

# US Government: Congress, President & Courts

GOVT 2305 (17671)

University of Houston

Spring 2023

Instructor: Hui Zhou

Course Mode: Face to Face

Tuesdays/Thursdays 8:30-10:00a.m.

Email: [huizhou68@gmail.com](mailto:huizhou68@gmail.com)

Office Location: PGH 391

Classroom: SW 102

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00–3:00p.m.

**PLEASE ALWAYS INDICATE YOUR NAME AND CLASS WHEN EMAILING ME.**

Norton Technical Support: Click Link through Blackboard

## Course Description

*How well has the American “experiment” worked?* This course is a companion course to POLS 1336 and is designed to provide you with the tools to answer this question. We will focus primarily on the institutional side of government: the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. In addition, we will explore the Texas political system as a contrast and parallel to the American system. We will also broadly discuss the Constitution (including the Bill of Rights), civil rights and liberties, and the creation of public policy to help round out your understanding of the machinery of government. The material presented to you in the readings, lectures and discussions will give you an understanding of the institutions, processes and informal political arrangements that shape and direct political activity.

## Course Website

Our course will be managed through Blackboard. To log into Blackboard, direct your browser to [www.uh.edu/Blackboard](http://www.uh.edu/Blackboard) and click on the white BLACKBOARD Learn button. Enter your PeopleSoft ID and password and then select our class from the list. Our class shell should open up. If you cannot gain access to the class shell, contact User Services in room 116, PGH (713/743-1411).

If you do not know your Blackboard Learn password, please call 713-743-1411 or stop by the TSS Help Desk in Hoffman Hall Room 116.

## Required Text

*We the People/ Governing Texas/ Ginsberg et al and Champagne et al* (Custom UH Version, W.W. Norton Publishing, 2021).

**DO NOT purchase the hardcopy textbook(s).** It is included in your student fees through the CTAP program. If you would like a hardcopy of the book, you can order it directly from Norton.

THIS COURSE HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH A STRUCTURED PATH TO COURSE SUCCESS, INCLUDING PRACTICE QUIZZES AND STUDY HELPS IN ADDITION TO ASSIGNED READINGS. WE HAVE ADOPTED AN E-TEXT FROM NORTON, IN PART TO REDUCE COST.

You have access to the ebook and all materials through Blackboard.

### POINT TOTALS and GRADES

Your final grade will be determined by the following method:

- (1) Attendance—5% of your grade
- (2) 3 Exams—each 20% of your grade
- (3) 11 Inquizitive Exercises—combine for 35% of your grade  
(LOWEST MODULE GRADE DROPPED)
- (4) 5% bonus points for online deliberation activity

I will take attendance occasionally. Students must sign on an attendance sheet to prove their attendance.

There are three exams throughout this course. The exams will not be cumulative. Exams must be completed in person at CASA labs.

Inquizitive exercises are aimed at helping you understand the course content. They are available on Blackboard and can be completed online.

Final Grades for the course will be based on the following scale. I reserve the right to make adjustments to the grades based on overall performance in the course. *Please do not ask for individualized extra credit opportunities.*

#### University of Houston Standard Grading Scale

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	63-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-	60-62
B	83-86	C-	70-72	F	below 60

#### Exams

The exams will test your knowledge of the readings, lectures, and classroom discussions. The format for each of the exams will be the same—a series of multiple choice and true/false questions.

Exams will be conducted at one of the CASA centers on campus. More detailed information about the procedure will be released on Blackboard.

*For each exam, you will have **60 multiple choice questions**. Each answer is worth **1 point**. So, you can get a total of **60 points** for each exam.*

**Makeup exams will not be granted unless there is a verified illness or family emergency. Failure to schedule an exam in advance or missing the exam reservation time due to everyday human errors are not valid excuses. No matter how many exams a student misses, one makeup exam is allowed at most. A reminder email will be sent to the class one day before each exam.**

### **InQuizitive Exercises**

*Inquizitive* is a study aid that appears with the material for each week of the course.

Do not wait until the last minute to complete these chapter exercises. The quizzes are best done with some time to take notes and study a bit. And, obviously, the boost to your grade that you get from *Inquizitive* will be greater the more time you spend reviewing and improving your performance.

