Course Description & Objectives

This course is designed to introduce students to the institutions of the American government, using the prior civic understanding each student has. The course investigates the behavioral trends that explain how individuals work within these institutions to change laws. The course also explores topics where students can challenge their understanding of government by comparing how state politics is unique from the federal government and identifying the dates of significant reforms to the lawmaking process.

Learning Objectives

The course is designed with the objective that by the end the semester each student has a comprehensive knowledge of:

- How branches of government operate independently
- How branches interact with one another and what that means for the power one individual can have
- What ways constituents can influence each operation of the government
- Through Service Learning activities, recognize the importance of relationships and government structures in how decisions are implemented.

Students who will do the best in the course will understand how political contexts shape how institutions function and identify the processes in which the public can influence how the government operates. Note: This section of POLS 2305 is registered as a course for the GIVE BACK certificate.

Required Books

All texts can be found in the bookstore or online.


Know this is a new format for eTextbooks and in your purchase you may add a loose leaf copy of the textbook.

Student Evaluation

Participation

I believe actively participating in discussion are an important part of a class, which is why participation will make up 100 points of your final grade. The participation grade is a proportion of the high quality contributions to class discussion throughout the semester. Students attentively taking notes each day, but not engaging in discussions or helping their peers should expect to receive 75 of the 100 points. Students putting forth no effort in a given day should expect to receive a zero for participation on that given date.
I encourage you to **CHALLENGE, RESPOND to, & CRITIQUE** what you read and hear outside of class. Our goal is to learn by challenging what preconceived notions we may have.

**REVEL Chapter Quizzes**

The textbook for this class includes interactive exercises to test your knowledge as you study. The quiz appears after you have read the section and move the mouse to the right side of the screen - *a gray bar will appear*. You may submit answers once to each of the quizzes. At the end of the term, the top five quiz scores are used in calculating the final grade. Quizzes are available two weeks before the deadline - missing a deadline will result in a zero for the assignment.

As is the case with any online platform take time to be familiar with how it works, clear your cache and internet history, and if problems persist - **Call Pearson 24/7 at 1-855-875-1801** and identify the product you are using, your class, and student username. If your issue is still not resolved, alert Dr. Owens and provide the service number the associate gave for your call.

**Assignments**

There will be at least five class assignments throughout the semester to make up 200 points. Each activity will correspond with the readings and is designed to assess your ability to understand and apply the topics of the course (usually in our local environment). Moreover, all work must be original - including only direct quotes without any analysis will result in a 0. Note: *The lowest score of these assignments will be dropped. All missed assignments will be counted as a zero, but can be dropped.*

**Colloquium**

University campuses and cities like Tyler, Texas are hubs for opportunities to engage in thoughtful discussions about the role of government or see how policy decisions effect our lives. During the semester are to attend three public events *Distinguished Lecture Series, Webb Student Society - if the talk relates to politics, meeting of the Smith County Commission, etc...* Upon attending the lecture or government meeting, observe politics in action or the questions others are asking. For each event:

1) Take notes

2) Collect information to document you were there

3) Upload a 450 to 500 word discussion of what occurred at the event to share your experience with the class. Pay particular attention to the actions of individuals and the rules that structure their activity. Consider how the concerns raised in the meeting (or at the event) reflect content we have discussed in the course. As you write multiple entries, feel free to be creative in building comparisons of differences and similarities between similar events. Stories should be added under the forum for Colloquium Events.

**Exams**

Three exams on September 30, October 21, and November 14 are each worth 100 points. The final, 150 points, will be cumulative in that you are asked to draw connections across topics covered throughout the class. Each exam will offer different types of short-answer, matching, and multiple choice questions. Each question will hold different point values. *Missing an exam without the confirmation of an alternative test date, before the exam date, will result in a zero.*
Grading

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Community Colloquium (3 events)</td>
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<td>Online Chapter Quizzes (5 count)</td>
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<td>Class Assignments (4 count)</td>
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<td>Exam II (Oct 21)</td>
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<td>Exam III (Nov 14)</td>
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<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>Extra Credit</td>
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<td>10</td>
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Student Conduct

I have high expectations for each student in this class, which are based on your academic performance to get to this point and my belief that you will treat each of your fellow classmates with respect. My goal is to facilitate a supportive and engaging class experience for everyone and one part of that is eliminating disruptive behavior. Using technology in a way that distracts others and demonstrates a lack of respect for the instructor is unacceptable.

Concealed Handgun Campus Policy

*Handbook of Operating Procedures*, Section 2.10.1(6-8): “A license holder who carries a handgun on campus must carry it in a holster or other secure weapon case that completely covers the trigger and the entire trigger guard area. The holster must have sufficient tension or grip on the handgun to retain it in the holster even when subjected to unexpected jostling.

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.

