Introductory Texas Politics

Class Meeting Times
Classes will meet Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30 am to 10:45 am in Business 158

Text
Texas Politics Today - William Earl Maxwell, Ernest Crain

Important Dates to Remember
January 27 – Census date – 12th day roll due
March 26 - last day to withdraw from class with an “W”
March 10-14 – Spring Break
May 5-10 - Final Exam Week

Course Description
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.

This class will focus on local and state political offices, the governing bodies at the local and state level, and the structure of the state legislature, judicial, and executive branches. Considering that this year is a mid-year election year emphasis will be placed on certain political campaigns as well as a special focus on the Governor race. It is hoped that this course will better inform the student about the political process, reasons one should be concerned about politics (local and national), and the manner in which the government functions.

Learning Outcomes:
After successfully completing this course, students should be able to demonstrate:
• familiarity with terminology used to study political science and state and local government
• basic knowledge of the historical evolution of Texas governmental structures
• an understanding of the constitutional, institutional, political and legal processes and structures of the state of Texas
• comprehension of the interrelationships of national and local state governments
• awareness of basic values of Texas political culture

Grading Scale
Exams will be graded on a 100-point scale. Make up exams will only be scheduled for students with a valid and credible excuse and will consist of different questions than the regular exam. Each exam will be worth 100 points. The total points possible will be 300 points.
The grading scale will be the following:

- 270 - 300 points = A
- 240 - 269 points = B
- 210 - 239 points = C
- 180 - 209 points = D
- 179 and below    = F

Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Week of Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 14</td>
<td>Introduction to politics and government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>Introduction, Chapter 1, Texas History Background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 28</td>
<td>Chapter 2, Texas Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>Chapter 3 Voting and Elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>Chapter 4, Political Parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>Chapter 5, Interest Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Feb 20</td>
<td>First Exam – Feb 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>Chapter 6, The Legislature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>Chapter 7, The Legislative Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>Chapter 8, The Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>Chapter 9, the Bureaucracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Second Exam – April 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>Chapter 11, Law and Due Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Chapter 12, Taxing and Budgeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Chapter 13, Spending and Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>April 29</td>
<td>Chapter 14, Local Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>May 5-10</td>
<td>Final Exam week – Third Exam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class Etiquette and Expectations

In my experience most people understand that in college there are expectations that the student should act as an adult in the classroom. Most of the time students conduct themselves with good manners and are greeted with respect from their fellow students as well as the instructor. However, from time to time a social “problem child” slips in and disrupts the classroom. To keep such disturbances to a minimum I will briefly give my expectations of the students in the classroom.

Tardiness is understood; sometimes we simply cannot help being late. If you must enter the class late please do so quietly and do not let tardiness become a habit. **Please turn cell phones and pagers off before entering class.** An occasional ring or two will not terribly bother me, but don’t let it become a habit as well. **Please don’t talk to other students in class or text message friends! Stay off of electronics unless taking notes!** It is disruptive and disrespectful to the other students in class.
Students are expected to remain polite during classroom discussions. Even during heated debates, you must treat your classmates with respect. Violation of this policy will result in a reduction of your class participation grade. For example, you should not make derogatory remarks about your classmates’ ideas. Instead, explain why you think they are wrong, backing up your viewpoint with sound factual analysis and refraining from personal attacks. Another example is being quiet while someone else (including your instructor!) has the floor.

Class Attendance:
I do not have a class attendance policy. However, experience shows me that students that diligently attend their classes and keep good notes tend to make high grades in their coursework, whereas students that are lax in their attendance and/or do not take lecture notes tend to make poor or failing grades in their classes. Remember this when you come to me wondering why you are failing this course. My first two questions will be are you attending class and are you taking good notes?

Disability Statement:
"If you have disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact Ida MacDonald in the Disability Support Services offices so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodation must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Support Services counselor. For more information, call or visit the Student Services Center located in the University Center, Room 111. The telephone number is 566-7079 (TDD 565-5579)."

Social Security 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.

Note Regarding Student Absence due to Religious Observance:
Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor by the second class meeting of such absences.

Grade Replacement:
If you are repeating this course for a grade replacement, you must file an intent to receive grade forgiveness with the registrar by the 12th day of class. Failure to file an intent to use grade forgiveness will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. A student will receive grade forgiveness (grade replacement) for only three (undergraduate student) or two (graduate student) course repeats during his/her career at UT Tyler. (2006-08 Catalog, p. 35)

Academic Honesty
I have a pretty simple policy, DO NOT CHEAT OR PLAGERIZE. Doing so will result in the immediate failure of the class.