Equally obviously, to do all this, you will need a computer, an Internet connection and the appropriate password for Blackboard, and access to a copy of our Norton e-text. If you have difficulty getting on to Blackboard, you should contact User Services located on the ground floor of PGH (PGH 116, 713-743-1411). If you have difficulty because of your hardware, you should also contact User Services. It may be necessary for you to use one of the on-campus computer labs to work on this course if your hardware's specifications do not permit your machine to talk to Blackboard. Just in case you do have technical problems that might delay you in meeting course deadlines, you may come to the UH library to complete assignments on university computers. Alternatively, you may check out a laptop from the library.

The class is based on Inquizitive Modules and scheduled tests. You must meet the deadlines shown in the syllabus. Unfortunately, because of the numbers of students who take this course, the class cannot be tailored to your personal schedule. You must read this syllabus very carefully with attention to the assignments and deadlines.

You will need to allocate time for assignments and meet the corresponding deadlines. Once past, the online exercise over that material as well as any other assignments will close.

The Inquizitive materials are prepared by our publisher (Norton). These materials are accessible through the Blackboard account.

Inquizitive provides a way for you to pad your grade. You will have time to study to insure that you get good grades on your Inquizitive modules (not to mention the fact that this studying will also prepare you for course exams). You earn points in Inquizitive by reviewing and studying material in each chapter (and this also leads to higher grades on exams). Your advantage is that outcomes on the weekly graded material are entirely in your hands. If you put in a reasonable amount of time each week, you cannot get a bad grade in this course.

The due dates for Inquizitive assignments are listed in each week's assignments below. If you fail to take them by the deadline, you will not receive any points for that module. We cannot open a module after it has been closed. **If you are having technical trouble with Blackboard Learn, you must contact me by email and the UH Help Desk (713-743-1411) before the quiz closes.** It is best to complete these assignments as soon as possible.

### **Online Deliberation Activity (Voluntary Participation)**

Civil and productive discussion of political issues is essential in a democracy. To facilitate experience with such deliberation, we will be participating in online discussions on the issue of social media regulation. The forums will take place March 20-April 7. **YOU SHOULD SIGN UP EARLY TO ENSURE YOU GET YOUR PREFERRED TIME.**

The discussions utilize a platform called Common Ground for Action (CGA), developed by the National Issues Forum (NIFI) and the Kettering Foundation (see <https://www.nifi.org/en/cga-online-forums> for more information). Our forums will be facilitated by Dr. Ryan Kennedy of the UH political science department.

To participate, you should go to the Deliberation Test Bed registration site: <https://deliberation20.weebly.com/register.html>. Find your professor's name and select a time you would prefer to do the 1-hour 15-minute discussion. On the day and time you chose, you should go to the following Zoom link, ideally about 10 minutes before the beginning of your forum:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/7999506980?pwd=eXFMZzRnVnJXaXFzZCtpUS93RG15dz09>

Passcode: Gn2xhZ

Please note that while a confirmation and reminder email will be sent to you, we have found that this can sometimes be lost. All the information you need to participate is here and can also be copied from the confirmation screen when you register.

You will also receive a link to a short, non-partisan issue guide that you **SHOULD READ** before the discussion. If you ever forget your information, the necessary information is

available for all forums in the Calendar link: <https://deliberation20.weebly.com/calendar.html>. You will also receive a reminder email the day before your scheduled forum. If you need to change your session time, you can do so by returning to the same registration link.

After the forum, you will be asked to finish a short 10 minute survey. Students who participate in this forum and complete the survey will receive 5% bonus points based on their final grade. For instance, if your attendance, exam and Inquizitive exercises yield a final grade of 87 on a 0–100 scale, the 5% extra credit can let you earn additional 4.35 points, which improves your final grade from B+ to A-.

### Course Protocols

**Rule 1: Read the syllabus carefully.** We don't mind you asking questions about subjects covered by the syllabus, but please carefully read the syllabus and make a point of reviewing it over the course of the semester. If you do not read the syllabus carefully, you are vulnerable to making mistakes that will cost you points in the class.

**Rule 2: Valid e-mail address.** The University of Houston considers your e-mail address in PeopleSoft the official method of contact between you and the university. As a prerequisite of this course, you must have a valid e-mail address in PeopleSoft. You may not claim an incorrect or blank e-mail address as an excuse in the case of missed communications from the professor or staff.