If a person is believed to have improperly displayed a handgun or carried a handgun into a location where concealed carry is not permitted, the campus police should be contacted.

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. For more information please visit http://www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

Academic Honesty

It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty. The University of Texas at Tyler Policies and Procedures for Student Affairs will be strictly followed and can be found here at: http://www.uttyler.edu/mopp/documents/8Student%20Conduct%20and%20Discipline.pdf. Tests and assignments are designed to assess your understanding of the material—do not reference another student’s answers.

Violations of academic integrity are serious and will have a negative consequence on your classroom performance. In each instance a violation occurs, a failing grade will be assigned for the assignment or the course, require work to be redone, and have you identify what the cause of the violation was. The matter will be

1Should the class schedule need to be amended, I will advise the class in advance by email and via the course page
referred to the Dean of Students if institutional action is necessary. Reference the rights and responsibilities of students: http://www.uttler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php.

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.uttler.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 that students need to be aware of. 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 Services:

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, PTSD or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with the Accessibility Case Manager/ADA Coordinator, Cynthia Lowery Staples. If you are unsure if the above criteria applies to you, but have questions or concerns please contact the SAR office. For more information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to cstaples@uttyler.edu.
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 with official documentation 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 instructors 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.

If you have any questions or concerns about what is expected or permissible in this course or about academic integrity in general, please contact me.

Class Schedule

Week One

Aug 29  Class Introduction and Expectations

Aug 31  Politics and Political Science
Readings: Politics in America, Ch. 1

Sept 2  Online: Politics and Governance
Readings: Politics in America, Ch. 1

Week Two

Sept 5  No Class: Labor Day

Sept 7  Democratic Theories and Changes in Society
Readings: Politics in America, Ch. 2

Sept 9  Changes in Society: Individual Beliefs and Equality
Readings: Politics in America, Ch. 2
Week Three
Sept 12   Governing with Collective Actions
Sept 14   Collective Action Costs, Trade-offs in Politics
Sept 16   Early American Politics: The Colonies
           Readings: Politics in America, Ch. 3

Week Four
Sept 19   Early American Politics: Colonies
           Readings: Politics in America, Ch. 3
Sept 21   Voting in the Convention: Outcome of Compromise Constitution Limitations of Government Authority
           Readings: Politics in America, Ch. 3
Sept 23   How much power is each branch intended to have?

Week Five
Sept 26   Constitutional Foundation of Federalism, Shared and Distinct Authority
           Readings: Politics in America, Ch. 4
Sept 28   Federalism in Practice: Review - How Can you leverage power from your authority?
           Readings: Politics in America, Ch. 4
Sept 30   Exam I

Week Six
Oct  3    Introduction to Public Opinion
           Readings: Politics in America, Ch. 5
Oct  5    Measuring and Understanding Public Opinion
           Readings: Politics in America, Ch. 5
Oct  7    Why do Groups Differ in Opinion and Participation?
           Readings: Politics in America, Ch. 5

Week Seven
Oct 10    Media: Who Frames the Problem?
           Readings: Politics in America, Ch. 6
Oct 12    Intentional Organization of Political Parties
           Readings: Politics in America, Ch. 7
Oct 14    Are Elections influenced by the Media and Political Parties?
Week Eight
Oct 17  Party Conventions and the National Brand
Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 7
Oct 19  Understanding the context and how opinions/information can change - Exam II Review
Oct 21  Exam II - Opinion, Information, and Participation

Week Nine
Oct 24  Campaigns for office
Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 8
Oct 26  Organized Interests in the Electorate
Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 9
Oct 28  Discussion: Can Representation be Biased?

Week Ten
Oct 31  The People’s House: Power of Organization
Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 10
Nov 2  Policymaking and Constitutional Authority
Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 10
Nov 4  Senate: Representing States and Power of Individuals
Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 10

Week Eleven
Nov 7  Presidents and the Presidency
Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 11
Nov 9  Organization and Implementing Policy
Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 11
Nov 11  Exam Review

Week Twelve
Nov 14  Exam III
Nov 16  Bureaucracy
Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 12
Nov 18  Boundaries of Executive Action
Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 12
Week Thirteen

Nov 21-25  *Fall Break*

Week Fourteen

Nov 28  Jurisdictions of the Federal Courts
   *Readings:* Politics in America, Ch. 13

Nov 30  Judicial Selection
   *Readings:* Politics in America, Ch. 13

Dec 2  Judicial Decision Making Processes
   *Readings:* Politics in America, Ch. 13

Week Fifteen

Dec 5  Civil Rights: Movements and their Successes
   *Readings:* Politics in America, Ch. 15

Dec 7  Civil Rights: Movements and their Successes
   *Readings:* Politics in America, Ch. 15

Dec 9  Final Exam Review: Recognize Ways You Can Influence Government or Involve Others

Exam Week

Dec TBA  Final Exam