Introductory Texas Politics

POLS 2306.001 - MWF 8:00AM- 8:55 AM BUS 212 Spring 2016
POLS 2306.003 - MWF 12:20-1:15 PM BUS 212 Spring 2016

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Email: rjackson@uttyler.edu

Office Hours: MWF
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM
11:10 AM - 12:00 PM
or by appointment

I will respond to e-mails during the weekdays in a timely manner if they are received before 5PM. However, if you e-mail me during the weekend I will respond on the following Monday.

Check Blackboard for announcements

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

This course is designed to acquaint the student with the study of political science. The student will be able to understand the institutions and processes that govern Texas and other states, as well as the localities (such as cities and counties) within them. The student will become familiar with the historical antecedents which made up the political culture and regions of Texas. The student will learn to characterize the trends of Texas political history. The student will be able to trace the changing political partisan face of Texas from a one party Democratic state to state with a strong Republican party. The student will become cognizant of the changes facing Texas in ethnic diversity and population growth.

Required Materials:

Texas Politics Today by Maxwell Edition 17th
Publisher: Cengage ISBN: 9781285861913

Additional Readings and online videos will be assigned on Blackboard.

Method of Instruction:

The primary method of instruction will be professor led discussion lectures, which will be open-form style, with students expected to participate in a dialogue fashion. The outline of the textbook will serve as the basic outline for the course, although we will no doubt visit other topics and ideas as they arise. Come prepared to discuss the chapter of that class day. Simple Rules: 1) BE ON TIME, 2) READ THE MATERIAL PRIOR TO CLASS TIME, 3)
PARTICIPATE. It is vital that you keep up with the reading! You must come prepared! I have added a participation/professionalism segment to the final grade!

In this course you are to read, watch the assigned videos, make careful notes, and complete the online course work. In class we will discuss and expand upon the themes, concepts and ideas covered in the reading and videos. Students are expected to a) Participate in face-to-face discussions, b) take short in-class quizzes, and c) take in-class examinations over the materials presented throughout the course.

Assignments and Grading

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

Professionalism 10%
Quizzes 20% In-class every day after assigned reading
Examination #1 20%
Examination #2 20%
Final Examination 30%

Grades for assignments and exams will be posted in Blackboard.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

In this course we will use several different tools to assess student learning. Since deep understanding of Texas politics and government if our mission, students will demonstrate learning and understanding using several different tools. Each of the assessment tools we use will have a specific weight that will contribute 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 to the expectations.

Students are expected to read, make careful notes, and complete online journals before class when assigned. In-class meetings are to discuss the readings and expand upon the themes, concepts and ideas covered in the readings. In addition to completing weekly readings students are expected to a) participate in face-to-face discussions b) take short in-class quizzes weekly, c) write reflective journals throughout the semester over specified topics and d) take in-class examinations over the materials presented online. In-class attendance and participation as well as online participation are critical to your success.

The successful student will write brief online (in Blackboard) reflective journals (300 words) that critically discuss the assigned topic. Reflective journals will be assigned throughout the semester, and when journals are assigned they will be due before class on Mondays (late entries will not count as completed and will lose a letter grade per day).
Exams: There will be two in class examinations, on the dates indicated below, covering the assigned material from each chapter. The exams will be drawn from the materials covered in the most recent section of the course: for example, Exam 2 will cover material studied after Exam 1. During exams, no discussion among students is permitted of any kind. Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off. Students arriving after the first exam has been turned in will not be allowed to start the exam and will need to make immediate alternate arrangements with the professor. Alternative make-up examinations may differ from the original exam being made up. If you have a University excused absence then you must inform the professor prior to the exam for alternate arrangements. The final exam will be a group project in which students are expected to create a unique multi-media presentation on an assigned aspect of Texas politics or government assigned by the professor.

Exam Content: Questions on examinations may be drawn from your textbook, materials presented in lecture, and/or additional materials provided by the instructor as announced in class. Just reading the book, or just attending class, will likely be insufficient to earn a good grade in the course.

Professionalism and attendance: The remaining 10% of your final grade will be based on your level of participation and attendance in class. Just reading the book and just attending the class will likely be insufficient to earn a good grade in the course.

Class Policies: Please provide a respectful learning environment for your fellow students. Repeated tardiness, cell phone disruptions, reading materials unrelated to the course (such as Facebook or other textbooks, and abuse of communication technologies (e.g. Web browsing/IMing, texting) will adversely affect your grade and may lead to your dismissal from the class for the day. Please do not arrive later than ten minutes for class, if you are late please do not interrupt other students class time by your tardiness. Please seek other arrangements for the notes and activities you may have missed when you are absent or later than ten minutes. Please turn off all electronic devices, alarms, cell phones, etc. during class. Disruptions and tardiness will be reflected in your professionalism grade.

University Policies and Procedures:

The following University policies must appear on each course syllabus or be provided as an informational sheet (web-links to these policies may be used in the print or electronic syllabus) http://www.utttyler.edu/academicaffairs/syllabuspolicies.pdf

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.utttyler.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.utttyler.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/Accessibility 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 psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible a disability diagnosis such as a chronic disease, learning disorder, head injury 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 an Accessibility Case Manager. 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 webpage (http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices/) or the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to saroffice@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 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.

**Important Dates:**

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Begins</td>
<td>January 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Census Date</td>
<td>February 1</td>
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<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>March 7-11</td>
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<td>Final Filing Deadline</td>
<td>March 15</td>
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<td>Last Day to drop/Withdraw</td>
<td>March 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>NMUN-NY</td>
<td>March 20-24</td>
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<td>SR-MUN Charlotte</td>
<td>March 31- April 2</td>
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<td>Study Day</td>
<td>May 2</td>
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<td>Final Exams for Spring Term</td>
<td>May 3-7</td>
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