

COURSE SYLLABUS: POLS-2305.003
Introductory American Government

MEETING TIMES: Tuesday/Thursday from 2:00pm until 3:20pm

LOCATION: Arts and Sciences Room 158

TEXTBOOK: [Game of Politics: Conflict, Power, and Representation](#), by Kenneth Bryant, Jr., Eric Lopez, and Mark Owens. UT-Tyler Press, Tyler, Texas. First Edition. ISBN: 13:978-1-7333299-4-1.

NOTE: This textbook is provided as an open educational resource free of charge to all UT-Tyler students. Access to the digital version is provided in the Canvas classroom by the University. Students may contact the political science department office for details on purchasing a physical copy of the text.

PROFESSOR: David McClendon

OFFICE: Jenkins 141 at Tyler Junior College

OFFICE PHONE: 903-510-2276

OFFICE E-MAIL: dmccclendon@uttyler.edu

You may also try to reach me at my TJC email address (dmcc1@tjc.edu, that's a number one(1), not a lowercase letter L)

OFFICE HOURS: Monday and Wednesday: 9:00am - 1:00pm
Tuesday, Thursday: 9:00am – 10:00am
Friday: No Scheduled Office Hours. By Appointment Only.

NOTE: Since my fulltime job is at TJC, I will try to set up some conference times right after our class meeting times. These likely will be held either in the classroom itself, or in the political science department conference room. In addition, you always have the option to set up an in-person appointment at another time, or we can set up either a phone conference or Zoom meeting if necessary.

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

Introductory survey of the discipline of political science focusing on the scope and methods of the field, and the substantive topics in

the discipline including the theoretical foundations of politics, political interaction, political institutions and how political systems function.

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Identify and define terminology used to study political science and American Government
- Have basic knowledge of the historical evolution of American government and the political process
- Describe the constitutional, institutional, political, and legal processes and structures of the United States

ATTENDANCE FOR THIS COURSE

Why are you here? The Texas Legislature (<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>) some time ago decided through its infinite wisdom that students in the state of Texas should have an "understanding of our representative democracy" as well as the "proper civic attitudes" to function as citizens. To this end, you are required to take this course in order to graduate from any college or university in Texas.

It is your responsibility to take care of your enrollment status with the class. I will not drop you if you stop coming to class. As such, if you simply stop attending or participating in the course then you will receive a failing grade in the course. If you feel it necessary to withdraw from this course, you are responsible for contacting the proper office on campus to complete the withdrawal process.

Please note that one component of your grade will be in-class assignments. These assignments are only done in class and you must be present in order to complete them. **Unexcused** absences from classroom assignments will result in a zero for that assignment. Examples of in-class assignments include pop reading quizzes, reflection writing assignments, small group exercises, etc. Participation in these learning exercises is designed to enhance the learning experience and encourage individual participation.

Absence from scheduled examinations will not be tolerated unless there is a substantial and prior excuse and the student has scheduled and taken the exam prior to the regularly scheduled

exam dates. Make-up or alternate exams after the scheduled exam dates will be given at the discretion of the professor. If there is a last-minute emergency, please make contact with me by phone or email message so I have a record of you trying to reach me to take into consideration. If you work with me beforehand, I will work with you.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT AND PARTICIPATION

The views of the instructor are not dogma and are always open to question. Please feel free to disagree, but also be prepared to back up your argument. The unthinking student that simply regurgitates information without critically analyzing how it affects them is missing out on an opportunity to think about information that will have an impact on them for the rest of their lives.

We are all adults and are thus expected to behave in a civilized and respectful manner. I expect all students to be on their best behavior as outlined in the Student Honor Code at all times.

Unruly class behavior - including but not limited to: disrespectful language or gestures, shouting, insults, talking with other students during class, texting, tweeting, emailing, web browsing, or reading non-class materials – is improper and will be confronted and corrected when it happens. If you feel that there is an imminent personal emergency where you need to have your phone on, you **MUST** speak with me prior to the start of class and be prepared to share minimal details of that emergency with me so I may grant an exception.

DO NOT PULL YOUR PHONE OUT DURING A TEST! USE OF ANY MESSAGING OR RECORDING DEVICE DURING A TEST WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE ASSUMED AS CHEATING AND A VIOLATION OF THE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY (see below).

DO NOT SLEEP IN CLASS. I understand that there are things outside of the classroom that lead to sleep deprivation (work, kids, pets, parties, athletics, etc). If you are that tired, please go home and get the rest that you need without being interrupted by me and your colleagues. If you are that bored, and you have read the material, and you believe that you have a more exciting way of

introducing the material, please let me know. I am always open to suggestions on ways to improve the classroom experience. If you think I am that boring, then please drop the course and get into a class that suits your learning style. I am smart enough to know that I cannot reach 100% of the people all the time, even though I try. If you believe that your educational needs can best be achieved with someone else, let's get you there.

All homework assignments are due by the assigned due date and **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED LATE FOR ANY REASON**. If you must miss a class for any reason you are still responsible for getting the assignment in on time or it will not be counted and a "0" will be recorded.

Other items: Headphones, ear buds, etc., should not be worn while in the classroom. Do not wear brimmed hats, i.e. "ball caps," on test days. You will be asked to remove them. I do not mind if you eat or drink so long as it is done quietly and unobtrusively.