**Rule 3: Schedules.** Remember that this is a structured course with weekly deadlines. If you cannot meet the deadlines, you should not be in this class. Review these deadlines and scheduled events carefully. You must do the assigned work during the semester on time. Each semester we have students who fail to do the assignments and then ask to have them reposted, or who want us to extend the course for them for a period after the semester is over. We do not have the staff to tailor this course in this fashion. You must do the work during the semester and meet the deadlines.

**Rule 4: Computer equipment.** There will be online quizzes and study assignments. The class staff cannot make special arrangements to deliver the material to you. If you have a computer problem, you should have your computer repaired, if that is necessary, or contact the university IT Help Desk at 713-743-1411, or visit them in room 116 of Hoffman Hall. One of the most frequent problems that students have in this class is that they wait until the last minute to do assignments and then have problems with their personal computer that cause them to miss the deadline. Plan ahead to avoid this mistake.

**Rule 5: Missed internet assignments.** If you do not complete an online assignment by the date and time listed, you will not be allowed to make up the assignment. Your grade for that assignment will be zero. There are **no exceptions** to this rule. We realize that unforeseen circumstances arise, and that is why we allow you to drop your lowest Inquizitive grade. If you wait until the last minute to complete the assignment and then

suffer computer problems, you will miss the deadline. Give yourself enough time to do the online work at home or at the university.

**Rule 6: Posting Grades.** Grades will be posted on the Blackboard Learn site.

**Rule 7: Dropping the course.** You may drop or withdraw without a grade up until the official university reporting date (ORD), which is [February 1, 2023](#) for this semester. If you drop the course after that, you must receive a grade, or take a “W.” Please consult the academic calendar for the last day to drop a course with a grade or withdraw with a “W”.

**Rule 8: Communication.** Email communications related to this course will be sent to your email alias (ending with @uh.edu), which in turn will be directed to your destination email account. Some students may set their destination email account to their [Exchange email account](#) (ending with @cougarnet.uh.edu) which each University of Houston student receives. The Exchange mail server can be accessed via Outlook, which provides a single location for organizing and managing day-to-day information, from email and calendars to contacts and task lists. Exchange email accounts can be accessed by logging into Office 365 with your Cougarnet credentials or through Access UH. Other people might prefer to direct their email alias to other email addresses such as a Gmail account. You will be responsible for checking your destination email account regularly for class updates and announcements. You may e-mail me at anytime regarding procedural issues. If I have not responded within 72 hours, email me again. Sometimes, emails are blocked by spam filters. For substantive concerns, please come to my office hours or make an appointment to see me.

**Rule 9: Dropping you from the course.** If we believe that you are not actively engaged in the class (i.e., you are missing assignments, exams, or are failing to respond to communications) we reserve the right to unilaterally drop you from the course. We don't want to do this, so please make sure to give this course your full effort.

### **Religious Holy Days**

If you must miss an examination in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

### **COVID-19 Information**

Students are encouraged to visit the University's [COVID-19](#) website for important information including on-campus testing, vaccines, diagnosis and symptom protocols, campus cleaning and safety practices, report forms, and positive cases on campus. Please check the website throughout the semester for updates.

### **Vaccinations**

Data suggest that vaccination remains the best intervention for reliable protection against COVID-19. Students are asked to familiarize themselves with pertinent [vaccine information](#), consult with their health care provider. The University strongly encourages all students, faculty and staff to be vaccinated.

### **Face Covering Policy**

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the University strongly encourages everyone (vaccinated or not) to wear face coverings indoors on campus including classrooms for both faculty and students.

### **Presence in Class**

Your presence in class each session means that you:

- Are NOT exhibiting any [Coronavirus Symptoms](#) that makes you think that you may have COVID-19
- Have NOT tested positive or been diagnosed for COVID-19
- Have NOT knowingly been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or suspected/presumed COVID-19

**If you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms that are not clearly related to a pre-existing medical condition, do not come to class.** Please see [Student Protocols](#) for what to do if you experience symptoms and [Potential Exposure to Coronavirus](#) for what to do if you have potentially been exposed to COVID-19. Consult the (select: [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) or [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#)) for information regarding excused absences due to medical reasons.

