

POLS 2306-04  
Fall 2008  
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John Raulston

### **Introductory Texas Politics**

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 process 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 the 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 process of electing judges, have a working knowledge of the legislative process, have a working knowledge of legislative leaders, have a working knowledge of the committee system, and understand the policy decisions facing state leaders today. Students should also 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 the action of voting.

#### **Office Hours-**

Monday and Wednesday 1:00pm to 2:00pm  
Friday 1:30pm to 2:00pm  
Wednesday 5:30pm to 6:00pm

#### **Class Meetings-**

Classes will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:00pm to 8:40pm in RBN 3035.

#### **Text-**

The following text is required and is available for purchase at the campus bookstore.

Government and Politics of Texas: A Comparative View. Halter, Gary M. Sixth Edition

#### **Course Requirements-**

1. Attendance of class meetings.
2. Successful completion of three exams to be held on September 24<sup>th</sup>, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, and November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008

3. Successful completion of the Final Exam date TBD (Final Exam Week).

### **Grading Scale-**

Make up exams will only be scheduled for students with a valid and credible excuse. Each exam, including the final exam, will be worth 100 points for an overall total of 400 points. The grading scale will be as follows:

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

### **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, local, and state governments
- recognition of the role of states in implementing public policy
- awareness of basic values of Texas political culture

**Disability Statement-** If you have a disability, including a 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. The telephone number is 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 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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)

**Course Outline-**

1. Introduction, Halter, Chapter 1
2. The Constitution, Halter, Chapter 2
3. Interest Groups, Halter, Chapters 4
4. Political Parties, Halter, Chapter 5
5. Voting, Campaigns, and Elections, Halter, Chapters 3 and 6
6. The Texas Legislature, Halter, Chapter 7
7. The Legislative Process, Halter, Chapter 7
8. The Governor, Halter, Chapter 8
9. The Administrative State, Halter, Chapter 8
10. The Judiciary, Halter, Chapter 9
11. The Substance of Justice, Halter, Chapter 9
12. Local Government, Halter, Chapter 11
13. The State Economy and the Financing of State Government, Halter, Chapter 10
14. Issues in Public Policy
15. The Future of Texas Politics