The University of Texas at Tyler

Introduction to Texas Government & Politics

POLS 2306.061 ~ Asynchronous Online

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Office Hours: TT 11a to 2p and by appointment.

Check **Canvas** for announcements!

Welcome to the study of Texas government & politics - POLS 2306! I congratulate you on choosing to study Texas Government! This will be an exciting course, and I am thrilled to have you with me for a semester of learning! We will have a wonderful semester together as we focus our efforts on critical analysis and communicating a clear and coherent understanding of Texas government and politics, as well as our social and personal rights, duties, and responsibilities!

Course Objectives:

1. to acquaint you with the study of political science and
2. to improve your understanding of the institutions and processes governing Texas and other states and localities (such as cities and counties).
3. The student will become familiar with the historical antecedents that make up Texas's political culture and regions.
4. The student will learn to characterize the trends in Texas' political history.
5. The student will be able to trace Texas's changing political partisan face from a one-party Democratic state to a state with a strong Republican party.
6. The student will become cognizant of the changes facing Texas in ethnic diversity and population growth.

Required Reading Materials:

There are two (2) books required for this course. Both books are linked below and in Canvas.

1. *Uncovering Texas Politics* (*https://www.uttyler.edu/press/files/uncovering-texas-politics-in-the-21st-century.pdf*) You do not need a paper copy of this text, but it is available on Amazon if you would like to purchase it.
2. *Bill Ratliff: A Profile of Courage and Leadership in American Politics*, by Robert Sterken; ISBN-13: 978-1498546959. Please note that this is freely available through the library as an e-textbook. Please visit this page (https://libguides.uttyler.edu/c.php?g=1066647&p=7761759) and look for course **POLS-2306-029**.

Additional online videos will be assigned on the course Canvas site.

Method of Instruction: This is an asynchronous online course! Students are expected to complete readings and assignments before class meetings and to discuss major themes and topics during class. I expect respectful, organic, and flexible class discussions. This robust course will emphasize learning and conceptual gain through guided peer-to-peer dialogue.

Complete the readings and assignments.

Take examinations 1, 2, and 3 in Canvas.

Assignments and Grading: Your grade in this course will be based on the following:

Assessment Instruments and Values:

- **Examination # 1 20%**
- **Examination # 2 20%**
- **Ratliff Book Worksheet Assignments 25%**
- **Textbook and Video Assignments 20%**
- **Final Exam 15%**

Course Requirements & Evaluation

Are you learning? How much and how well are you learning? In this course, we will use several different tools to assess student learning. Since deep learning about Texas politics and government is our mission, students will demonstrate learning and understanding using several different tools.

Each assessment tool we use will have a specific weight contributing to your overall grade in the course. While some of the tools used are not weighted heavily – they will give you guidance and feedback and others (like in-class exams) are more heavily weighted. Please pay close attention to these weights and the expectations.

Ratliff Assignment: You must read the Bill Ratliff book and complete the writing assignment in Canvas. Late assignments will be docked one complete letter grade.

Exams: Three (3) examinations will be held on the indicated dates, covering the assigned materials from each module. The exams will be drawn from the material covered in the most recent section of the course; for example, Exam 2 will cover the material studied after Exam 1.

Exam Content: Questions on examinations are drawn from class discussions, your textbook, and materials presented in the VIDEOS.

UT Tyler Student

Resources, Rights, & Responsibilities

Resources to assist you in the course

• UT Tyler Student Accessibility and Resource (SAR) Office (provides needed accommodations to
students with document needs related to access and learning)
• UT Tyler Writing Center
• The Mathematics Learning Center
• UT Tyler PASS Tutoring Center
• UT Tyler Supplemental Instruction
• Upswing (24/7 online tutoring) - covers nearly all undergraduate course areas
• Robert Muntz Library and Library Liaison
• Canvas 101 (learn to use Canvas, proctoring, Unicheck, and other software)
• Digital Support Toolkit (for supported courses only. Students are automatically enrolled in the toolkit for supported courses)
• LIB 422 -- Computer Lab where students can take a proctored exam
• The Career Success Center
• UT Tyler Testing Center
• Office of Research & Scholarship Design and Data Analysis Lab

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 permitted only for **this course** for specific assignments or situations, and appropriate acknowledgment is required.

