POLS 2306 – Texas Government

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Time: T/Th 2:00-3:20p
Location: Arts and Sciences 158
Office Hours: T/Th 3:30-5 p.m. and by appointment (CAS 123)

Course Description: Many Americans are only vaguely aware of what it is state governments do. Are they lower-tier entities tasked with carrying out the will of the federal government? Are they separate entities with their own sovereignty? What exactly are state governments, and where do they stand regarding the federal government of the United States? In this class we will explore the concept of the 10th Amendment and its bestowment of power to the state governments, the creation and evolution of the Texas government and Constitution, as well as the foundations and workings of the three branches of the Texas government. Furthermore, we will examine campaigns and elections, public opinion, political parties, interest groups, and the many local governments that exist in and around the Texas government.

Time Management
In order to do well in this course, you **MUST** take responsibility for your work habits and ensure you do all the work. In other words, if you start to neglect your work, put things off, and fall behind, it will be extremely difficult to do well in this course. For that reason, it is imperative you regularly check your email and make a plan on when you will work on your assignments, ensuring they will be completed by the posted deadline. Additionally, you should plan to study and prepare for all posted exams and the final.

Communication
I am always available to chat and happy to meet with students. If you ever need to chat, you can either stop by during office hours or email me to make an appointment (either in office or online). You can email either myself or the TA with any questions or concerns about the course. When emailing, please allow 24 hours for a response (emails over weekends may not be responded to till the next business day).
Be sure to only email using your student email account. Due to FERPA, we may not be able to respond with course information to personal email accounts.

Textbook
The book for this course is provided to students at no cost and is available at the link below:
https://www.uttyler.edu/press/files/uncovering-texas-politics-in-the-21st-century.pdf

Course Attendance Policy
Students are heavily encouraged to come to every class to both participate in class discussion and take notes on all new material. Doing so drastically increases your likelihood of performing well on exams. Additionally, everyone is expected to be respectful and courteous throughout the course.

Assignments
Participation 10%
Lecture Quizzes 30%
Exams 30%
Final Exam 30%

Participation: Part of doing well in this course is showing up and participating in the class lecture and discussion. Attendance will be taken periodically throughout the course in the form of quizzes or other activities.

Lecture Quizzes will consist of multiple-choice questions based on the material covered in class. Students will be given three attempts at these quizzes, and I will only keep the grade of the highest attempt scored. My suggestion is that students do the first attempt with no notes to test themselves on where they stand regarding the material. They can then use the second and third attempt with their notes to find the answers to questions they missed. This method should serve as a helpful test prep for the in-class exams and final. I will drop the lowest three lecture quizzes.

Exams will be in class and closed-book/notes. These exams will consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions, which will be based heavily off of materials discussed in class. I will drop the lowest exam grade.

Final Exam will be held during the university's scheduled timeslot for this course. This exam will be cumulative, meaning it will cover all material discussed throughout this course.

Note: I understand that certain life events happen and that sometimes events are outside of your control. Such events may include, but are not limited to, power outages, illness, family priorities, etc. For that reason, I have dropped the three lowest lecture quizzes and the lowest exam grade. These drops are not "freebies" but are instead intended to cover such unrollable events. In other words, if you miss a posted quiz due to technical issues, that will count as one of your drops.

Letter Grades:
A = 90-100
B = 80-89
C = 70-79
D = 60-69
F = 59 and below

I will round up to the nearest decimal point. For example, if you end with an 89.5 I will round that from a B to an A. There will be no exceptions to this grading policy.

Late Work
As a general rule, I will not accept late work. This means all assignments, quizzes, exams, etc. are due by their posted due date. Only in extreme extenuating circumstances, such as a medical emergency, shall late work be considered.

Disability Services
I will abide by all accommodations approved by the university to ensure fair accessibility. It is the student's responsibility to meet with the instructor and inform them of the necessary accommodation on or around the first day of class. Do not wait to do so right before an exam!
To apply for services, please follow the link below:
https://www.uttyler.edu/academics/success-services/disability-services/

Title IX Reporting
The University of Texas at Tyler is committed to the principle that the university's learning and working environment be free from inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment in any form will not be tolerated, and individuals who engage in such conduct will be subjected to disciplinary action, whether on or off campus. I will report any and all behavior that fits the definition of sexual harassment to the appropriate office.

On-Campus Food Pantry
The Patriot Pantry is dedicated to helping students, staff, faculty and community members in need. Its mission is to provide food and personal care items to members of the UT Tyler community. Our pantry is completely donor funded, and it is our goal that no student goes to class hungry! For more information please visit https://www.uttyler.edu/offices/service-learning/food-pantry/

Student Counseling
UT Tyler provides in-person and online counseling services to students. For more information, please visit https://www.uttyler.edu/student-life/health-wellness/student-counseling-center/

Artificial Intelligence Policy
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 is not permitted in this course at all. I expect all work students submit for this course to be their own. I have carefully designed all assignments and class activities to support your learning. Doing your own work, without human or artificial intelligence assistance, is best for your efforts in mastering course learning objectives. For this course, I expressly forbid using ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for any stage of the work process, including brainstorming. Deviations from these guidelines will be considered a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code and academic honesty values.

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

Course Schedule

The following is the planned schedule for the semester. While I do not foresee any changes to this, I reserve the right to make necessary changes to the syllabus in order to accommodate unforeseen events or due to the pace of the course.

1/13 – Course Introduction/Syllabus

1/15 – Federalism

1/20 – Federalism

1/22 – Understanding Political Culture in Texas
Lecture Quiz 1 due in Canvas by 1/25 11:59pm CST

1/27 – Texas Constitution

1/29 – Texas Constitution
Lecture Quiz 2 due by 2/1 11:59pm CST

2/3 – Texas Legislature

2/5 – Texas Legislature
Read Ch. 6
Lecture Quiz 3 due in Canvas by 2/8 11:59pm CST

2/10 – Review Game 1

2/12 – Exam 1

2/17 – Special Interest Groups
Read Ch. 5

2/19 – Special Interest Groups
Lecture Quiz 4 due in Canvas by 2/22 11:59pm CST

2/24 – Political Parties
Read Ch. 4

2/26 – Political Parties
Lecture Quiz 5 due in Canvas by 3/1 11:59pm CST

3/3 – Campaigns and Elections
Read Ch. 3

3/5 – Campaigns and Elections
Lecture Quiz 6 due in Canvas by 3/8 11:59pm CST

3/10 & 3/12 – Spring Break (No Class)

3/17 – Review Game 2

3/19 – Exam 2

3/24 – Texas Executive
Read Ch. 7

3/26 – Texas Executive
Lecture Quiz 7 due in Canvas by 3/29 11:59pm CST

3/31 – Texas Judiciary
Read Ch. 8

4/2 – Local Government
Lecture Quiz 8 due in Canvas by 4/5 11:59pm CST

4/7 – Review Game 3

4/9 – Exam 3

4/14 – Local Government

4/16 – Texas Economic and Financial Situations
Lecture Quiz 9 due in Canvas by 4/19 11:59pm CST

4/21 & 4/23 – Final Exam Review Week

4/28 – Final Exam