

POLS 2306.001 Texas Politics

Fall 2009

MWF 9-9:50 am

Instructor: Prof. Larry Carter

Office hours MWF 10-11 am Tuesday 8-10 am and 5-6 pm. Also by appointment

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Course Objectives

This course offers an introduction to Texas state and local government. It will supply the student with a framework for analyzing the constitutional basis for Texas government, the processes of Texas government as well as the institutions and the policies of Texas government. In addition to understanding the formal structures and processes of government emphasis is also placed on the realities of the political system.

At the conclusion of this class students should be able to identify top elected officials in Texas government and their primary duties; understand the Texas budget process; have a basic understanding of the Texas judicial system and the process of electing judges; have a working knowledge of the legislative process, legislative leaders, the committee system and policy decisions facing state leaders and be familiar with the duties of county and city officials.

This course is meant to be an overview of Texas government with the main purpose of showing students how the process works and the responsibility of citizens to follow politics and become active participants beyond voting.

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 within the state of Texas
- comprehension of the interrelationships of national and local and state governments
- recognition of the role of states in implementing public policy
- awareness of basic values of Texas political culture

Blackboard

All students are required to sign up on the Blackboard site for this course. All class announcements, assignments and grades will be posted here. If you have any problems signing on to BlackBoard please go to the Computer Lab on the first floor of the Business Building.

Course Grading

There will be four exams given over the course of the semester each worth 100 points. These exams will be composed of fifty multiple choice questions. The lowest exam score will be dropped, On-line quizzes and in-class writing assignments will constitute participation. Weekly quizzes will be posted online.

Three exams 100 pts each	300 points
Quizzes/Participation	<u>150</u> points
Total points	450 points

Scale A	405-450 points
B	360-404 points
C	315-359 points
D	270-314 points
F	269 and below

Attendance

Regular attendance is expected and roll will be taken daily. It is the responsibility of an absent student to get notes from fellow students. Students who miss more than 5 classes (unexcused) will have 30 points deducted from their total points. Make-up exams are subject to the approval of the instructor.

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)

Disability Statement

If you have a disability, including learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact Ida MacDonald in the Disability Support services office so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, students 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 282. Phone number 903 566-7079.

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 program so that all students have an identification number.

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.

Required Text

Texas Politics Today by William Earl Maxwell and Ernest Crain. 13th Edition. Wadsworth

Always check BlackBoard for chapter quizzes and class updates.

Exam Schedule

Course Outline

Week 1

Weds August 26 Introduction to Texas Politics

Friday August 28 Texas Elections

Week 2

MWF Chapter 1 Texas History and Culture

Week 3

MWF Chapter 2 The Texas Constitution

Week 4

Monday September 7 Labor Day. No classes.

WF Chapter 3 Voting and Elections

Week 5

Monday September 14 Exam 1 Chapters 1-3

WF Chapter 4 Political Parties

Week 6

September 21 MWF Chapter 5 Interest Groups

Week 7

September 28 MWF Chapter 6 The Legislature

Week 8

October 5 MWF Chapter 7 The Legislative Process

Week 9

October 12 Monday Exam 2 Chapters 4-7

WF Chapter 8 The Governor

Week 10

October 19 MWF Chapter 9 The Bureaucracy

Week 11

October 26 MWF Chapter 10 The Judiciary

Week 12

November 2 MWF Chapter 11 Law and Due Process

Week 13

November 9 Exam 3

Week 14

November 16 MWF Chapter 12

Week 15

Monday November 23 Chapter 13

Thanksgiving Holiday Weds-Friday

Week 16

November 30 MWF Chapter 13

Week 17

December 7 MWF Chapter 14

Finals week Dec 15-18 **Exam 4 Friday December 18 at 8 am.**