

# POLS 5311: Graduate Seminar in American Politics

SPRING 2020  
Mark Owens  
mowens@uttyler.edu

*Course Time:* 6:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.  
Mondays  
Classroom: CAS 104

*Office Hours:* 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Mon  
3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Wed  
Office: CAS 123

---

## Course Description

This course is designed to provide a survey of the institutions within the American government and the behavioral trends in American Politics. Each week examines, in detail, the scholarly arguments over the complexities of each topic and how to use the literature to identify details necessary when analyzing a question. Upon completion of this class, students should be prepared to take an advanced seminar on a subfield of American politics and evaluate arguments in American politics that are worth of appearing on a comprehensive exam.

### *Learning Objectives*

- Identify the components used to develop a political science theory.
- Translate the applied implications of an empirical or theoretical study (recognize, interpret, interact).
- Evaluate if theories in political science are valid.
- Justify how individuals in government achieve powers beyond the direct authority of an office.
- Synthesize the needs of individuals to participate in politics.
- Raise, and recognize, questions that political science has still not answered.
- Produce works that systematically analyze political phenomenon.

## Required Books

Baumgartner, Frank and Bryan Jones. 2009. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, 2nd edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Available as an ebook for \$10, <https://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/A/b06763995.html>

Additional required readings can be found on the course web page.

## Student Evaluation

### *Expectations for all work*

All work must be original - including only direct quotes without any analysis will result in a 0. Work that largely summarizes or only paraphrases work from other sources will not receive more than a B-. A paper must synthesize arguments and facts to build justifications for the author's main point (or argument).

All missed class activities will be counted as a zero, *if not excused beforehand*.

Should it be necessary for a student to make up either of the exams, that will be done toward the end of the term.

All out of class assignments are due on the date specified. Failure to turn in an assignment on time will result in a penalty of one letter grade per day. Assignments not received within four days of the deadline will no longer be accepted.

All readings are expected to be completed before discussion of the topic. Although not all readings will be discussed in class, this does not negate your responsibility to know the assigned material.

## **Class Assignments & Participation, 100 points**

As a graduate seminar active participation in the class discussion is essential to your learning, as is the ability to apply knowledge gained from your study. For this reason the 200 points are associated with multiple weekly assignments and your consistent participation. Overall participation will be measured as a weekly evaluation of the proportion of the high quality contributions made in each class meeting. Note: *Incorrect answers during class discussion will not count against you, but you should not expect points in those cases.* Distracting others or engaging in tasks that are off topic detract points from the weekly participation score.

## **Research & Analysis: 150 points**

During the 2020 election we have the opportunity to engage with voters across the state when they are paying the closest attention to their representation. In collaboration with the UT Tyler Polling Lab, we are able to conduct a large statewide poll to analyze attitudes of the public about candidates and policy. This large project is structured through five assignments.

### **Experimental Learning: Texas Opinion Survey**

The poll reflects a service learning activity to create real-world experience in the application of social science research and the skills you will be able to provide upon graduation. The poll will be in the field for two weeks, with the Polling Lab open for operation in the evenings between 4:30pm and 8:30pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, as well as a block of time from 12pm to 6pm on Saturdays and Sundays. You will be able to select two-hour shifts to work at one of the 20 stations during that time.

To participate you need to have an active CITI certification for Ethical Research in Social and Behavioral Sciences. This is an important element of maintaining ethical research and is in line with the University's IRB process.

Your participation will be assessed based on the hours you work (minimum 9 hours). The quality of your participation will reflect a ratio of the quality of your participation that reflects the number of calls made and the number of calls successfully completed. You will also be evaluated through observation of how clearly you communicate with respondents and complete the assigned tasks.

### **Analysis Paper**

The 2020 election has brought up many questions about electoral competition and political change in Texas. What happens will be a combination of what voters want and the candidates they have to choose from. Study what happens in Iowa, New Hampshire, and on Super Tuesday to set expectations for what candidates will win the party nominations. Then based on the first prediction, project how

competitive you expect the general election to be in Texas by identifying the probability of victory and the size of the victory.