a. Example 1: This course has specific assignments where artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT or Copilot) are permitted and encouraged. When AI use is permissible, it will be clearly stated in the assignment directions, and all use of AI must be appropriately acknowledged and cited. Otherwise, the default is that AI is not allowed during any stage of an assignment.

b. Example 2: During some class assignments, we may leverage AI tools to support your learning, allow you to explore how AI tools can be used, and/or better understand their benefits and limitations. Learning how to use AI is an emerging skill, and we will work through the limitations of these evolving systems together. However, AI will be limited to assignments where AI is a critical component of the learning activity. I will always indicate when and where the use of AI tools for this course is appropriate.

c. Example 3: Most assignments in this course will permit using artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT or Copilot. When AI use is permissible, it will be documented in the assignment description, and all use of AI must be appropriately acknowledged and cited. When using AI tools for assignments, add an appendix showing (a) the entire exchange (e.g., prompts used), highlighting the most relevant
sections; (b) a description of precisely which AI tools were used, (c) an explanation of how the AI tools were used (e.g. to generate ideas, elements of text, etc.); and (d) an account of why AI tools were used (e.g. to save time, to surmount writer's block, to stimulate thinking, to experiment for fun, etc.). Students shall not use AI tools during in-class examinations or assignments unless explicitly permitted and instructed to do so.

d. Example 4: In this course, we may use AI tools (such as ChatGPT and Copilot) to examine how these tools may inform our exploration of the class topics. You will be notified as to when and how these tools will be used, along with guidance for attribution. Using AI tools outside of these parameters violates UT Tyler's Honor Code, constitutes plagiarism, and will be treated as such.

Resources available to UT Tyler Students
• UT Tyler Counseling Center (available to all students)
• TAO Online Support Center (online self-help modules related to mental & emotional health)
• Military and Veterans Success Center (supports for our military-affiliated students)
• UT Tyler Patriot Food Pantry
• UT Tyler Financial Aid and Scholarships
• UT Tyler Registrar's Office
• Office of International Programs
• Title IX Reporting
• Patriots Engage (available to all students. Get engaged at UT Tyler.)

University Policies and Information
• Withdrawing from Class - Students are allowed to withdraw (drop) from a course through the University's Withdrawal Portal. Texas law prohibits students who began college for the first time

in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. The number includes courses dropped at other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities.

Make sure to consider the impact withdrawing from any course has on your academic progress as well as the financial implications. We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and financial aid for additional guidance. CAUTION #1: Withdrawing before census day does not mean students receive 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.

• 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 are required to 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 course requirements by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course. The "I" may be assigned in lieu 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 course work 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 prior to 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 for a student. 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 complete the work for the course within the time limit, 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 not been assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F or to NC, if the course was initially taken under the CR/NC grading basis.
• Grade Appeal Policy: - UT Tyler's Grade Appeal policy requires the completion of a Grade Appeal form for this action to take place. The grade appeal begins with the instructor of the course. If a student does not agree with the decision of the instructor, the student may then move the appeal to the department chair/school director for that course. If the student is still dissatisfied with the decision of the chair/director, the appeal moves to the Dean of the College offering that course, who has the final decision. Grade appeals must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade. The Grade Appeal form is found on the Registrar's Form Library.
• 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 a student has 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, the student is encouraged to visit https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact the student when the application has been submitted and schedule 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 http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

• 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. Campus resources for military-affiliated students are in the Military and Veterans Success Center (MVSC). The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttyler.edu or via phone at 903.565.5972.

• 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).

• 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 in protecting your confidential information.

• Recording of Class Sessions: Class sessions may be recorded by the instructor for use by students enrolled in the course. Recordings that contain personally identifiable information or other information subject to FERPA shall not be shared with individuals not enrolled in the course unless appropriate consent is obtained from all relevant students. Class recordings are reserved only for the use of students enrolled in the course and only for educational purposes. Course recordings should not be shared outside of the course in any form without express permission.

• Absence for Official University Events or Activities: All courses follow the practices related to approved absences as noted by the Student Manual of Operating Procedures (Sec. 1 -501).

• Absence for Religious Holidays: Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious holiday are requested to inform the instructor by the second class meeting of the semester.

• Campus Carry: We respect the right and privacy of students who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in all courses. 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.