

POLS 2306: Texas Government

Introduction:

This course is an examination of the Texas political system, including its intellectual foundations and the design of the Constitution. It includes the study of major institutional factors, the impact of interest groups and the media, and the processes of policy-making. It may be taken in fulfillment of statutory requirements for a baccalaureate degree.

Instructor: M. Rhys Dotson.

Email: mdotson@uttyler.edu

Office: CAS 117

Office Hours: T/R 7:45 am to 9:15 am

Note on office hours: If you need me outside of these hours, we can make accommodations to meet those needs. The best way to reach me is by email. During the week I will return emails within 24 hours and on the weekend within 48 hours. Weekends begin at 5:00 pm on Fridays and conclude at 8:00 am on Mondays.

Required Text:

Lopez, Eric, et al. *Uncovering Texas Politics in the 21st Century*. Tyler: The University of Texas at Tyler Press, 2020.

Course Objectives:

The primary goal is to successfully complete a required course with minimal pain and suffering while gathering useful information. To that end, after successfully completing this course, students should be able to demonstrate:

- To acquaint you with the study of political science
- To improve your understanding of the institutions and processes that govern Texas and other states, as well as the localities (such as cities and counties) within them.
- The student will become familiar with the historical antecedents which make up the political culture and regions of Texas.
- The student will learn to characterize the trends in Texas' political history.
- The student will be able to trace the changing political partisan face of Texas from a one-party Democratic state to a state with a strong Republican party.
- The student will become cognizant of the changes facing Texas in ethnic diversity and population growth.

Expectations and Etiquette:

It is expected that everyone in this course, including the instructor, will maintain respect for one another. I encourage you to form your own opinions and thoughts

surrounding the course material but note that not everyone will share all of your sentiments. You can disagree with someone, but it will be done in a respectful and thoughtful manner. If the instructor determines that your behavior in the course is inappropriate, you will be forwarded to the appropriate campus administrators and/or the campus police.

Methods of Evaluation:

Exams (60%): In this course, you will take two major exams. The exams are comprised of materials presented during lectures, online videos, podcasts, and the content covered within the assigned chapters from your textbook. You will have fifty minutes to complete fifty multiple-choice questions. The final exam is **not** cumulative.

Quizzes/Assignments (40%): Within each module, you will be assigned chapter quizzes that cover the readings from our online textbook. You will have sixty minutes to complete all quizzes.

Note on exams and assignments: There are no make-up exams or assignments in this course. If you fail to complete either one, you will receive a zero grade. Additionally, you are not allowed to use any resources (internet, textbook, notes) on your exams. If the instructor determines you have violated this rule, you will automatically fail the exam. If this happens a second time, you will automatically fail this course.

Grade Breakdown:

A: \geq 89.5

B: 79.5 - 89.4

C: 69.5 - 79.4

D: 59.5 - 69.4

F: 59.4 or below

Note: At the end of the semester, final grades will not be rounded up.

UT Tyler Honor Code:

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

Student's Rights and Responsibilities:

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this [link \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

Campus Carry:

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave

responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available by clicking this [link \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

UT Tyler - A Tobacco-Free University:

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors.

Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products.

There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit this [link \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies:

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. (For Fall, the Census Date is Sept. 12.) Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or by clicking this [link \(Links to an external site.\)](#). Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- - Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail, or Credit/No Credit
 - Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
 - Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
 - Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
 - Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid State-Mandated Course Drop Policy
Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six

courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date). Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services:

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical, and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit the following [site \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and fill out the New Student application.

The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR [webpage \(Links to an external site.\)](#), come by the SAR office, located in the University Center (UC 3150), or call 903.566.7079.

Religious Observances:

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

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities:

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time, the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA 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. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation:

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct:

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give an unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

If the professor determines you have engaged in cheating within the course, you will automatically fail the assignment or exam. If a second offense occurs, you will receive an automatic failing grade for the course. There are **no** exceptions to this policy.

- - "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:
 - Copying from another student's test paper
 - Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test
 - Failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test
 - Possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes." The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test
 - Using, buying, stealing, transporting, or solicitation in whole or part of the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program
 - Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority
 - Discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination
 - Divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors have designated that examinations are not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student
 - Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment

- Paying or offering money or other valuable things to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program
- Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit
- Taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of the University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct
- Misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially
- "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit.
- "Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.
- All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

UT Tyler Resources for Students:

- - UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995) or writingcenter@uttyler.edu
 - UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964) or tutoring@uttyler.edu
 - The Mathematics Learning Center (RBN 4021) is an open-access computer lab for math students with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
 - UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)

Important COVID-19 Information for Classrooms and Laboratories:

It is important to take the necessary precautions to ensure a healthy and successful year. UT Tyler continues to urge you to protect yourselves against the flu, COVID, and any new threats that may be developing. Be diligent about preventive measures such as washing hands, covering sneezes/coughs, social distancing, and vaccinations, which have proven to be successful in slowing the spread of viruses. Encourage those who don't feel well to stay home, and if they show symptoms, ask them to get tested for the flu or COVID. Self-isolation is important to reduce exposure ([CDC quarantine/isolation guidelines \(Links to an external site.\)](#)). Please work with your faculty members to maintain coursework

and please consult [existing campus resources \(Links to an external site.\)](#) for support.

Recording of Class Sessions:

Class sessions may be recorded by the instructor for use by students enrolled in this course. Recordings that contain personally identifiable information or other information subject to FERPA shall not be shared with individuals not enrolled in this course unless appropriate consent is obtained from all relevant students. Class recordings are reserved only for the use of students enrolled in the course and only for educational purposes. Course recordings should not be shared outside of the course in any form without express permission.