The knowledge you gain prior to the election about the views of Texans is crucial to in-depth explanations of how we can interpret whether candidates offer clear representation or are out of step with their constituencies. Given your experiences and analysis of other polling (or voting trends) offer an informed analysis of what policy views by the public influenced the outcome of an election. Where there policy issues that were driving the political engagement of independent voters? Are there any issues that allowed a candidate to attract support from voters that identify with the opposite party?

Remember these comparisons do not need to simply discuss what occurs on the margins. You can also explore policies that had significant support across the state to project whether the new leaders have a mandate to make a particular policy decision.

A typical analysis, described here, should be between 4 and 5 pages and make meaningful comparisons between regions of the state or identifiable voting groups (issue advocacy, ethnicity, religion, etc).

### **Alternative Projects**

If you choose not to participate in the survey work, then request an alternative assignment. Options include:

1. Campaign Finance Study
2. Legislative History
3. Meta-analysis of a theory/hypothesis

### **Assessments of Academic Works, 150 points**

The seminar's course readings touch on subfields within the discipline to understand the aspects of American politics that are studied most and the theories used to explain. Moreover, the topics in the course provide an initial foundation in preparation for the comprehensive exams. With that motivation, select four articles in the semester in which you are to critically assess the reading based on the value of its academic contribution (teaching something new, providing a different perspective...).

The submission will be due on the week we discuss the reading in class. In class you will lead the initial discussion of the article as we talk about the week's readings.

Each submission is worth 50 points each (lowest will be dropped), for a total of 150 points. See the related rubric for more information on what questions to think about and how to structure your submission.

### **3 Minute Research Presentation**

Across graduate schools there is a competition where Masters students prepare a three minute (180 second) presentation that describes an important question to study and how social science can help us better understand the problem. State your theory and the findings from your research that add to our larger knowledge of American Politics.

This presentation will occur in the context of our class, but it will follow the same format as UT Tyler's Grad School 180, <https://www.uttyler.edu/graduate/180.php>. To learn more consult with the orientation slides provided:

<https://www.uttyler.edu/graduate/files/gradschool180.pdf>

Presentations will be given in class on April 27 – or a more robust presentation can be given at the Lyceum (April 17).

## Grading

|                                   |                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Class Discussion & Leadership     | 100 points        |
| Assessments of Academic Works     | 150 points        |
| Research Participation & Analysis | 150 points        |
| 3 Minute Research Presentation    | 100 points        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>500 points</b> |

## Class Schedule<sup>1</sup>

- Jan 13** Political Behavior and Institution in the US: What do you know?  
*Readings:* Stimson, Jim. “Professional Writing in Political Science: A Highly Opinionated Essay.”
- Jan 20** **No Class**, Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Observed
- Jan 27** Big Question in American Politics  
*Readings:* *Agendas and Instability*, Ch. 1-3.  
Dahl, Robert. 2005. “What Political Institutions Does Large-Scale Democracy Require.” *Political Science Quarterly* 120(2): 187-197.  
  
Aldrich, John. 1993. “Rational Choice and Turnout.” *American Journal of Political Science* 37: 246-78.  
  
Azari, Julia R., and Jennifer K. Smith. 2012. “Unwritten rules: Informal institutions in established democracies.” *Perspectives on Politics* 10(1): 37-55.  
  
*Recommend:*  
Nall, Clayton. 2015. “The Political Consequences of Spatial Policies: How Interstate Highways Facilitated Geographic Polarization.” *Journal of Politics* 77(2): 394-406.
- Feb 3** Voting in US Elections  
*Readings:* Jacobson, Gary. 1985. “Money and Votes Reconsidered: Congressional Elections 1972-1982.” *Public Choice* 47(1): 7-62.  
  
Ware, Alan. 2000. “Anti-Partism and Party Control of Political Reform in the United States: The Case for the Australian Ballot.” *British Journal of Political Science* 30(1): 1-29.  
  