REQUIRED COURSE WORK

Grades for the course will be determined by the successful completion of the following assignments and examinations:

- Chapter Quizzes Grade worth 100 points. (15% of semester grade)
- Classroom Assignment Grades worth 100 points. (15% of semester grade)
- TEST 1 worth 100 points. (15% of semester grade)
- TEST 2 worth 100 points. (15% of semester grade)
- TEST 3 worth 100 points. (15% of semester grade)
- **COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAM** worth 200 points. (25% of semester grade)

For a total of **700 points possible** in the course, but the grades will be weighted according to the above scale.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY AND AI USE 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.

For this course, I encourage all students to consult with your classmates and friends outside of class to engage in discussions and talk about the material discussed. I also expect all assignments submitted to be your own work and not that of any other person or entity (this includes Artificial Intelligence software like spinbots, chatbots, or essay generators like ChatGPT or CoPilot). Suspicious similarities in assignments, or submissions that are beyond the capability of other works you have submitted, are an indication of cheating and laziness and grounds for investigating violations of UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy. I WILL NOT TOLERATE VIOLATIONS OF THE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY IN ANY FORM. IF YOU ARE CAUGHT ENGAGING IN THIS FORM OF UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR, YOU WILL RECEIVE AN AUTOMATIC FAILING GRADE ON THE ASSIGNMENT AND YOUR NAME WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE DEAN FOR ANY FURTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTION THE UNIVERSITY DEEMS NECESSARY. REPEATED VIOLATIONS WILL ENSURE MULTIPLE FAILED ASSIGNMENT GRADES WHICH CAN LEAD TO FAILING THE COURSE OUTRIGHT.

FINAL DISCLAIMER: As the professor, I reserve the right to amend this syllabus as the need dictates. As such, all test dates should be considered approximate and not set in stone. This is especially true

this semester as it is my first term using the resources supplied by the department and I will be building the course as we go along. Any and all changes will be announced in sufficient time to allow for your personal adjustment. Now, let's go have fun!

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE FOR SPRING 2025

UNIT I - POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS AND FRAMEWORK

Week One

January 14

Topic: Orientation and Introduction to Course, Understanding Political Ideas

Read: Syllabus, Online Orientation Modules

January 16

Topic: American Political Values

Read: Online Module

Week Two

January 21

Topic: Constitutionalism, part 1.

Read: Chapter 1: The United States Constitution

January 23

Topic: Constitutionalism, part 2

Read: Chapter 1: The United States Constitution

Week Three

January 28

Topic: Constitutionalism, part 3

Read: Chapter 1: The United States Constitution

January 30

Topic: Public Opinion

Read: Chapter 2: Public Opinion

Week Four

February 4: Complete Unit 1, Review for Test 1

February 6: UNIT TEST 1 on or about Thursday, February 6th

UNIT II – INSTITUTIONS OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Week Five

February 11

Topic: The Legislative Branch, part 1

Read: Chapter 3: Congress

February 13

Topic: The Legislative Branch, part 2

Read: Chapter 3: Congress

Week Six

February 18

Topic: The Executive Branch, part 1

Read: Chapter 4: The Presidency

February 20

Topic: The Executive Branch, part 2

Read: Chapter 4: The Presidency

Week Seven

February 25

Topic: The Federal Bureaucracy, part 1

Read: Chapter 5: The History of Bureaucratic Principals

February 27

Topic: The Federal Bureaucracy, part 2

Read: Chapter 5: The History of Bureaucratic Principals

Week Eight

March 4: Complete Unit 1, Review for Test 1

March 6: UNIT TEST 2 on or about Thursday, March 6th

UNIT III – LINKAGE INSTITUTIONS

Week Nine

March 11

Topic: Interest Groups

Read: Chapter 7: Interest Groups

March 13

Topic: Political Parties, part 1

Read: Chapter 10: Political Parties in America

SPRING BREAK – March 17 to 21. Have a safe and relaxing break!

Week Ten

March 25

Topic: Political Parties, part 2

Read: Chapter 10: Political Parties in America

March 27:

Topic: Campaigns, Elections, Voting, part 1

Read: Chapter 11: Campaigns and Elections in America

Week Eleven

April 1

Topic: Campaigns, Elections, Voting, part 2

Read: Chapter 11: Campaigns and Elections in America

April 3: UNIT TEST 3 on or about Thursday, April 3rd

UNIT IV – Gallimaufry

Week Twelve

April 8

Topic: The Judicial Branch, part 1

Read: Chapter 6: The Federal Judiciary

April 10

Topic: The Judicial Branch, part 2
Read: Chapter 6: The Federal Judiciary

Week Thirteen

April 15

Topic: Public Policy, part 1
Read: Chapter 8: What is Public Policy?

April 17

Topic: Public Policy, part 2
Read: Chapter 8: What is Public Policy?

Week Fourteen

April 22

Topic: The Media, part 1
Read: Chapter 9: The Media

April 24

Topic: The Media, part 2
Read: Chapter 9: The Media

Week Fifteen: April 28 – May 2

COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAM on TUESDAY, APRIL 29TH from 2:00pm – 4:00pm.

<https://www.uttyler.edu/schedule/files/spring-2025-final-exam-schedule.pdf>

Once you have finished reading this syllabus, you must send me a message in Canvas telling me that you have read the syllabus, you agree to its provisions, and you are ready to start the course.