### **Syllabus Changes**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other emergencies, please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through Blackboard and email.

### **Cancelled Classes**

Classes may be canceled on rare occasions. The class will be informed of these dates and will be held responsible for any readings or assignments.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students will be asked to sign an honor code statement as part of their submission of any graded work including exams: *"I understand and agree to abide by the provisions in the [University of Houston Undergraduate Academic Honesty Policy](#), I understand that academic honesty is taken very seriously and, in the cases of violations, penalties may include suspension or expulsion from the University of Houston."*

Namely, no cheating or plagiarism will be tolerated. Any instances will be reported to the Dean, and the penalty will be at least an F for the assignment in question.

### **Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids**

The University of Houston complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for disabled students. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, UH strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact [the](#)



[Justin Dart Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#) (formerly the Justin Dart, Jr. Center for Students with DisABILITIES).

### **UH CAPS Statement**

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS ([www.uh.edu/caps](http://www.uh.edu/caps)) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the “Let's Talk” program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus.

### **Excused Absence Policy**

Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) and [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up an exam. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).

### **Recording of Class**

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

### **Course Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Readings and InQuizitive Due Dates</b>
<b>Jan 17</b>	Course Overview	Read this syllabus Read Declaration of Independence (Appendix)
<b>Jan 19</b>	Introduction	<b>FED Chapter 1:</b> American Political Culture



<b>Jan 24</b>	Founding Principles and U.S. Constitution	<b>FED Chapter 2: The Founding and the Constitution</b>
<b>Jan 26</b>	Founding Principles and U.S. Constitution	Read Lutz, "Who Were the Antifederalists?" (in ebook) Read U.S. Constitution (Appendix) <b>FED CHAP 2 CONSTITUTION INQUIZITIVE EXERCISES COMPLETED BY JANUARY 29 (11:59 PM)</b>
<b>Jan 31</b>	Federalism and Constitution	<b>FED Chapter 3: Federalism</b>
<b>Feb 2</b>	Texas and Federalism	<b>TX Chapter 3: Texas in the Federal System</b> <b>FED CHAP 3 FEDERALISM INQUIZITIVE EXERCISES COMPLETED BY FEBRUARY 5 (11:59 PM)</b>
<b>Feb 7</b>	Civil Liberties	<b>FED Chapter 4: Civil Liberties</b>
<b>Feb 9</b>	Civil Rights	<b>FED Chapter 5: Civil Rights</b> <b>FED CHAP 5 CIVIL RIGHTS INQUIZITIVE QUIZ EXERCISES BY FEBRUARY 12 (11:59 PM)</b>
<b>Feb 14</b>	US Congress	<b>FED Chapter 12: The U.S. Congress</b>
<b>Feb 16</b>	US Congress	<b>FED Chapter 12: The U.S. Congress continued</b> <b>FED CHAP 12 CONGRESS INQUIZITIVE QUIZ EXERCISES BY FEBRUARY 19 (11:59 PM)</b>
<b>Feb 21</b>	Legislative Politics	<b>TX Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature</b>
<b>Feb 23</b>	Legislative Politics	<b>TX Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature</b> <b>TEXAS CHAP 7 TEXAS LEGISLATURE INQUIZITIVE EXERCISES COMPLETED BY FEBRUARY 26 (11:59 PM)</b>
<b>Feb 28</b>	Presidency	<b>FED Chapter 13: The U.S. Presidency</b> <b>FED CHAP 13 PRESIDENCY INQUIZITIVE EXERCISES COMPLETED BY MARCH 5 (11:59 PM)</b>
<b>Mar 2</b>	<b>Exam 1</b> <b>Location: CASA-CBB, room 242</b>	<b>Make an appointment and take exam at CASA today from 9 am to 6 pm. No in person class today.</b>
<b>Mar 7</b>	Texas Plural Executive	<b>TX Chapter 8: The Texas Executive</b>
<b>Mar 9</b>	Bureaucracy	<b>FED Chapter 14: The Bureaucracy</b> <b>FED CHAP 14 BUREAUCRACY</b>