Citrin, Jack, Eric Schickler, and John Sides. 2003. “What if everyone voted? Simulating the impact of increased turnout in senate elections.” *American Journal of Political Science* 47(1): 75-90.

---

<sup>1</sup>Should the class schedule need to be amended, I will advise the class in advance by email and via the Canvas page

Highton, Benjamin. 2004. "Voter Registration and Turnout in the United States." *Perspectives on Politics* 2(3): 507-515.

Herron, Michael and Jasjeet Sekhon. 2005. "Black Candidates and Black Voters: Assessing the Impact of Candidate Race on Uncounted Vote Rates." *Journal of Politics* 67(1): 154-177.

**Feb 10** Primary Elections

*Readings:* Strong, Donald. 1948. "The Rise of Negro Voting in Texas." *American Political Science Review* 42(3): 510-522.

Haynes, Audrey, Paul-Henri Gurian, Michael Crespín, and Christopher Zorn. 2004. "The Calculus of Concession: Media Coverage and the Dynamics of Winnowing in Presidential Nominations." *American Politics Research* 32(3): 310-337.

McKee, Seth C., and Danny Hayes. 2008. "Polls and Elections: Dixie's Kingmakers: Stability and Change in Southern Presidential Primary Electorates." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 39: 400-417.

Lazrus, Jeffrey. 2011. "Unintended Consequences: Anticipation of General Election Outcomes And Primary Election Divisiveness." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 30(3): 435-461.

**Feb 17** Survey Week

**Feb 24** Campaign Effects

*Readings:* Gerber, Donald, Alan Gerber, and David Nickerson. 2003. "Getting Out the Vote in Local Elections: Results from Six Door-to-Door Canvassing Experiments." *Journal of* 65: 1083-1096.

Tolbert, Caroline J., and John A. Grummel. 2003. "Revisiting the racial threat hypothesis: White voter support for California's Proposition 209." *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 3(2): 183-202.

Prior, Marcus. 2012. "Who Watches Presidential Debates: Measurement Problems in Campaign Effects Research." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76(2): 350-363.

**Mar 2** Persuading Voters

*Readings:* Kahn, Kim Fridkin and Patrick J. Kenney. 1999. "Do Negative Campaigns Mobilize or Suppress Turnout? Clarifying the Relationship between Negativity and Participation." *American Political Science Review* 93: 877-889.

Druckman, James N. 2001. "On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who can Frame?" *Journal of Politics* 63(4): 1041-1066.

Stone, Walter and Elizabeth Simas. 2010. "Candidate Valence and Ideological Positions in U.S. House elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 54(2): 371-388.

Lupton, Robert and Seth McKee. 2019. "Dixie's Drivers: Core Values and the Southern Republican Realignment." *Journal of Politics*.

