Course Description & Objectives

This course is designed to introduce students to the institutions of the American government. Additionally, the course will investigate the behavioral trends that explain how individuals work within these institutions to change laws. Furthermore, the course will expose students to the ways state politics is unique from the federal government.

Learning Objectives

The course is designed with the objective that by the end the semester each student will have a comprehensive knowledge of how branches of government operate independently and how they interact with one another. 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.

Required Books

All texts can be found in the bookstore or online.


Know this is a new format for eTextbooks and your purchase should include a loose leaf copy of the actual textbook.

Additional required readings can be found on the course web page.

Student Evaluation

Blackboard Participation

I believe actively participating in discussion are an important part of a class, which is why participation will make up 120 points of your final grade (4 posts & 4 replies). The participation grade is a proportion of the high quality contributions to class discussion throughout the class on the discussion board. CHALLENGE & RESPOND, REPLY & CRITIQUE; our goal is to learn by challenging what preconceived notions we may have. Discussion board posts - that are not preapproved for extraordinary circumstances - cannot be revisited after the deadline has passed. Moreover, all work must be original - including only direct quotes without any analysis will result in a 0.

Each week a new prompt will be added. The student’s role is two-fold.

1) Each student may select four discussion board posts during the semester to provide in-depth answers to the questions posed.

2) Provide peer responses that critique or build on the arguments or explanations provided by your colleagues. Do this four times throughout the semester.
REVEL Chapter Quizzes

The textbook for this class includes ten 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. 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 seven class assignments throughout the semester to make up 210 points. Each activity will correspond with the readings and is designed to assess your ability to understand the material. 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 even to share your experience with the class. Stories should be added under the forum for Colloquium Events.

Exams

Three exams on February 18, March 17, and April 7 are each worth 100 points. The final, 100 points, will be cumulative in that it will ask you 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 will result in a zero.

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UT System Pre-Test &amp; Post-Test</td>
<td>E.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard In-Depth Responses (x4)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Responses to Peer Posts (x4)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REVEL Quizzes (x10)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colloquium (x3 events)</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Assignments (x7)</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam I (Feb 18)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam II (Mar 17)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam III (Apr 7)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam (May 5)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Should the class schedule need to be amended, I will advise the class in advance by email and via the course page
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.

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.uttler.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 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 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

Jan 19-22  Politics and Political Science
   Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 1
   Task: 1) Syllabus Quiz, Assignment #1
          2) Try a Chapter Quiz, Section 1.7, Who Governs? - optional

Jan 25-29  Governing Collective Actions
   Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 2
   Task: 1) Identify Specific Instructions in the US Constitution, Assignment #2
          2) Chapter Quiz #1, Section 2.3, Dilemmas of Equality

Feb 1-5  Building to the Constitution: Colonies and Confederation
   Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 3
   Task:  Chapter Quiz #2, Section 3.7, Conflict over Ratification

Feb 8-12  Outcome of Compromise: The U.S. Constitution
   Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 3
   Task: 1) State Delegation Facebook - Outline their contributions, Assignment #3

Feb 15-19  Be my Valentine?: Federalism & Exam I
   Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 4
   Task:  Chapter Quiz #3, Section 4.7, Money and Power Flow to Washington
          Exam I

Feb 22-26  Public Opinion & Participation
   Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 5
   Task: 1) Conduct a Poll & Present Results as Cross Tabs, Assignment #4
          2) Chapter Quiz #4, Section 5.4, Policy and Opinion

Feb 29-4  Media & Parties
   Readings:  Politics in America, Ch. 6 & 7
   Task: 1) Chapter Quiz #5, Section 6.6, Freedom vs. Fairness
          2) Chapter Quiz #6, Section 7.1, Power of Organization

Mar 7-11  Spring Break

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Mar 14-18  Interest Groups & Exam II  
**Readings:**  *Politics in America*, Ch. 9

**Task:**  Exam II

Mar 21-25  Campaigns & Elections  
**Readings:**  *Politics in America*, Ch. 8

**Task:**  1) Texas Voting Report, Assignment #5  
2) Chapter Quiz #7, Section 8.4, *Campaign Strategies*

Mar 28-1  Congress is all the same:  *April Fool’s* - The House  
**Readings:**  *Politics in America*, Ch. 10

**Task:**  1) Redistricting, Assignment #6  
2) Chapter Quiz #8, Section 10.7, *Decision Making on the Floor*

Apr 4-8  Senate & Exam III  
**Readings:**  *Politics in America*, Ch. 10

**Task:**  Exam III

Apr 11-15  File your Taxes & Presidency  
**Readings:**  *Politics in America*, Ch. 11

**Task:**  Presidency Assignment & Blackboard Quiz, Assignment #7

Apr 18-22  Bureaucracy  
**Readings:**  *Politics in America*, Ch. 12

**Task:**  1) Map How a Regulation Was Developed, Assignment #8  
2) Chapter Quiz #9, Section 12.6, *Congressional Constraints*

Apr 25-29  Courts and Civil Rights  
**Readings:**  *Politics in America*, Ch. 13 & 15

**Task:**  Chapter Quiz #10, Section 13.6, *Supreme Court Decision Making*

May 5-6  Final Exam