Texas Government

POLS 2306 –Fall 2025
Online
3 Credit Hours [No Prerequisites Required]

Instructor: Mrs. Jill "Nikki" Carter
Email: Jcarter@uttyler.edu [preferred contact]
- In your email, please note which class you are in (example POLS 2306.061)
- Expect a response within 24 hours M-F or 48 hours on the weekends
- I will only reply to email from an official UT-Tyler email account

Office Location: CAS 122
Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday 1pm -2:30pm. Virtual Appointments available upon request with a 24-hour notice. Email is the quickest way to communicate, and I will make every effort to get back to you promptly. I encourage you to reach out if you have questions, concerns, or need any help as office hours are better thought of as student hours to help you to be more successful or get one on one time with your professors.

 "*I greet you as the shapers of American society*." – Lyndon B. Johnson

"*You may all go to hell and I will go to Texas*." - Davy Crockett said this angrily after losing his Tennessee bid for the U.S. Congress.

Canvas:
This online class will be conducted through Canvas. If you experience any problems logging into Canvas or any technical problems with the system you should seek help from Campus Computing. They can be reached via email at itsupport@patriots.uttyler.edu. Please include your full name, student ID number and date of birth in any communications you send to them. If you experience any issues in Canvas, such as a locked module, you need to reach out to Canvas support and email me as well.

Course Description:
This course is an examination of the Texas political system, including its intellectual foundations and the design of the Constitution. It includes study of the 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.

Content 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, and
- 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.

Important Note:
I encourage you to meet or message with me regularly to discuss or clarify lectures videos, or reading—or to talk about government or history in general. Please keep this in mind throughout the semester.

Also, some semesters, life gets in the way; unfortunate and unexpected things happen. Should you have one of these semesters, I am more than happy to talk to you about what to do and provide you with resources to assist you as needed. But, if the trauma is too great, you may need to concider dropping one or all of your courses. Your education is vitally important, but there are things that outrank even education sometimes—and *you have to make that call when it is necessary*. I cannot grade you on how well or poorly you deal with your life at given moments. Your grades reflect your performance in this class—not how well you are dealing with other things .I wish all of us a semester in which these things aren't issues.

Course attendance policy:
Regular attendance is one of the best ways to stay engaged and be successful in this course. I invite you to log onto Canvas each week, where you can work through the module content and complete the graded assignments. Logging in without engaging is not considered attendance, as it does not confer the same benefits to your learning. Each unit has a once per section due date for all its assignments to provide you with maximum flexibility within that period to complete work, but it is not intended to encourage you to wait until the last minute to complete everything. Regular (weekly) module engagement and assignment completion is key to being successful in this course. While there is no penalty for not doing weekly work, this will keep you on track, help you develop time management skills, and help reduce the stress of trying to cram an entire unit of work into a short period of time. However, if an emergency comes up, you travel, get sick, or for anything else that may happen then you have until the hard deadline to catch up; which offers you flexibility when needed. You may also work ahead in a unit if that is what works best for you. I invite you to submit late assignments after the "soft deadline," up until the "hard deadline," after which no late work is accepted for full credit.

Course Make-up Policy:
I understand that things happen, that it why I give an extended period of time for each unit. It is also why module assingments and quizzes submitted lafter after the unit deadline receive a 50% reduction on points per day (a 0 after second day). You have ample time alotted to complete each assignment, usually several weeks, and waiting until the last minute to do an assignment is not advised.Time management is one of the skills you will need for the future, and this schedule is to help you work on that skill. If you have a computer issue, internet issue, or any other issue on the date an assignment is due is not an excuse for not completing the assignment on time and no additional points will be granted for late work. If you do the work early and an issue presents itself, then there is time for us to work together and resolve it so that you can submit the work by the due date. Unfortuently, each semester I have students who put off everything until the due date and sometime comes up or they run out of time. This causes you stress and harms your grade, I strongly senougage you NOT to risk this, but if you do, then you have to accept those consequences.

Also there are no make-up exams or alternative assignments given once a test has been missed. There are 5 exams given over the semester and one of them is dropped. If you miss an exam, then that will be your dropped test grade. If you miss multiple exams that are open for an extedned period of time because of an emergency situation then I encourage you to reach out to the CARE team on campus for that they can help you and determine the best course of action. No provisons are made in this course for missing more than one test in a semester. <u>If you are going to miss an exam because of a school activity, you must make arrangements to take the exam prior to the day the exam will be given, as they are open the entire time the unit is.</u>

Required Reading and Materials:

Textbook: The textbook is a free PDF – *Uncovering Texas Politics.* You will also be given book chapters and other materials that will be uploaded onto Canvas. They are a required part of the course and you are responsible for the information presented in them. There is no official textbook for you to purchase.

Course Structure:

This course will be conducted in four units and there will be one exam over the material in each unit. There is also a comprehensive final exam. Each unit will be available for a limited period of time and late work isfor full credit is not accepted once that deadline passed. Please see the attance policy below for more detauls and check Canvas for due date for assignemnts.

To enourage your own success, I suggest you to log on each week and complete work in a current module..Waiting until the last minute to do the assignments is not advised, can cause adfitional stress, and have a negative impact on your grade and or course work. For example, having a computer issue, internet issue, Canvas issue, or any other issue on the end of the day that assignments due is not an excuse for not completing them on time and no additional time will be granted to earn full credit on those assignments. On the other hand, if you do the work early and an issue presents itself, then there is time for us to work together and resolve it so that you can submit the work by the due date. The university has computer labs for you to use and most places have wifi you can access. You can also use your cellphone as a hot spot in many cases (I recently had to do this to complete some of my work on time because of a storm).

