



POLS 2306 (Online): Introductory Texas Politics Winter Session 2025



Professor Eric A. Lopez

Office: CAS 115

Office Phone #: (903) 566-7371

Office Hours: Given the class format, regular face-to-face office hours will not be held. However, I am accessible through email (expect a response within 12 hours) if you should have any questions, or would like to schedule a virtual appointment through Zoom.

Email: elopez@uttyler.edu

- *I will only reply to email from an official UT-Tyler email account*

Course Description and Objectives

Written constitutions define the powers and responsibilities of government while simultaneously establishing the limits of government. To better understand these concepts, this course is designed to provide an introductory analysis and evaluation of the political systems established by both the U.S. and Texas constitutions. Throughout the course students will:

- Critically examine the philosophical foundations of both political systems by exploring the historical debates and writings that shaped the formation of these documents.
- Distinguish and identify the key differences and similarities between the three branches of government at the National and State level.
- Appraise current events (at both the National and State level) to highlight the applicability and importance of both constitutions in today's society.
- Consider the formation of partisan preferences and how evaluate how partisanship has shaped Texas into a one-party state and the consequences of this affiliation.

Credit Hours: 3; Prerequisites: None

Required Texts

- 1) Lopez, Eric, Marcus Stadelmann, and Robert Sterken. 2020. *iTejas!: Uncovering Politics in the 21st Century*. UT-Tyler OER Textbook. Available on Canvas.
- 2) Additional required readings will be posted in Canvas.

Requirements, Dates, and Grades

Success in the class is dependent on your ability to login to Canvas daily, since Canvas is the medium used to deliver the class content (lectures, readings, exams/quizzes, etc.). The required content and coursework are scheduled with specific deadlines that allow you to work at your own pace. This schedule provides flexibility in completing the coursework that is convenient for you, while allowing us to progress through the course material together. In both Canvas and the syllabus, the due dates and times for every assignment is listed; please pay attention to all due dates and times for these assignments. **For example, all text in this color signifies the due date and time for an assignment.**

To ease completion and distribution of course material, the course is organized into 6 modules. Beginning with Module 1, students will need to complete the assigned readings, view all posted content (e.g., lectures, short videos), and complete various assignments within a given module in order to proceed throughout the course. Canvas allows you to save your progress, so that you do not have to complete a given module in one sitting

Each module is structured as follows:

Module Content

Overview

- Brief overview of the learning objectives of the module content.

Readings and Media

- All readings that do not come from the Required Text can be found in their respective module. In the **Course Outline and Readings** section, these readings are marked as being located on Canvas.
- Readings, and the Reading Schedule, can also be found in the **Course Outline and Readings** section of the syllabus.

- Further, each module contains a video lecture, or lectures, over the readings and related content.

Review Questions

- Students will be provided review questions about the module content. Answering these questions will not count towards your final grade; however, they will serve as the basis for your review for Exam 1, Exam 2, and the Final Exam. Also, they will help you prepare for the Module Quizzes. If you should have any questions on these questions, please do not hesitate to email me for help, or clarification.

Module Quizzes

- At the end of each content module, a quiz will be distributed. These quizzes will cover all information that should have been read and viewed for the module.
- **You only have one shot at them (you will be unable to stop, restart, etc.).** Open and take the Module Quiz when you have finished reading and viewed all the module content. Please carefully follow the directions provided, such as the time limit.
- These quizzes **WILL** count towards your final grade. A total of twelve quizzes (there is a Syllabus Quiz explained in the Course Outline and Readings section) will compose your Module Quiz grade. Therefore, only begin once you have completed the module content.
- You will be unable to begin the next module until you have completed the previous module's quiz.

Exams

Exam 1, Exam 2, and the Final Exam will be delivered through Canvas on the dates specified below and each exam will consist of a combination of True/False and multiple-choice questions. Carefully read the instructions provided for each exam, paying close attention to when the exam will be open and when it is due (no late exams will be accepted).

Importantly, you will only have one chance to complete each exam (i.e., you are not allowed to stop, save, and finish later). These exams will only cover course materials prior to the date of the exam (i.e., no exam in this course is cumulative).

Grades and Due Dates

The following are the weights given to the Exams and the Module Quizzes and the date that each is due:

Assignment	Date Due (Subject to Change)	Grade Percentage
Exam 1	Monday, December 22, 2025	25%
Exam 2	Monday, December 29, 2025	25%
Final Exam	Monday, January 5, 2025	25%
Module Quizzes	Per Module	25%

Final grades will be granted on the following scale: A=100%-90%, B=89%-80%, C=79%-70%, D=69%-60%, and F=59%-50%.

Class and University Policies

(The following information is also provided within Canvas, specifically in the UT Tyler Syllabus Module)

Policy Concerning Canvas and Submitting Assignments

The Professor is conscious to the fact that Canvas can be unreliable. If you are having trouble posting in the discussion forums, accessing posted readings, or submitting an assignment, please inform me immediately about the issue and attach the relevant assignment. All times listed in this syllabus correspond to the Central Time Zone, as this corresponds with UT-Tyler's time zone. No late exams will be accepted.

