Introduction to Texas Politics (POLS 2306) Course Syllabus

POLS 2306. Introduction to Texas Politics.
Study of the institutions governing Texas and related policy processes. Includes a focus on the legislative process, the executive branch, and the judicial system. May be taken in fulfillment of statutory requirements for a baccalaureate degree.

Instructor Information: Melissa Dotson, email: mdotson@uttyler.edu, office: BUS 204A
Office number: 903-566-7179
Office Hours: MWF – 9:00-9:50; T/R – 11:00-11:50

Course Rationale: This course introduces the student to various aspects of the nature and development Texas Politics.


Methods of Evaluation: The student’s mastery of the subject material will be determined through exams. An exam will be given on the scheduled test day. Do not be late—it will reduce the amount of time you have to complete the exam. The first exam will be worth 20% of your final grade. The second and third exams are worth 25% of your overall grade and the final exam will be worth 30% of your final grade. Each exam will be based upon the content of lectures, discussions, and your readings. Test format will be discussed prior to the first exam. No electronic devices (e.g. cell phones, pagers, computers, cameras, etc.) will be used in the classroom once the exam has been passed out or while there are people in the room taking the exam. In addition, once the first exam has been turned in to the instructor or her representative, no further exams will be handed out. Any student who enters following this event will be considered absent and will take the make-up exam on the make-up exam day.

Classroom Policies: Policies regarding make-up procedure, number of exams, exam dates, and similar class related activities will be determined by the instructor.

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.uttyler.edu/wellness/StudentRightsandResponsibilities.html

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 12th day of class (See Schedule of Classes for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Registrar's Office and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Registrar's Office if you have any questions.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness: 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 a 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 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 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 the course 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

Methods of Instruction: Lecture is the primary teaching method, but in class discussions will heavily influence the student’s grade as well.

Attendance: All students are expected to attend every class meeting. Students who come in late may be counted absent if the instructor believes the student missed too much of the class. Students who anticipate being absent from class due to religious observances are requested to inform the instructor in writing by the second class meeting of the semester. 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. Make-up exams will be given only to students with, in the opinion of the instructor, a valid reason for missing the exam, AND all make-up exams will be administered at the end of the semester. Each student is only allowed one make-up exam, all other missed exams will receive a zero. Make-up exams will not receive the in-class benefits of bonus questions and/or a grade curve (if given). Failure to take the make-up on the assigned day will result in a zero for that exam.

Behavior: All students will maintain respect and courtesy for their classmates and for the instructor. Do not use cell phones during class. Turn off your phone before class begins. Frequent violations of this rule will result in a lowered class participation grade and egregious violations may result in the instructor lowering the student’s semester grade. No profanity, sleeping, talking that interrupts the instructor, lewd, rude, or socially unacceptable behavior (and even some socially acceptable behavior may not be allowed in class). If student conduct becomes unacceptable, the instructor will ask the student to leave and not return.

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-violent 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 Resource 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 you 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.

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.

The Instructor reserves the right to make modifications in content and schedule as necessary to promote the best education possible within prevailing conditions affecting this course. Each semester, students will be given an opportunity to evaluate the instructor and the course.

Common Course Outcomes:

Exemplary Educational Objectives:
After taking this course students must be able to:
   1. Identify and evaluate significant individuals, events, and eras in the history of the U.S. or Texas
   2. Recognize and analyze political, social, and economic changes in the U.S. or Texas history
   3. Identify and evaluate causes and effects of domestic and international issues and events in U.S. or Texas history
   4. Apply relative chronology through the sequencing of significant individuals, events, and time periods in U.S. or Texas history.

Assessment: Daily quizzes, outside reading tests, attendance, and unit exams using a variety of question types, including short answer, multiple choice, matching, and true/false questions.

Exam Breakdown:

Exam #1 (Chapters 1-3)
Exam #2 (Chapters 4-7)
Exam #3 (Chapters 8-11)
Exam #4 (Chapters 12-14)