		<b>INQUIZITIVE EXERCISES COMPLETED BY MARCH 12 (11:59 PM)</b>
<b>Mar 21</b>	Local Government	<b>TX Chapter 10: Local Government</b>
<b>Mar 23</b>	Texas Public Finance	<b>TX Chapter 11: Public Finance TEXAS CHAP 10 LOCAL GOVERNMENT INQUIZITIVE EXERCISES COMPLETED BY MARCH 26 (11:59 PM)</b>
<b>Mar 28</b>	US Courts	<b>FED Chapter 15: The Federal Courts</b>
<b>Mar 30</b>	Texas Judiciary	<b>TX Chapter 9: The Texas Judiciary FED CHAP 15 US COURTS INQUIZITIVE EXERCISES COMPLETED BY APRIL 2 (11:59 PM)</b>
<b>Apr 4</b>	<b>Exam 2 Location: CASA-AAH, room 101</b>	<b>Make an appointment and take exam at CASA today from 9 am to 6 pm. No in person class today.</b>
<b>Apr 6</b>	Texas Law	<b>TX Chapter 13: Crime, Corrections, and Public Safety TEXAS CH 13 CRIME INQUIZITIVE EXERCISES COMPLETED BY APRIL 9 (11:59 PM)</b>
<b>Apr 11</b>	Public Policy	<b>FED Chapter 16: Economic Policy</b>
<b>Apr 13</b>	Public Policy in Texas	<b>TX Chapter 12: Public Policy in Texas</b>
<b>Apr 18</b>	Public Policy	<b>FED Chapter 17: Social Policy</b>
<b>Apr 20</b>	Public Policy in Texas	Hawley, Immigration and American Politics (in ebook) <b>TEXAS CH 12 PUBLIC POLICY INQUIZITIVE EXERCISES COMPLETED BY APRIL 23 (11:59 PM)</b>
<b>Apr 25</b>	<b>Exam 3 Location: CASA-AAH, room 101</b>	<b>Make an appointment at CASA and take exam from 9 am to 6 pm. No in person class today.</b>
<b>TBD</b>	<b>Makeup Exam</b>	<b>Students who missed one or more exams for acceptable reasons can take a makeup exam at most.</b>  <b>The specific date and location will be announced via email as soon as they are determined. Again, students must make an appointment at CASA and take exam from 9 am to 6 pm.</b>

### **EXAM PROCEDURES and RULES:**

Exams will be administered in person via CASA. Exams are multiple choice, and closed note/book. Using electronic devices or notes during the exam will result in a zero, and could result in possible charges of violating the academic honesty policy.

Exam Procedures:

1. Students will need to create an account if they do not have one by visiting <https://www.casa.uh.edu/>
2. Once an account is created, the student will need to visit CASA-CBB or CASA-GAR to register fingerprints, UH Cougarnet ID card, and photo. This should be done as soon as possible, and certainly before exam day. This is a one-time process and carries over each semester.
3. All students must have a reservation to take an exam at CASA. There is a no walk-in or stand-by waiting policy. The latest date/time to make a reservation for any exam is the date/time before the actual exam date/time. However, it is highly recommended that all students schedule for their test as soon as the online scheduler is available to avoid the peak time and to maximize your chance getting reservation. CASA suggests that students log on two weeks in advance to make a reservation that best fits their schedule.
4. Students must arrive at CASA with their UH Cougarnet ID card. Students can check in 20 minutes before their reservation until 15 minutes past their reservation. Students who arrive more than 15 minutes late will have missed their reservation.
5. Students must store all personal belongings before entering the testing area. Students are not permitted to bring any personal belongings to the Testing Center. Items such as briefcases, notebooks, backpacks, purses, calculators (unless instructed otherwise), pagers, cell phones, recording devices, photography equipment, and any other prohibitive item that is not related to the testing session must be placed at the check-in desk.
6. Check-in begins 20 minutes before their reservation time. As a courtesy, they allow students to check in no more than 15 minutes late to their reservation. If the student arrives more than 15 minutes late to their exam reservation, then they have missed their reservation. There are no exceptions or standby options. Please do not contact me or CASA to request late admission. You will need to take a makeup exam in mid-May with a penalty.
7. Any problems (technical or subject matter) during the exam will be recorded in an incident report by the proctor and sent directly to me.