

The University of Texas at Tyler

Honors Introduction to Texas Government & Politics

HPR 135 ~ Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM

POLS 2306.H029

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Office Hours: TT 11a to 2p and by
appointment and in Zoom. 😊

Check **Canvas** for announcements!

Welcome to the study of [Texas government & politics](#) - POLS 2306! I congratulate you on choosing to study Texas Government! This will be an exciting course, and I am thrilled to have you with me for a semester of learning! We will have a wonderful semester together as we focus our efforts on critical analysis and communicating a clear and coherent understanding of Texas government and politics, as well as our social and personal rights, duties, and responsibilities!

Course Objectives:

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

Required Reading Materials: There are two (2) books required for this course:

1. [Uncovering Texas Politics \(https://www.uttyler.edu/press/files/uncovering-texas-politics-in-the-21st-century.pdf\)](https://www.uttyler.edu/press/files/uncovering-texas-politics-in-the-21st-century.pdf) You do not need a paper copy of this text, but it is available on Amazon if you would like to purchase it.
2. [Bill Ratliff: A Profile of Courage and Leadership in American Politics](#), by [Robert Sterken](#); ISBN-13: 978 1498546959. Please note that this is freely available through the library as an e-textbook. Please visit this page (<https://libguides.uttyler.edu/c.php?g=1066647&p=7761759>) and look for the course **POLS-2306-029**.

Additional online videos and course materials will be provided on the course Canvas site.

Method of Instruction: This is a face-to-face lecture and discussion-based course! Students are expected to complete readings and assignments before class meetings and to discuss major themes and topics during class. I expect respectful, organic, and flexible class discussions. This robust course will emphasize learning and conceptual gain through guided peer-to-peer dialogue.

Complete the readings and assignments.

Take examinations 1, 2, and 3 in Canvas.

Assignments and Grading

Your grade in this course will be based on the following:

1. Ethics & State Policy Presentation 10%
2. Examination # 1 8%
3. Examination # 2 8%
4. Ratliff Book Worksheet Assignments 20%
5. Textbook and Video Assignments 20%
6. Notetaking, Attendance, and Participation 10%
7. Final Exam 9%

Course Requirements & Evaluation

Are you learning? How much and how well are you learning? In this course, we will use several different tools to assess student learning. Since deep learning about Texas politics and government is our mission, students will demonstrate learning and understanding using several different tools.

Each assessment tool we use will have a specific weight contributing to your overall grade in the course. While some of the tools used are not weighted heavily – they will give you guidance and feedback and others (like in-class exams) are more heavily weighted. Please pay close attention to these weights and the expectations.

Handwritten Notes: 1. For each class meeting, you are required to take handwritten notes during the lecture and discussion. 2. After each week of class, take a clear photo of your handwritten notes using your phone. 3. Upload the photo of your handwritten notes into the designated Canvas assignment submission area before the next class meeting. 4. Late notes will not be accepted, so make sure to upload your notes promptly after each class. 5. Your

handwritten notes will be used for studying and review purposes, so make sure they are legible and organized. 6. If you have any questions or concerns about this assignment, please reach out to your instructor for clarification.

Ethics Survey & Reflection Essays: This is a two-part assignment. 1. First, In class we will open this quiz and answer these questions on a piece of paper that DOES NOT have your name or any identification on it and turn it in to Professor Sterken on the second day of class on August 28th. Do not answer the questions in the quiz in Canvas. I am only seeking your anonymous answers. 2. Second, open and take this quiz at the end of the semester in two formats: a) on a piece of paper with anonymous answers that you turn in to Dr. Sterken, and b) answer the questions in this Canvas assignment.

Ethics & State Government Presentation: Create a 4–7-minute video presentation in which you apply the core principles of ethics discussed in class to one of the ethics essay prompts/questions discussed in the course. You may choose any prompt/question that resonated with you or that you found particularly challenging.

Ratliff Assignment: You must read the [Bill Ratliff book](#) and complete the writing assignment in Canvas. Late assignments will be docked one complete letter grade.

Exams: Three (3) examinations will be held on the indicated dates, covering the assigned materials from each module. The exams will be drawn from the material covered in the most recent section of the course; for example, Exam 2 will cover the material studied after Exam 1.

Exam Content: Questions on examinations are drawn from class discussions, your [textbook](#), and materials presented in the VIDEOS.

Late Work: Life happens. If you miss an assignment due date, please email or talk with me and let me know. I don't necessarily need to know why (you can tell me if you want). You are an adult and do not need to explain to me. My mission is to have you be successful in learning the content of this course. To that end, I am happy to accept late assignments. I will deduct a full letter grade for late work, but again, I want you to be successful.

UT Tyler Student Resources, Rights, & Responsibilities

Student Resources:

Faculty can update student resources to provide additional supports appropriate for each course.

Resources to assist you in the course

- UT Tyler Student Accessibility and Resource (SAR) Office (provides needed accommodations to students with document needs related to access and learning)
- UT Tyler Writing Center
- The Mathematics Learning Center
- UT Tyler PASS Tutoring Center
- UT Tyler Supplemental Instruction
- Upswing (24/7 online tutoring) - covers nearly all undergraduate course areas
- Robert Muntz Library and Library Liaison.
- Canvas 101 (learn to use Canvas, proctoring, Unicheck, and other software)
- Digital Support Toolkit (for supported courses only. Students are automatically enrolled in the toolkit for supported courses)
- LIB 422 -- Computer Lab where students can take a proctored exam
- The Career Success Center
- UT Tyler Testing Center
- Office of Research & Scholarship Design and Data Analysis Lab

Resources available to UT Tyler Students

- UT Tyler Counseling Center (available to all students)
- MySSP App (24/7 access to Student Support Program counseling through phone or chat and online wellness resources available in a variety of languages)
- Student Assistance and Advocacy Center
- Military and Veterans Success Center (supports for our military-affiliated students)
- UT Tyler Patriot Food Pantry

- UT Tyler Financial Aid and Scholarships
- UT Tyler Student Business Services (pay or set up payment plans, etc.)
- UT Tyler Registrar's Office
- Office of International Programs
- Title IX Reporting
- Patriots Engage (available to all students. Get engaged at UT Tyler.)

