from yourself*

*Swayin to the rhythm of the new world order and  
Count the bodies like sheep to the rhythm of the war drums*

*The boogeymen are coming  
A Perfect Circle*

#### CLASS PARTICIPATION and ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Just as each student is expected to attend class, each student is also expected to participate in the class discussion. Not only does this include preparing for and listening in class, it also includes asking questions, answering questions, providing examples, and expressing opinions. This class will be much more interesting in an atmosphere of active participation and lively exchange of ideas. There will be numerous opportunities throughout the semester to use current events to explore and expand upon our understanding of the concepts we are studying. As a result, I expect students to keep up with current events. If you aren't normally in the habit of doing so, then you should plan to start. I recommend reliable news sources (e.g. BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>, the Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/us>, and the Independent <https://www.independent.co.uk/us>).

In any classroom situation that includes discussion and critical thinking, there are bound to be many differing viewpoints. These differences enhance the learning experience and create an atmosphere where students and instructors alike will be encouraged to think and learn. On sensitive and volatile topics, students may sometimes disagree not only with each other but also with the instructor. It is expected that faculty and students will respect the views of others when expressed in classroom situations. Each person has the right to express his or her opinion. Our Bill of Rights not only guarantees us the right to express our opinions but also provides us the opportunity to learn from our fellow citizens as they express their opinions.

*“On earth there is nothing greater than I: it is I who am the regulating finger of God” — thus roareth the monster. And not only the long-eared and short-sighted fall upon their knees! Ah! even in your ears, ye great souls, it whispereth its gloomy lies! Ah! it findeth out the rich hearts which willingly lavish themselves!*  
Friedrich Nietzsche

## CONCEALED HANDGUN POLICY

The Austin Community College District concealed handgun policy ensures compliance with Section 411.2031 of the Texas Government Code (also known as the Campus Carry Law), while maintaining ACC's commitment to provide a safe environment for its students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

Beginning August 1, 2017, individuals who are licensed to carry (LTC) may do so on campus premises except in locations and at activities prohibited by state or federal law, or the college's concealed handgun policy.

It is the responsibility of license holders to conceal their handguns at all times. Persons who see a handgun on campus are asked to contact the ACC Police Department by dialing 222 from a campus phone or 512-223-7999.

## TITLE IX

I am a full supporter of Title IX. I will report all incidents that come to my attention.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND SCHEDULE

### EVALUATION

Three exams will be given during this semester as noted on the Course Schedule. In addition to this, your grade will include a Classroom Participation component and Auxiliary Assignments.

Writing assignments or take-home essays will be turned into [Google Classroom](https://classroom.google.com/) (https://classroom.google.com/). Hard copies given to the professor should be assumed lost and NO credit will be received for them. Never treat a written assignment as a summarization. You are to ask and answer a question of political significance. Be creative, but also make sure to support your thesis and any claims made around it. The class ID and enrollment passwords are listed below:

### EVALUATION

REQUIREMENT	POINTS TOWARDS FINAL GRADE
MIDTERM	250
FINAL	400
QUIZZES	192
<u>AUXILLARY ASSIGNMENTS</u>	<u>0-230</u>
MAXIMUM	1072

### LETTER GRADE ASSIGNMENT

Final letter grades will be assigned after determining total points earned, as follows:

Final Grade Scale	Letter Grade
900 - 1100	A
800 - 899	B
700 - 799	C
600 - 699	D
0 - 599	F

## GOOGLE CLASSROOM CODE: 5ori3el

### EXAMS

Exams will be some combination of essay, short answers, and multiple choice and posted online. Since you will have a wide range of time to complete the test, there are NO make-up exams. Just get it done!

This is a college lecture course. You should view your essays as responses to the lectures. You are not expected to summarize or agree with the lectures, but you are expected to demonstrate mastery of the material presented in the lectures. In other words, if you do not attend the lectures, you cannot expect to perform well on the essays. If your essay looks like you read a Wikipedia article instead of listening to the lecture, you should expect to get an “F” on that essay.

*Successful politicians are insecure and intimidated men. They advance politically only as they placate, appease, bribe, seduce, bamboozle or otherwise manage to manipulate the demanding and threatening elements in their constituencies.*  
Walter Lippmann

### QUIZZES

I will give weekly quizzes worth 12 points each. These will usually be released on Fridays. You will only have 24 hours from their release to answer the quiz. Quizzes will consist of 2-12 multiple choice and short answer questions. If I choose to forgo a quiz, I will reward the class 12. Quizzes are based on lecture material. Answering them will be difficult if you do not attend.

### AUXILIARY ASSIGNMENTS

There are multiple ways to earn these 0-232 points.

**1) Participate in Class:** If you contribute during lectures, and add to the quality of those lectures, then I will give you up to points 82 points. This is subjective. If I don't know your name, it probably means that you have not participated enough for me to figure out who you are. If you are obnoxious and just speak to say something and you waste class time, etc., then you will earn negative points! Don't be that guy!

