

POLS 2306.002
Fall 2008

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Office: BUS 233 - Hours: T and TR 10:00am-11:00am

Introductory Texas Politics

Class Meeting Times

Classes will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00am to 12:15pm

Text

Texas Politics Today (13th ed.), William Earl Maxwell, Ernest Crain

Important Dates to Remember

September 10 – Census Date

October 31 - last day to withdraw from class with an “W”

November 26-29 – Thanksgiving Holiday

December 16 – Final Exam 11:00am – 1:00pm

Course Description

Study of the institutions governing Texas and related policy processes. Includes a focus on the legislative process, the executive branch, and the judicial system. May be taken in fulfillment of statutory requirements for a baccalaureate degree.

This class will focus on local and state political offices, the governing bodies at the local and state level, and the structure of the state legislature, judicial, and executive branches. It is hoped that this course will better inform the student about the political process, reasons one should be concerned about politics (local and national), and the manner in which the government functions.

Learning Outcomes:

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to demonstrate:

- familiarity with terminology used to study political science and state and local government
- basic knowledge of the historical evolution of Texas governmental structures
- an understanding of the constitutional, institutional, political and legal processes and structures of the state of Texas
- comprehension of the interrelationships of national and local state governments
- awareness of basic values of Texas political culture

Grading Scale

Exams will be graded on a 100-point scale. Make up exams will only be scheduled for students with a valid and credible excuse *and* will consist of different questions than the regular exam. Each exam will be worth 100 points. There will also be 1 Media Project worth 100 points. The total points possible will be 400 points.

3 tests worth 100 points each (300), 1 project worth 100 points

The grading scale will be the following:

- 360 - 400 points = A
- 320 - 359 points = B
- 280 - 319 points = C
- 240 - 279 points = D
- 239 and below = F

Course Outline

Week	Date	Description
1	August 28	Introduction to politics and government
2	September 2	Chapter 1, Texas History Background
3	September 9	Chapter 2, Texas Constitution; Chapter 3 Voting and Elections
4	September 16	Chapter 4, Political Parties
5	September 23	Chapter 5, Interest Groups
6	September 30	First Exam on Tuesday Sept. 30 , Chapter 6, The Legislature
7	October 7	Chapter 7, The Legislative Process
8	October 14	Chapter 8, The Governor
9	October 21	Chapter 9, the Bureaucracy
10	October 28	Second Exam Tuesday Oct. 28 Last day to withdraw from class – October 31
11	November 4	Chapter 10, The Judiciary
12	November 11	Chapter 11, Law and Due Process
13	November 18	Chapter 12, Taxing and Budgeting
14	November 25	Chapter 13, Spending and Services
		Media Project Due December 2
15	December 2	Chapter 14, Local Government
16	December 9	Finish the Semester
	December 16	Final Exam

We will adhere to this schedule as closely as possible. In the event that the class gets behind I will reschedule tests at least 1 week in advance. It is the students' responsibility to attend class in order to keep current with all schedule changes.

Class Etiquette and Expectations

In my experience most people understand that in college there are expectations that the student should act as an adult in the classroom. Most of the time students conduct themselves with good manners and are greeted with respect from their fellow students as well as the instructor. However, from time to time a social "problem child" slips in and disrupts the classroom. To keep such disturbances to a minimum I will briefly give my expectations of the students in the classroom.

Tardiness is understood; sometimes we simply cannot help being late. If you must enter the class late please do so quietly and do not let tardiness become a habit. **Please turn cell phones and pagers off before entering class.** An occasional ring or two will not terribly bother me, but don't let it become a habit as well. **Please don't talk to other students in class or text message friends!** It is disruptive and disrespectful to the professor and other students in class.

Students are expected to remain polite during classroom discussions. Even during heated debates, you must treat your classmates with respect. For example, you should not make derogatory remarks about your classmates' ideas. Instead, explain why you think they are wrong, backing up your viewpoint with sound factual analysis and refraining from personal attacks. Students should remain quiet while someone else (including your instructor!) has the floor.

Class Attendance:

I do not have a class attendance policy. However, experience shows me that students that diligently attend their classes and keep good notes tend to make high grades in their coursework, whereas students that are lax in their attendance and/or do not take lecture notes tend to make poor or failing grades in their classes. Remember this when you come to me wondering why you are failing this course. My first two questions will be are you attending class and are you taking good notes?

Disability Statement:

"If you have disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact Ida MacDonald in the Disability Support Services offices so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodation must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Support Services counselor. For more information, call or visit the Student Services Center located in the University Center, Room 111. The telephone number is 566-7079 (TDD 565-5579)."

Social Security Statement:

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number.

Note Regarding Student Absence due to Religious Observance:

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor by the second class meeting of such absences.

Grade Replacement:

If you are repeating this course for a grade replacement, you must file an intent to receive grade forgiveness with the registrar by the 12th day of class. Failure to file an intent to use grade forgiveness will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. A student will receive grade forgiveness (grade replacement) for only three (undergraduate student) or two (graduate student) course repeats during his/her career at UT Tyler. (2006-08 Catalog, p. 35)

Academic Honesty

I have a pretty simple policy, DO NOT CHEAT OR PLAGERIZE. Doing so will result in the immediate failure of the class.