Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the institutions of the American government. Additionally, the course will investigate the behavioral trends that explain how individuals work within these institutions to change laws. Furthermore, the course will expose students to the ways state politics is unique from the federal government.

Learning Objectives

The course is designed with the objective that by the end the semester each student will have a comprehensive knowledge of how branches of government operate independently and how they interact with one another. Students who will do the best in the course will understand how political contexts shape how institutions function and identify the processes in which the public can influence how the government operates.

Required Books

All texts can be found in the bookstore or online.


Additional required readings can be found on the course page.

Student Evaluation

Participation

Attendance and actively participating in discussion are important components of this class, which is why participation will make up 150 points of your final grade. Your attendance impacts your participation grade, because your raw participation grade will be weighted by the number of classes you attend divided by the number of days our class met. The raw participation grade is a weekly tally of high quality contributions to class discussion. Note: *Incorrect answers during class discussion will not count against you, but you should not expect points in those cases.* Students attentively taking notes, but not engaging in discussions or helping their peers should expect to receive 113 of the 150 points. Texting, email, and “researching trends in public opinion” via social networks detracts from your participation in class and this score - although you will be counted as present.

Assignments

There will be six announced in-class assignments throughout the semester to make up 100 points. Each activity will correspond with the readings and is designed to assess your ability to understand the material. Note: *The lowest score of these assignments will be dropped.* All missed assignments will be counted as a zero, but can be dropped.
Politics in Texas Brief

Texas holds a unique place in American politics, because of its geographic size, large population, and the level of political engagement across the state. This assignment is intended to give you a chance to learn more about a politician or geographic area you want to learn more about. Choose a political topic to analyze (ex. campaign fundraising, voter identification, or laws from this past legislative session) and compare how the issue is affected by the political context here in Texas. By July 16, you will need to select a topic to follow (10 points) and on August 3, you will turn in your analysis (90 points). This assignment is to be no more than one and a half pages. With this constraint let your argument, structure of the paper, and quantitative evidence draw the reader to your conclusion. See the instructions on course page for more information.

Exams

The first exam (July 15), the second exam (July 27), and final exam (August 7) are each worth 200 points. The final will be cumulative in that it will ask you to draw connections across topics covered throughout the class. Each exam will offer different types of short-answer, matching, and multiple choice questions. Each question will hold different point values.

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-Class Assignments</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam I (July 15)</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam II (July 27)</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politics in Texas Brief (July 17, Aug 3)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam (Aug 7)</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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Student Conduct

I have high expectations for each student in this class, which are based on your academic performance to get to this point and my belief that you will treat each of your fellow classmates with respect. My goal is to facilitate a supportive and engaging classroom for everyone and one part of that is eliminating disruptive behavior. I will allow computers in-class for note taking. However, it is unacceptable to use your cell phone or computer during class to chat, surf the web, talk, or text. Using technology in this way during class is distracting to others and demonstrates a lack of respect for the instructor.

Academic Honesty

It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty. The University of Texas at Tyler Policies and Procedures for Student Affairs will be strictly followed and can be found here at: http://www.uttler.edu/mopp/documents/8Student%20Conduct%20and%20Discipline.pdf. Tests and assignments are designed to assess your understanding of the material-do not reference another student’s answers.

Violations of academic integrity are serious and will have a negative consequence on your classroom performance. In each instance a violation occurs, a failing grade will be assigned for the assignment or the course, require work to be redone, and have you identify what the cause of the violation was. The matter will be referred to the Dean of Students if institutional action is necessary. Reference the rights and responsibilities of students: http://www.uttler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php.

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1Should the class schedule need to be amended, I will advise the class in advance by email and via the course page
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 that students need to be aware of. 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 Services:

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, PTSD or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with the Accessibility Case Manager/ADA Coordinator, Cynthia Lowery Staples. If you are unsure if the above criteria applies to you, but have questions or concerns please contact the SAR office. For more information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to cstaples@uttyler.edu.

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 instructors 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.

If you have any questions or concerns about what is expected or permissible in this course or about academic integrity in general, please contact me.

Class Schedule

Week One

July 6  Class Introduction and Expectations

July 7  Politics and Governance
        Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 1

July 8  Collective Action
        Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 1

July 9  The Colonies and Confederation of States
        Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 2

July 10 John Adams, Episodes & Discussion

Week Two

July 13 The Constitution Convention
        Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 2

July 14 Federalism
        Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 3

July 15 Exam I on Politics and the Constitutional Structure

July 16 Civil Rights & Nationalization of Politics
        Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 4

July 17 Civil Liberties and Amendments to the Constitution
        Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 5
Week Three

July 20  Public Opinion  
Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 10  
In-Class Activity 3

July 21  Public Opinion II  
Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 10

July 22  Parties  
Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 12  
In-Class Activity 4

July 23  Interest Groups and Lobbying  
Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 13

July 24  Class Discussion: What wins an argument money, the law, or public support?

Week Four

July 27  Exam II on Rights, Liberties, and Political Engagement

July 28  Congress  
Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 6

July 29  Presidency  
Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 7

July 30  Policymaking and Implementation  
Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 8  
In-Class Activity 5

Week Five

Aug 3  Judiciary and Judicial Decision Making  
Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 9  
Politics in Texas Brief Due

Aug 4  Party Nominations  
Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 11

Aug 5  The General Election  
Readings: Logic of American Politics, Ch. 11  
In-Class Activity 6

Aug 6  Class Discussion: Checks & Balances and Getting Things Done

Aug 7  Final Exam, 10:40AM