Since all quizzes, assignments, and exams are available online for some period of time the late work policy is that any **Module assignments submitted late are reduced 50% of the grade per day and students who miss a semester test will not receive a make up or alternative assignment, one exam grade is dropped and if you miss a test, that will be your dropped grade.** Please see the exam policy for more info and remember to check Canvas for due dates.

Online Quizzes:

There will be 12 quizzes, each consisting of 20 multiple-choice and true/false over the lectures, textbook, and other content for each chapter module. Each quiz is worth 20 points. Quizzes are designed to help familiarize you with at least some of the important material that will be on the exams and to make sure you are reading. These quizzes are open book and open note. Since thing happen, one quiz grade is dropped (missed or lowest grade) for a total of 220 points. The syllabus quiz grade will not be dropped. **Module quizzes submitted late are reduced 50% of the grade per day.**

Online Assignments:

There will be 16 of these over the course of the semester and they will be worth 3 points each. There is one assignment that is worth 2 points and one worth 5 points. Total points available is 55. **Module assignments submitted late are reduced 50% of the grade per day (0 after 24 hours)**

Online Exams:

There will be four-unit tests and a final exam.Each exam will consist of a mixture multiple choice and true/false questions for a total of 100 points. There is a study guide posted for each exam. If you miss a test, there are no make-up exams given for individual exams. At the end semester, students who missed an exam will take the final exam as a grade replacement. Students who did not miss one have the option to take the final to replace another test grade and try to improve their score. Basically, no matter how you make it work, there are 5 exams and 4 count towards your final grade. See schedule below for due dates**.** Test count for a total of 400 points.

An important note - No lockdown browser or proctcoring software is required for exams or quizzes this semester. However, Exams are NOT open book or open note and outside resources, like google, are not allowed. To ensure academic honesty, you must complete the quizzes for each module before taking the

exam, or else you will be given a 0 on the test. The exams are times and once you answer a question, you cannot go back to it and there is a time limit. These measures are taken because I do not require a lockdown browser or test monitoring software on exam since they generally make students have anxiety and score poorly.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage 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 (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

AI Usage Policy for This Course
The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools—such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Grammarly, and similar technologies—is permitted only on assignments where AI use is explicitly allowed in the instructions.

✅ Permitted Use
You may use AI tools only on assignments that clearly state AI assistance is allowed.
When AI use is permitted, you must follow all instructions regarding how to document your use (e.g., including the prompt, tool used, and how you used it).

❌ Prohibited Use
AI tools are not allowed on any assignments, quizzes, or exams that assess your individual understanding of course content and materials.
This includes—but is not limited to—essays, exams, and take-home assessments unless otherwise specified.
Grammar and writing assistants (e.g., Grammarly) are also considered AI tools and are subject to the same restrictions.
⚠️ Academic Integrity
Using AI tools on assignments where they are not permitted will be considered a violation of the academic integrity policy and may result in disciplinary action.

Couse Points Breakdown:
Online Quizzes: 220 pts
Online Assignments: 55pts
Four exams – 400 pts
670 points total

Final Grade Scale:
More than 89.5% of total points available = A
79.5% - 89.4% of pts = B
69.5% – 79.4% of pts = C
59.5% - 69.4% of pts = D
Below 59.5% of total points available = F

Course Schedule: <mark>Check Canvas for Due Dates</mark>

<p align="center"><mark>Due 9/5 and</mark> 9/10</p>

Readings:

  !   The Getting Started Module – Due 1/24

  !   Module 1: Texas Political Culture and Diversity

  !   Module 2: Texas in the Federal System and the Texas Constitution

Assignments and Exam: check Canvas for specific assignments for and due dates – 1st exam - Census date end of week 2

<p align="center"><u>UNIT 2</u>
<mark>Due</mark> 10/3</p>

Readings:
  !   Module 3: Voting and Elections
  !   Module 4: Political Parties
  !   Module 5: Interest Groups

Assignments and Exam: check Canvas for specific assignments and due dates – 2nd exam

<p align="center"><u>UNIT 3</u>
<mark>Due</mark> 11/5</p>

Readings:
  !   Module 7: The Legislature
  !   Module 8: The Executive
  !   Module 9: The Judiciary

Assignments and Exam: check Canvas for specific assignments and due dates - 3rd exam - *Last day to drop a class is 3/28*

<p align="center"><u>UNIT 4</u>
<mark>Due</mark> 12/5</p>

Readings:

- ! Module 10: Law and Due Process
- ! Module 11: Local Government
- ! Module 12: Public Policy

Assignments and Exam: check Canvas for specific assignments and due dates – 4th exam

Final exam – Required for students who missed another exam, optional for those who took all four Unit tests and want to try and replace another test. The final will not harm your grade! – <mark>Due</mark> 12/9

Online Classroom Conduct/Decorum:

Practice decorum and decency in all discussion posts and communication with fellow students and the instructor. More than one offense will result in possible dismissal from the class. For further reading on Internet decorum, I recommend that you take a look at UT-Tyler's "Netiquette" Guide.

Syllabus Notice:

The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus; however, students will be given ample warning to any possible changes.

Email Policy:

Per university request, I will only communicate with students via your Patriot email accounts. The university has had several problems reaching students with vital questions or information because they do not check their Patriot email, and they have asked faculty to require that students use their Patriot email accounts. All responses to student email will be sent only to your Patriot email account (even if you send the email from some other account). Email sent from any non-Patriot email account will not be answered.

Student Resources:

For a general overview of resources provided by The University of Texas at Tyler, please refer to this link: http://lms-media.uttyler.edu/fileman/OID/Resource/

Academic Honesty:

Please carefully read the course policies found in Canvas and the university policy for cheating and academic dishonesty at the following website:: http://www.uttyler.edu/judicialaffairs/scholasticdishonesty.php