- Mar 9** No Class, Enjoy Spring Break
- Mar 16** Understanding Public Opinion  
*Readings:* Palfrey, Thomas and Keith Poole. 1987. "The Relationship between Information, Ideology, and Voting Behavior." *American Journal of Political Science* 31(3): 511-530.  
 MacKuen, Michael B., Robert S. Erikson, and James Stimson. 1989. "Macropartisanship." *American Political Science Review* 83(4): 1125-1142.  
 Kuklinski, James H., Paul J. Quirk, Jennifer Jerit, David Schweider, and Robert F. Rich. 2000. "Misinformation and the Currency of Citizenship." *Journal of Politics* 62: 790-816.  
 Malhotra, Neil, and Yotam Margalit. "Expectation setting and retrospective voting." *The Journal of Politics* 76(4): 1000-1016.  
 Schaffner, Brian and Cameron Roche. 2017. "Misinformation and Motivated Reasoning: Responses to Economic News in a Politicized Environment." *Political Opinion Quarterly* 81(1): 86-110.
- Mar 23** Windows for Policy Change  
*Readings:* *Agendas and Instability*, Ch. 4-8.
- Mar 30** Party Power in the House of Representatives  
*Readings:* *Agendas and Instability*, Ch. 9 & 10.  
 Roberts, Jason and Steve Smith. 2003. "Procedural contexts, party strategy, and conditional party voting in the US House of Representatives, 1971–2000." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(2): 305-317.  
 Schickler, Eric, Kathryn Pearson, and Brian D. Feinstein. 2010. "Congressional Parties and Civil Rights Politics from 1933 to 1972." *Journal of Politics* 72(3): 672-689.  
 Clark, Jennifer Hayes. 2012. "Examining parties as procedural cartels: Evidence from the US states." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 37(4): 491-507.  
 Rohde, David. 2013. "Reflections on the Practice of Theorizing: Conditional Party Government in the Twenty-First Century." *Journal of Politics* 75(4): 849-864.
- Apr 6** Individualism in the Senate  
*Readings:* Binder, Sarah, Eric Lawrence, and Steven Smith. 2002. "Tracking the Filibuster, 1917 to 1996." *American Politics Research* 30(4): 406-422.  
 Bernhard, William, and Brian R. Sala. 2006. "The remaking of an American Senate: The 17th Amendment and Ideological Responsiveness." *Journal of Politics* 68(2): 345-357.  
 Owens, Mark. 2018. "Changing Norms in a Nuclear Age." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51(1): 119-123.

Howard, Nicholas and Mark Owens. 2020. "Circumventing Legislative Committees: The US Senate." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*.

**Apr 13**      Presidency

*Readings:*    *Agendas and Instability*, Ch. 12.

Deen, Rebecca and Laura Arnold. 2002. "Veto Threats as a Policy Tool: When to Threaten?" *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 32(1): 30-45.

Ponder, Daniel. 2012. "Presidential Leverage and the Politics of Policy Formulation." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 42(2): 300-323.

Bolton, Alexander and Sharece Thrower. 2019. "The Constraining Power of the Purse: Executive Discretion and Legislative Appropriations." *Journal of Politics* 81(4): 1266-1281.

Ostrander, Ian and Toby J. Rider. 2019. "Presidents Abroad: The Politics of Personal Diplomacy." *Political Research Quarterly* 72(4): 835-848.

**Apr 20**      Power of the Judiciary

*Readings:*    Mishler, William and Reginald Sheehan. 1996. "Public Opinion, the Attitudinal Model, and Supreme Court Decision Making: A Micro-Analytic Perspective." *Journal of Politics* 58: 169-200.

Johnson, Timothy and Andrew Martin. 1998. "The Public's Conditional Response to Supreme Court Decisions." *American Political Science Review* 92: 299-309.

Black, Ryan and Christie Boyd. 2013. "Selecting the Select Few: The Discuss List and the U.S. Supreme Court's Agenda-Setting Process." *Social Science Quarterly* 94(5): 1124-1144.

Gibson, James, Milton Lodge, and Benjamin Wilson. 2014. "Losing, but Accepting: Legitimacy, Positive Theory, and the Symbols of Judicial Authority." *Law and Society Review* 48(4): 837-866.

**Apr 27**      Three-Minute Presentations

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT MUST APPEAR IN EACH COURSE SYLLABUS

### 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.

### Students 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: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

### 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 at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

### 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 [www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free](http://www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free).

### 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. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. 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 <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> 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 at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

### Student Absence due to Religious Observance

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 unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

- i. "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 soliciting in whole or part 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 has designated that the examination is 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 for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
  - paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home 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; and
  - 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.
- ii. "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.
- iii. "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.
- iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

### **UT Tyler Resources for Students**

- [UT Tyler Writing Center](mailto:writingcenter@uttyler.edu) (903.565.5995), [writingcenter@uttyler.edu](mailto:writingcenter@uttyler.edu)
- [UT Tyler Tutoring Center](mailto:tutoring@uttyler.edu) (903.565.5964), [tutoring@uttyler.edu](mailto:tutoring@uttyler.edu)
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the 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](tel:903.566.7254) (903.566.7254)