If any conflict (others tests, travel plans, etc.) with an assignment's due date exists that you feel will not allow you to complete the assignments on time, notify me of your situation by Thursday, December 18, 2025. Be advised that allowances (e.g. extensions) will only be given in extreme cases with my discretion as to what I define as extreme.

Technical Information

If you experience technical problems or have a technical question about this course, you can obtain assistance by emailing itsupport@patriots.uttyler.edu or call 903.565.5555. When you email IT Support, be sure to include a complete description of your question or problem including:

- The title and number of the course
- The page in question
- If you get an error message, a description and message number
- What you were doing at the time you got the error message

Plug-ins and Helper Applications

UT-Tyler online courses use Java, JavaScript, browser plug-ins, helper application and cookies. It is essential that you have these elements installed and enabled in your web browser for optimal viewing of the content and functions of your online course. Always ensure that you are using the most update version for the browser you choose to access the online learning content.

NOTE: Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the recommended browser for Canvas.

- **Adobe Reader** allows you to view, save, and print Portable Document Format (PDF) files.
<http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
- **Java Runtime Environment (JRE)** allows you to use interactive tools on the web.
<http://www.java.com/en/download/>
- **Adobe Flash Player** allows you to view content created with Flash such as interactive web applications and animations. <http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>
- **QuickTime** allows users to play back audio and video files.
<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>

Netiquette Guide

"Netiquette" is network etiquette, the "do's and don'ts" of online communication. Netiquette covers both common courtesies online and informal "rules of the road" of cyberspace. Review and familiarize

yourself with the guidelines provided.

<http://www.learnthenet.com/learn-about/netiquette/index.php>

“Make Up” Policy

Make-up exams and re-takes of quizzes will only be offered to those students that have a University approved absence, a doctor’s note detailing your inability to take an assignment on the date provided on this syllabus, or a sudden emergency (e.g., death in your family, illness, technical issues) that prohibits your participation. Anyone who has not satisfied any of these requirements and does not complete the assignments will be given a grade of “0.”

Recall, if any conflict (others tests, travel plans, etc.) with the assignments exists notify me by Thursday, December 18, 2025. Be advised that allowances will only be given in extreme cases with my discretion as to what I define as extreme (see also: Student Absence for University Sponsored Events and Activities and Student Absence Due to Religious Observance sections of the 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.

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).

Absence for Official University Events and 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 excused 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](#).

Class Discussion and Threatening Behavior

Given the nature of political discourse, some of the topics discussed and debated in class may be sensitive to some students. It is expected that students, regardless of the subject matter, maintain civility in their class comments. The University and the Professor seek to promote a safe environment where students may participate in debates, discussion, and other objectives concurrent with the educational process without compromising their health, safety, and welfare. Concurrent with this ideal, mutual courtesy and respect should govern all classroom conduct. Therefore, threats of physical harm or verbal abuse will not be tolerated in this class.

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\(s\).](#)

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>.

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."

If you are registered with the SAR office, please set up a meeting with the Professor to discuss what specific accommodations should be made to ensure your success in the class.

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.

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 this syllabus, 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

The Census Date for this session is Tuesday, December 16, 2025.

Withdrawing from Class

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.**

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.

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.

Student Resources

In Canvas, open the UT-Tyler Syllabus Module to view a list of resources to assist you in the course and resources available to all UT-Tyler students.

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.

Changes to the Syllabus

The information contained in the course syllabus, with the exception of the grading criteria, attendance policy, and the make-up policy, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice as long as the change is without prejudice to the students.

Course Outline and Readings (subject to change)

Each subsequent module on Canvas will be available in accordance with the dates on the reading list. While you are free to work on these modules on your own time, you should be completing and beginning new modules given the schedule provided below.

December 15, 2025

12/15: Canvas site opens at 8:00am

- To access module content, click on the **Modules** link on the left-side menu.
- Your “first assignment” is to complete the POLS 2306 Pre-Test, located in the Day 1 Module. This is purely for assessment purposes and *WILL NOT* count towards your grade for the class. The “first assignment” must be complete and submitted on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, by 11:59pm.
- Your “second assignment” is to complete the “Who Are You” Discussion post.

December 16, 2025 (Introduction to the Course)

12/16 – Course opens at 10:00am

- Review the syllabus and familiarize yourself with Canvas. From the home screen, you can find a link to the course syllabus and a link to the course modules.
- To access module content, click on the **Modules** link on the left-side menu. From there, please read and view all content in the **UT Tyler Syllabus Module**. You will be unable to proceed to Module 1 until you have done so.
- Your first graded assignment is to complete the Syllabus Quiz, located in the **UT Tyler Syllabus Module**. This quiz **WILL** count towards your Module Quiz Grade; however, there is no time limit and you can use the syllabus to answer the questions. **The Syllabus Quiz must be complete and submitted on Wednesday, December 17, 2025 by 11:59pm.**
- Students are expected to email me, Professor Lopez, to confirm they have read the syllabus and understand the course’s assignments, requirements, and structure. If any questions should arise during your review of the course, please do not hesitate to email me for clarification