University Policies and Information

Withdrawing from Class

Students may withdraw (drop) from this course using the Withdrawal Portal. Withdrawing (dropping) this course can impact your Financial Aid, Scholarships, Veteran Benefits, Exemptions, Waivers, International Student Status, housing, and degree progress. Please speak with your instructors, consider your options, speak with your advisor, and visit the One-Stop Service Center (STE 230) or email enroll@uttyler.edu to get a complete review of your student account and the possible impacts to withdrawing. We want you to make an informed decision. UT Tyler faculty and staff are here for you and often can provide additional support options or assistance. Make sure to carefully read the implications for withdrawing from a course and the instructions on using the Withdrawal portal.. Texas law prohibits students from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career*. The six courses dropped includes those from other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Consider the impact withdrawing from this class has on your academic progress and other areas, such as financial implications. We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and Enrollment Services for additional guidance. CAUTION #1: Withdrawing before census day does not mean you get a full refund. Please see the Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule. CAUTION #2: All international students must check with the Office of International Programs before withdrawing. All international students are required to enroll full-time for fall and spring terms. CAUTION #3: All UT Tyler Athletes must check with the Athletic Academic Coordinator before withdrawing from a course. CAUTION #4: All veterans or military-affiliated students should consult with the Military and Veterans Success Center.

* Students who began college for the first time before 2007 are exempt from this law.

Artificial Intelligence Statement

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy. Refer to the About This Course section of the UT Tyler Syllabus Module for specific information on appropriate use of AI in your course(s).

Final Exam Policy

Final examinations are administered as scheduled. If unusual circumstances require that special arrangements be made for an individual student or class, the Dean of the appropriate college, after consultation with the faculty member involved, may authorize an exception to the schedule. Faculty members must maintain student final examination papers for a minimum of three months following the examination date.

Incomplete Grade Policy

If a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all of the requirements for a course by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course. The "I" may be assigned in place of a grade only when all of the following conditions are met: (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all coursework or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor, and (c) the student presents these reasons before the time that the final grade roster is due. The semester credit hours for an Incomplete will not be used to calculate the grade point average. The student and the instructor must submit an Incomplete Form detailing the work required and the time by which the work must be completed to their respective department chair or college dean for approval. The time limit established must not exceed one year. Should the student fail to meet all of the work for the course within the

time limit, then the instructor may assign zeros to the unfinished work, compute the course average for the student, and assign the appropriate grade. If a grade has yet to be assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F, or NC. If the course was initially taken under the CR/NC grading basis, this may adversely affect the student's academic standing.

Grade Appeal Policy

Disputes regarding grades must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade by filing a Grade Appeal Form with the instructor who assigned the grade. A grade appeal should be used when the student thinks the final course grade awarded does not reflect the grades earned on assessments or follow the grading scale as documented in the syllabus. The student should provide the rationale for the grade appeal and attach supporting document about the grades earned. The form should be sent via email to the faculty member who assigned the grade. The faculty member reviews the rationale and supporting documentation and completes the instruction section of the form. The instructor should return the form to the student, even if a grade change is made at this level. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the department from which the grade was issued. In situations where there is an allegation of capricious grading, discrimination, or unlawful actions, appeals may go beyond the Chairperson to the Dean or the Dean's designee of the college from which the grade was issued, with that decision being final. The Grade Appeal form is found in the

Registrar's Form Library.

NOTE: The Grade Appeal Form is different from the Application for Appeal form submitted to the Student Appeals Committee, which does not rule on grade disputes as described in this policy.

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 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 the Assistant Director Student

Accessibility and Resources/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <https://www.uttyler.edu/disability-services>, the SAR office located in the Robert Muntz Library, LIB 460, email saroffice@uttyler.edu, or call 903.566.7079."

Military Affiliated Students

UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military-affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with your faculty member if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make your faculty member aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. Your faculty member is willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. The Military and Veterans Success Center (MVSC) has campus resources for military-affiliated students. The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttyler.edu or via phone at 903.565.5972.

Students on an F-1 Visa

To remain in compliance with Federal Regulations requirements you must do the following:

- Traditional face-to-face classes: Attend classes on the regular meeting days/times.
- Hybrid Classes: Attend all face-to-face classes convened by the instructor according to the schedule set for your specific course.
- Online course: Only one online course can count toward your full-time enrollment. Students are expected to be fully engaged and meet all requirements for the online course.

Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct

The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that "Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do." Therefore, we enforce the Student Conduct and

Discipline policy in the Student Manual Of Operating Procedures (Section 8).

FERPA

UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in University Policy

5.2.3. The course instructor will follow all requirements to protect your confidential information.

Absence for Official University Events or Activities

This course follows the practices related to Excused Absences for University Events or Activities as noted in the Catalog.

Absence for Religious Holidays

This course follows the practices related to Excused Absences for Religious Holy Days as noted in the Catalog.

Absence for Pregnant Students

This course follows the requirements of Texas Laws SB 412, SB 459, SB 597/HB 1361 to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Part of the supports afforded pregnant students includes excuse absences. Faculty who are informed by a student of needing this support should make a referral to the

Parenting Student Liaison. NOTE: Students must work with the Parenting Student Liaison in order to receive these supports. Students should reach out to the Parenting Student Liaison at parents@uttyler.edu and also complete the Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form.

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 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>.