**2) Live Austin School Events:** There will likely be four lectures this year. If/as more become available I will inform you. (40 points). (Not available in Summer)

**3) 60 Minutes:** You can write a 300-word essay about a political topic from a single story from 60 Minutes <http://www.cbsnews.com/sections/60minutes/main3415.shtml>. The exact episode and story from that episode is up to you. However, since this essay MUST be political, so you will likely want to avoid writing about topics like Penelope Cruz, as fun as they might be. You can only receive credit for one 60 Minutes essay. (20 points)

**4) Frontline:** You can write a 300-word essay about a political topic from a single story from Frontline <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/>. The exact episode is up to you. However, since this essay MUST be political you will want to pick a story with political implications. You may do more than one Frontline, each subsequent frontline can be turned into the Movie Review slots on Google Classroom and count as 20 points each. (30 points)

**5) Radiolab:** You can write a 300-word essay about any topic from a single story from Radiolab <http://www.radiolab.org/>. The exact episode is up to you. You may not do more than one Radiolab for credit. (30 points)

**6) More Perfect:** You can write a 300 word essay about any topic from a single story from Radiolab <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolabmoreperfect/season-one/>. The exact episode is up to you, but I recommend that you start from the beginning. You may do more than one More Perfect episode for credit; each subsequent frontline can be turned into the Movie Review slots on Google Classroom and count as 20 points each. (30 points)

**7) Past Austin School Lectures:** You can write a 600 word political analysis as many of the following lectures (75 minutes or longer, only) as you like. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUGwVgtUewvtLvu7NaxVrw> (40 points)

**8) Movie Reviews:** You can write 300-word film review for up to a maximum of seven of the following movies:

Tora! Tora! Tora! (20)  
 Letters from Iwo Jima (20)  
 Gallipoli (20)  
 The Revolution Will Not Be Televised (20)  
 Fog of War (30)  
 1984 (20)  
 Brazil (20)  
 A Woman in Berlin (20)  
 Fail Safe (20)  
 Captain Fantastic (20)  
 United States House Select Committee on the January 6 Attack (20 per hearing)  
 Howard Zinn: You Can't Be Neutral (25)  
 The Corporation (25)  
 Hearts and Minds (30)  
 Koyaanisqatsi (30)  
 Battle of Algiers (30)

For options 3-8 you must turn in your work to Google Classroom (see instructions above).

#### HOW TO BEST COMPLETE THIS COURSE

1. Attend all class sessions; if you miss a class get copies of the handouts/notes from a classmate.
2. Do not miss tests. It will make receiving a good grade very difficult.
3. Read the assigned material prior to each class session.
4. Study the materials; prepare for and take each exam as scheduled.
5. Complete and turn in all assignments as assigned and on time. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR ANY REASON AFTER THE DUE DATE.**
6. Contact the instructor if, at any time, you feel your performance is not up to your standards.

#### FUNDAMENTAL ACADEMIC FORCES (STRONGEST TO WEAKEST)

1. Writing Ability
2. Reading Ability
3. Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills
4. Memorization

### COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DUE DATE	TEXT
In the Beginning			
8/21	Introduction		
8/23, 8/28, 8/30	The Origin of the English Government		Chapter 1
<i>Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past. George Orwell, 1984 (1949)</i>			
The Birth of a Republic			
9/4	LABOR DAY	No Class	Pretend to care about workers
9/6, 9/11, 9/13	The English Colonies		Chapter 2
9/18, 9/20	The Revolution		The Declaration of Independence
9/25	The Articles of Confederation		Federalist Paper #10
9/27, 10/2, 10/4, 10/9	The Constitution		The Constitution

10/11, 10/16	The Early Years		
10/18, 10/23, 10/25	The Courts		Chapter 14
10/30		MIDTERM	
<p><i>If these observations be just, our government ought to secure the permanent interests of the country against innovation. Landholders ought to have a share in the government, to support these invaluable interests, and to balance and check the other. They ought to be so constituted as to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority.</i> James Madison</p>			
The Facade			
10/30, 11/1, 11/6, 11/8, 11/13	Ideology & Parties		Chapters 4-8
11/15, 11/20	US Foreign Policy		
The Machine			
11/22	Congress		Chapter 9
11/27, 11/29, 12/4	The Presidency		Chapter 10
12/6	Human Rights, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties		Chapters 15-16
12/10		FINAL EXAM	
12/10	All Auxiliary Assignments are due by 11:59 PM to Google Classroom		

*There is nothing so good for the human soul as the discovery that there are ancient and flourishing civilized societies which have somehow managed to exist for many centuries and are still in being though they have had no help from the traveler in solving their problems.*

Walter Lippmann



God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. The people cannot be all, and always, well informed. The part which is wrong will be discontented, in proportion to the importance of the facts they misconceive. If they remain quiet under such misconceptions, it is lethargy, the forerunner of death to the public liberty. ... What country before ever existed a century and half without a rebellion? And what country can preserve its liberties if their rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms. The remedy is to set them right as to

facts, pardon and pacify them. What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.

Letter to William Stevens Smith (November 13, 1787), quoted in Padover's *Jefferson On Democracy*

Thomas Jefferson (April 13, 1743 - July 4, 1826)



Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide.  
Letter to John Taylor April 15, 1814

John Adams (October 30, 1735 - July 4, 1826)

The instructor reserves the right to modify any portion of the syllabus at any time. Good luck, good thoughts, good deeds, and good words!