Module 1 opens at 10am on December 16, 2025

December 16–December 21

Foundations of Government

Read (All Readings in Canvas)

- All readings in Module 1, Revolutionary Thought (Readings and Media)
- All readings in Module 1, The U.S. Constitution (Readings and Media)
- All readings in Module 1, The Texas Constitution (Readings and Media)

View (All Lectures in Canvas)

- All videos in Module 1, Revolutionary Thought (Readings and Media)
- All videos in Module 1, The U.S. Constitution (Readings and Media)
- All videos in Module 1, The Texas Constitution (Readings and Media)

Quiz Information

- Quiz 1: Revolutionary Thought must be complete and submitted by 11:59pm on 12/21/25.
- Quiz 2: The U.S. Constitution must be complete and submitted by 11:59pm on 12/21/25.
- Quiz 3: The Texas Constitution must be complete and submitted by 11:59pm on 12/21/25.

Exam 1 opens at 8am on December 22, 2025.

December 22

- Exam 1 will be distributed at 8:00am on Monday, December 22nd.
- **Exam 1 must be complete and submitted by 11:59pm on Monday, December 22nd.**
- Please carefully read the directions provided by Canvas (e.g., pay attention to the time limit) and only begin Exam 1 once you have completed the Module Review Questions from Module 1. Remember, you only have one shot at Exam 1 (you will be unable to stop, restart, etc.). Open and take Exam 1 when you have finished reading and viewed all the content of each module.

Module 2 opens at 10am on December 23, 2025.

December 23–December 28

Understanding and Analyzing Texas Politics

Read (All Readings in Canvas)

- All readings in Module 2, Partisanship and Its Development (Readings and Media)
- All readings in Modules 2, Voting and Elections in Texas (Readings and Media)
- All readings in Module 2, Political Parties (Readings and Media)
- All readings in Modules 2, The Electoral College (Readings and Media)

View (All Lectures in Canvas)

- All videos in Module 2, Partisanship and Its Development (Readings and Media)
- All videos in Module 2, Voting and Elections in Texas (Readings and Media)
- All readings in Module 2, Political Parties (Readings and Media)
- All readings in Modules 2, The Electoral College (Readings and Media)

Quiz Information

- Quiz 4: Partisanship and Its Development must be complete and submitted by 11:59pm on 12/28/25.
- Quiz 5: Voting and Elections in Texas must be complete and submitted by 11:59pm on 12/28/25.
- Quiz 6: Political Parties must be complete and submitted by 11:59pm on 12/28/25.
- Quiz 7: The Electoral College must be complete and submitted by 11:59pm on 12/28/25.

Exam 2 opens at 8am on December 29, 2025.

FYI: Monday, December 29, 2025, is the Last day to withdraw from one or more Winter Session courses

December 29

- Exam 2 will be distributed at 8:00am on Monday, December 29th.
- **Exam 2 must be complete and submitted by 11:59pm on Monday, December 29th.**

- Please carefully read the directions provided by Canvas (e.g., pay attention to the time limit) and only begin Exam 2 once you have completed the Module Review Questions from Module 2. Remember, you only have one shot at Exam 2 (you will be unable to stop, restart, etc.). Open and take Exam 2 when you have finished reading and viewed all the content of each module.

Module 3 opens at 10am on December 30, 2025.

December 30–January 4

The Institutions of Texas Politics

Read (All Readings in Canvas)

- All readings in Module 3, The Texas Legislature (Readings and Media)
- All readings in Modules 3, The Legislative Process (Readings and Media)
- All readings in Module 3, The Plural Executive (Readings and Media)
- All readings in Modules 3, The Texas Judiciary (Readings and Media)

View (All Lectures in Canvas)

- All videos in Module 3, The Texas Legislature (Readings and Media)
- All videos in Module 3, The Legislative Process (Readings and Media)
- All videos in Module 3, The Plural Executive (Readings and Media)
- All videos in Module 3, The Texas Judiciary (Readings and Media)

Quiz Information

- Quiz 8: The Texas Legislature must be complete and submitted by 11:59pm on 1/4/26.
- Quiz 9: The Legislative Process must be complete and submitted by 11:59pm on 1/4/26.
- Quiz 10: The Plural Executive must be complete and submitted by 11:59pm on 1/4/26.
- Quiz 11: The Texas Judiciary must be complete and submitted by 11:59pm on 1/4/26.

The Final Exam opens at 8am on January 5, 2025.

January 5

- The Final Exam will be distributed at 8:00am on Monday, January 5th.
- **The Final Exam must be complete and submitted by 11:59pm on Monday, January 5th.**
- Please carefully read the directions provided by Canvas (e.g., pay attention to the time limit) and only begin the Final Exam once you have completed the Module Review Questions from Modules 3. Remember, you only have one shot at the Final Exam (you will be unable to stop, restart, etc.). Open and take the Final Exam when you have finished reading and viewed all the content of each module.