



**Texas Government**  
POLS 2306 – Wintermester 2024  
Online

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:00am-12:00pm by appointment (in person or Zoom)

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**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](mailto:itsupport@patriots.uttyler.edu). Please include your full name, student ID number and date of birth in any communications you send to them.

**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.

## **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 three units and there will be one exam over the material in each unit. All units will be available for a limited period of time, and you may work through them at your own pace so long as you complete all required materials for each unit before the exam for that unit ends. The units will close (i.e. no longer be available) at the end of the exam period for that unit. Check Canvas for due dates.

You are expected to log on each week and complete work in a current module. Waiting until the last minute to do the assignments is not advised. 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, and no additional time will be granted. 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.

Also, as all quizzes, assignments, and exams are available online for some period of time, they cannot be made up if they are not completed by the due date. Remember to check Canvas for due dates.

**Online Reading Quizzes:** Each reading quiz will consist of 10 multiple choice/true-false questions derived from the text. This will assess how well you are reading the chapters and digesting the information. Reading quizzes will be worth 10 points per quiz and cannot be made up unless there are extenuating circumstances. There is one reading quiz for every chapter covered this semester, and will occur on a weekly basis.

### **Online Exams:**

There will be three-unit tests. Each test will consist of a mixture multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions for a total of 100 points. The If you miss a test, there are no make-up exams given for individual exams. Test count for a total of 300 points. **These exams are taken online in Canvas and no lockdown browser or proctoring software is required.**

### **Points Breakdown:**

Online Quizzes: 80 pts

Exam I: 100 pts

Exam II: 100 pts

Exam III: 100 pts

380points 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: Check Canvas for Due Dates****UNIT 1****Readings:**

- The Getting Started Module
- Module 1: Texas Political Culture and Diversity
- Module 2: Texas in the Federal System and the Texas Constitution
- Module 3: Voting and Elections

**Assignments and Exam:** check Canvas for specific assignments and due dates – 1<sup>st</sup> exam

**UNIT 2****Readings:**

- Module 4: Political Parties
- Module 5: Interest Groups
- Module 6: The Legislature

**Assignments and Exam:** check Canvas for specific assignments and due dates – 2<sup>nd</sup> exam

**UNIT 3****Readings:**

- Module 7: The Executive
- Module 8: The Judiciary

**Assignments and Exam:** check Canvas for specific assignments and due dates - 3<sup>rd</sup> exam and Final

**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](#).

**Late Assignment Policy**

As a general rule, I do not accept late assignments. I never spring any last-minute assignments on you – from the first day of class, you will know what is due and when it is due to me. It is up to you to plan accordingly as you have ample time to complete these assignments. If you do not turn in your assignments on time, it is a zero in the gradebook and I will not grade the assignment. If you have a documented excuse (death in the family, illness, car accident, etc...), you must inform me of your situation within 2 days of the missed assignment and it is mandatory for you to provide documentation to me in order to be eligible for a make-up. Please note that having to work is not an excused absence. While I am sympathetic and understanding to your work schedule, you have made a choice to enroll in this class and it must be considered a priority. First responders and military personnel will receive exemptions from the work policy in this class on an individual basis.

**Syllabus Notice**

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

**Email Policy**

I like to keep open lanes of communication between students and myself. If you need to ask any questions or discuss anything class related, please do not hesitate to email through Canvas. Please include POLS 2306 in the subject line so I know that it is class related. While you may email me through Canvas, please do not leave comments in the assignments themselves. I do not go back and check for those. My preferred method of contact is through Canvas, please try that first.

You are responsible for checking your email daily. I frequently email students individually or as a group – if I send you an email, I assume that you have read it and are informed with the message. It is a pet peeve of mine when students do not check their email – I will not hound you trying to get you to reply to my emails. At most, I will send you two emails and if I do not have a response in a reasonable amount of time then I will assume you have chosen not to reply to me, and I will act accordingly.

**Instructor Expectations**

Just as I have certain expectations of you, you should have certain expectations of me. I will be available by appointment and if I am unavailable, you will be notified. If you email me, you will receive a response within 48 hours during the business week and business hours. Email

responses during late hours and the weekend are not a guarantee, so last-minute questions for assignments may not receive answers if they are sent during those times. As for grading, you will receive feedback on all assignments. Please do not email within a day or two of the assignment submission looking for a graded assignment. If there is a technological issue, please get in touch with the university IT department. I am unable to fix Canvas issues that are system based.

### **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/>-  
[HYPERLINK "http://lms-media.uttyler.edu/fileman/OID/Resource/"](http://lms-media.uttyler.edu/fileman/OID/Resource/)  
[HYPERLINK "http://lms-media.uttyler.edu/fileman/OID/Resource/"](http://lms-media.uttyler.edu/fileman/OID/Resource/)  
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### **Academic Honesty:**

**[\*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\*] Please carefully read the course policy found in Canvas and the university policy for cheating and academic dishonesty at the following website:**

<http://www.uttyler.edu/judicialaffairs/scholasticdishonesty.php>

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.utt Tyler.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.

- “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.
- “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](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)