About the Online Streaming GOV 310L – American Government

Professors Daron Shaw and Eric McDaniel teach this section of GOV 310L using a new method of online delivery that enables students to view classes on the Internet by logging into Canvas. The course meets at a set time (8:30 AM), just like a traditional class – but students participate by logging in anywhere with a good Internet connection and viewing LIVE lectures online via streaming video. This is the fourth semester that a team-teaching approach has been used to improve students’ experience in large introductory courses at UT Austin.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does it mean that the course is online/web-based?

Participation in the course takes place completely online. The main course page is accessed through Canvas, the online course management system at UT. Unlike some online classes which are self-paced, this course takes place at scheduled times: this means that students are expected to “attend” class by logging into the course site, watching the streaming video, and participating in class activities. As with any class, there may be additional out-of-class assignments and homework assignments. The lectures are broadcast live from a studio-classroom in MEZ.

How will my class experience be affected by the online nature and format of the course?

The biggest difference is that instead of attending lectures by going to the same room multiple times per week at the same time, the student will be logged into Canvas (the learning management system at UT) on a computer at a location of their choosing at a set time, twice a week. Instead of raising their hands and talking with their neighbors, they will use a chat window to talk to TAs and other students. Quizzes and other activities take place inside of Canvas, mostly during class. In-class exercises, both graded and ungraded, will be used more frequently than in a traditional class for the purpose of keeping students engaged. Like all classes, students will be assigned readings and activities to complete outside of class; some graded, some for credit, and some not graded. In addition to the students’ own
notes, they will be able to access archived class lectures through Canvas for their own review.

*Will I be able to use my own computer?*

The course has gone through rigorous testing to ensure that most modern desktop and laptop computers are supported. You should test your device by using it to visit the test page at the following link: [https://www.laits.utexas.edu/tower/tech.html](https://www.laits.utexas.edu/tower/tech.html)

Students living on-campus and using UT-provided internet service (restricted.utexas.edu wireless network) should be aware of their bandwidth package. Tier 2 of bandwidth is recommended for this course. It is your responsibility to ensure you have adequate network bandwidth for this course. View bandwidth tiers here: [http://www.utexas.edu/its/help/network/403](http://www.utexas.edu/its/help/network/403)

*Do I need to go to class?*

This is a live scheduled class that takes place at the time listed in the course schedule. Students are expected to attend the lecture at the scheduled time just like a traditional class. The difference between this class and a traditional class is that the student must use a computer to watch the streaming video of the lecture at the scheduled time, instead of being physically present in a classroom.

*Do I need to “attend” class, or can I just watch the lectures later?*

Attendance works just like a traditional class, with the convenient exception that the student doesn’t have to be physically present in a particular location. Live lectures are broadcast during scheduled lecture times (accessed from the Canvas course page), during which students are required to complete a variety of live assignments. **Much of the student’s overall grade will be derived from their participation in these live activities that take place during the class period and only during that period.** Recordings are posted to the course website for the purpose of reviewing the material, not to take the place of watching and participating during the live broadcast. The only way to get credit for the assignments undertaken during the live class meetings is to complete the work at the time it is assigned. So, as with a traditional class, students are required to participate in the live class sessions during scheduled course meeting times.
What work will determine my grade in the course?

Grades are based on weekly in-class quizzes and participation-based activities. There are also two mid-term exams to be completed at a designated place and time (TBA).

Will there be a textbook?

There will be traditional textbooks assigned (see syllabus), in addition to readings and videos provided from freely-accessible online sources.

How will I interact/study with other students in my class?

During class times, students will have access to chat windows to communicate with other students and with the TAs. There may also be structured activities during class that require students to work together in groups. As with a traditional class, students can form their own study groups outside of class and TAs will hold regular office hours.

Is this class appropriate for freshman?

While this course is not designed with an 'ideal' student in mind, the online format may be more amenable to certain students. Since students will not be required to be physically present in class, but instead observe and participate in the course from a location of their choosing (as long as it has a strong Internet connection), the format requires a certain degree of self discipline for students to succeed in the course. If the student is new to the college environment, the structure placed on them by a regular meeting place may be better. At the same time, the structure of our online courses rely on frequent, low stakes testing that may foster a better transition into college level work, where maintaining involvement with the material is essential. For students who want to interact with other students face-to-face on a regular basis, this course is less likely to provide that experience when compared with a traditional course offering.

Can I go to the studio to watch the lectures being broadcast?

Students may receive an invitation from the instructors to attend the live studio lecture in the studio-classroom in MEZ. Because of limited space, access to the studio is restricted and students should only attend if invited. Students requiring special in-room accommodations should contact their instructor, and if needed, Services for Students with Disabilities.
Can I take this class if I have special accommodation needs?

The course complies with all University requirements for accommodation. All posted videos will be captioned; if requested, the live video stream can be captioned. Enrolled students needing accommodations should contact their instructors and Services for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible.