POLS 2306 – Introductory Texas Politics
(Hybrid/PATSS)
MWF 9:05am – 10:00am
Business Building, Room 212
University of Texas at Tyler
Spring 2015

Professor Eric A. Lopez
Office: BUS 227
Office Phone #: (903) 566-7428
Office Hours: MWF, 12:15pm - 2:15pm & by Appointment
Email: elopez@uttyler.edu
  • Expect a response within 24 hours (Monday-Friday)
  • I will only reply to email from an official UT-Tyler email account

Course Description and Objectives

Written constitutions define the powers and responsibilities of government while simultaneously establishing the limits of government. To better understand these concepts, this course is designed to provide an introductory analysis and evaluation of the political systems established by both the U.S. and Texas constitutions. Throughout the course students will:
• Critically examine the philosophical foundations of both political systems by exploring the historical debates and writings that shaped the formation of these documents.
• Distinguish and identify the key differences and similarities between the three branches of government at the National and State level.
• Appraie current events (at both the National and State level) to highlight the applicability and importance of both constitutions in today’s society.
• Consider the formation of partisan preferences and evaluate how partisanship has shaped Texas into a one-party state and the consequences of this affiliation.

Credit Hours: 3; Prerequisites: None

Required Texts

2) Additional required readings will be posted in Blackboard.

Requirements, Dates, and Grades

Given the nature of this Hybrid/PATSS course, this class will heavily utilize Blackboard. Blackboard will be used to conduct online discussion, the posting of course material, and, most importantly, will be the medium used to deliver a majority of class content. The traditional lecture portion of this course will require you to meet every Monday of the semester and on test dates (see below) in Business Building (HPR), Room 212.

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

**Online Discussion**

This course is divided into 4 Units. Accordingly, throughout each Unit (with the exception being Exam weeks and Spring Break), I will post discussion questions in Blackboard’s Group Discussion Board. It is expected that students will offer comments, questions, and replies to the discussion questions that are posted as well as to the posts of your classmates. **You are expected to actively participate in discussion!** I will be reading all messages and I will participate in the discussion when important/interesting point(s) are being argued or discussed. Postings are expected to be carefully crafted responses (a minimum of 4 sentences in length) and will be evaluated on:

• The quality of the posting, which uses references from the readings, current events, or personal experience to support comments
• The degree that the postings promote discussion with classmates
• Student engagement with their classmates posts
Weekly posts will be graded on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Minimal response to the Unit Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Postings responds to the question, but 1) does not offer support for claims and 2) does not stimulate further class discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Postings fully address the discussion questions and stimulate substantial follow-up postings. Also, student actively engages in the posts of other classmates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each Unit, the discussion forum will open at 12:00 a.m. Monday and close at 11:59 p.m. the Sunday before the Unit exam (with the exception being Unit 4, in which discussion will close Friday, April 24th at 11:59 p.m.).

**Quizzes**

Eight in-class, unannounced quizzes will be given throughout the semester and five will count towards your final grade (i.e. your three lowest quiz scores will be dropped). The quizzes will occur during mandatory lecture days and will cover information that should have been read for the day.

**Exams**

The exams will be held, in class, on the dates specified below and the format of each will be detailed prior to the exam. There will be 4 exams this semester and each exam will only cover readings and course materials prior to the date of the exam.
- Exam 1 will test your comprehension of material from 1/12 – 1/28
- Exam 2 will test your comprehension of material from 2/2 – 3/4
- Exam 3 will test your comprehension of material from 3/16 – 4/8
- The Final Exam will test your comprehension of material from 4/13 – 4/24

**Grades and Due Dates**

The following are the weights given to the Online Discussion, Quizzes, and the Exams and the date that each is due:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date (Subject to Change)</th>
<th>Grade Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>Friday, January 30, 2015</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>Friday, March 6, 2015</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>Friday, April 10, 2015</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Discussion</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final grades will be granted on the following scale: A=100%-90%, B=89%-80%, C=79%-70%, D=69%-60%, and F=59%-50%.

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://www2.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php

Attendance Policy

Your attendance in this course is not mandatory and your grade in this course will not suffer directly from missing class. However, the examination material in this class is not only based on the required readings, but on class participation and class discussions, which means that your grade will almost certainly suffer by missing too many classes. Further, borderline grades will be determined by the quality of your overall contribution to the course.

Class notes, either of my own or transcribed by other students, will be made available to those students whom miss class due to their observance of holidays and special events by organized religions or to students who have a pre-approved absence by the Dean of Students (see also: Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities and Student Absence due to Religious Observance sections of the syllabus).

For those students who attend lecture, photography of any class notes/lectures is strictly prohibited. Any student found in violation will be asked to leave class for the day.

“Make Up” Policy

Make up exams will only be offered to those students that have a University approved absence, a doctor’s note detailing your inability to take the exam on the date provided on this syllabus, or a sudden emergency (i.e. death in your family, illness) that prohibits your attendance for the exam on the date provided on this syllabus. Anyone who has not satisfied any of these requirements and does not take the exam will be given a grade of “0.”

If any conflict (others tests, travel plans, etc.) with the exams exists, notify me by January 26, 2015. Be advised that allowances will only be given in extreme cases with my discretion as to what I define as extreme. (see also: Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities and Student Absence due to Religious Observance sections of the syllabus).

Student Absence Due to Religious Observance
Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the Professor 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 Professor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the Professor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

**Policy on Academic Integrity**

The UT Tyler community regards cheating as an extremely serious matter and deals severely with those who violate the standards of academic integrity.

Examples of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):
- Copying from another person’s test paper
- During a test, possession of materials not authorized by the person administering the test
- Discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination or the divulging of examination contents to another when the Professor has allowed the exam to be kept by the student
- Working with others in taking tests or preparing academic assignments when not authorized by the Professor
- Obtaining by any means another person’s work and submitting that work as one’s own. This includes the downloading of academic papers or the purchase of papers written by others.

If a student is suspected of academic dishonesty, the classroom instructor may ask the student to meet with him or her to discuss the incident. A student may admit to allegations of academic dishonesty, waive the right to a hearing and accept penalties imposed by the instructor. The student may also deny all allegations and ask to see the Dean of Student Affairs. An accused student may accept the decision of the Dean of Student Affairs or ask for a hearing before an impartial hearing officer appointed by the university. Witnesses may be called and evidence presented. The hearing officer will consider all evidence and make a decision. The decision of the hearing officer may be appealed to the President by either the student or the Dean of Student Affairs. For further discussion of academic dishonesty and possible penalties, please see: http://www.uttyler.edu/judicialaffairs/scholasticdishonesty.php

**Class Conduct and Threatening Behavior**
Given the nature of political discourse, some of the topics discussed and debated in class may be sensitive to some students. It is expected that students, regardless of the subject matter, maintain civility in their class comments. The University and the Professor seek to promote a safe environment where students may participate in debates, discussion, and other objectives concurrent with the educational process without compromising their health, safety, and welfare. Concurrent with this ideal, mutual courtesy and respect should govern all classroom conduct. Therefore, threats of physical harm or verbal abuse will not be tolerated in this class.

All electronic devices must be silenced during class (if possible, please turn off all electronic devices) unless you have received prior permission from the Professor. Any such device that interrupts class will be confiscated and returned to the student during the Professor’s office hours. **ANYONE USING AN ELECTRONIC DEVICE WITHOUT PRIOR PERMISSION DURING AN EXAMINATION WILL RECEIVE A “0” ON THAT EXAM.**

**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@utt Tyler.edu

**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.utt Tyler.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

The Census Date for this semester is Monday, January 26, 2015.

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.

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 Professor’s directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform the Professor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

**Policy Concerning Blackboard and Submitting Papers**

The Professor is conscious to the fact that Blackboard can be unreliable at times. If you are having trouble posting in the discussion forums, accessing posted readings, or completing the quizzes, please inform me about the issue and attach the relevant assignment. All times listed in this syllabus correspond to the **Central Time Zone**, since this corresponds with the time zone Tyler, Texas is located in.

**Technical Information**

If you experience technical problems or have a technical question about this course, you can obtain assistance by emailing itsupport@patriots.uttyler.edu or call 903.565.5555.

When you email IT Support, be sure to include a complete description of your question or problem including:
- The title and number of the course
- The page in question
- If you get an error message, a description and message number
- What you were doing at the time you got the error message

You may also visit the Help Tab in Blackboard for useful information or check out **On Demand Learning Center for Students** http://ondemand.blackboard.com/students.htm

**Plug-ins and Helper Applications**

UT Tyler online courses use Java, JavaScript, browser plug-ins, helper application and cookies. It is essential that you have these elements installed and enabled in your web browser for optimal viewing of the content and functions of your online course. Always ensure that you are using the most update version for the browser you choose to access the online learning content.

**NOTE: Mozilla Firefox** is the recommended browser for Blackboard: http://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/

- **Adobe Flash Player** allows you to view content created with Flash such as interactive web applications and animations. http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/
QuickTime allows users to play back audio and video files.

Netiquette Guide

"Netiquette" is network etiquette, the do's and don'ts of online communication. Netiquette covers both common courtesy online and informal "rules of the road" of cyberspace. Review and familiarize yourself with the guidelines provided.

Changes to the Syllabus

The information contained in this syllabus, other than the grade and absence policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the Professor.

Course Outline and Readings (subject to change)

- Dates that are in Red, Bold, and Italicized are in-class, face-to-face lectures

Unit 1

Week 1 (January 12 – January 16)
- 1/12 – Introduction to the Course
  - Overview of the course, class policies, and the syllabus
  - In the General Discussion Board, Introduce yourself by stating your name and classification, why you are taking this class, and something “cool” you did during Holiday Break.
- 1/14, 1/16, 1/21, & 1/23 – The U.S. and Texas Constitutions
  - John Locke – Second Treatise of Civil Government, Chs. 1-2 (Blackboard)
  - The Declaration of Independence (Blackboard)
  - Virginia Declaration of Rights (Blackboard)
  - Federalist #’s 10 & 39 (Blackboard)
  - The Constitution of the United States (Blackboard)
  - The Texas Declaration of Independence (Blackboard)
  - Maxwell et al. Chapters 2 & 3

Week 2 (January 19 – January 23)
- 1/19 – NO CLASS (Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday)
- 1/21 & 1/23 – continue, The U.S. and Texas Constitutions

Week 3 (January 26 – January 30)
- 1/26 – FYI: CENSUS DATE
- 1/26 – Catch-Up and Prepare for Exam 1
- 1/28 – Optional Class Day (Review for Exam 1)
- 1/30 – EXAM 1

Unit 2
Week 4 (February 2 – February 6)
• 2/2 – Review Exam 1 and Introduce Unit 2
• 2/2, 2/4, & 2/6 – Partisanship
  o Green et al. Chapter 1 (Blackboard)
• 2/6 & 2/9 – Development of Partisanship
  o Campbell et al. Chapter 7 (Blackboard)

Week 5 (February 9 – February 13)
• 2/9 – Continue, Development of Partisanship
• 2/11 & 2/13 – Partisan Perceptions of Public Policy
  o Campbell et al. Chapter 8 (Blackboard)

Week 6 (February 16 – February 20)
• 2/16 – Voting and Elections in Texas
  o Maxwell et al. Chapter 4
• 2/18 & 2/20 – Continue, Voting and Elections in Texas
• 2/20, 2/23, & 2/25 – Political Parties in Texas
  o Maxwell et al. Chapter 5

Week 7 (February 23 – February 27)
• 2/23 – Continue, Political Parties in Texas
• 2/25 – Continue, Political Parties in Texas
• 2/25 & 2/27 – Interest Groups
  o Maxwell et al. Chapter 6

Week 8 (March 2 – March 6)
• 3/2 – Catch-Up and Prepare for Exam 2
• 3/4 – Optional Class Day (Review for Exam 2)
• 3/6 – EXAM 2

Unit 3

Week 9 (March 9 – March 13) – Spring Break ☺
• NO CLASSES!!!

Week 10 (March 16 – March 20)
• 3/16 – Review Exam 2 and Introduce Unit 3
• 3/16, 3/18, 3/20, & 3/23 – The Legislature and the Legislative Process
  o Maxwell et al. Chapters 7 & 8
  o Federalist #51 (Blackboard)
  o Article 1 of the Constitution (Blackboard)

Week 11 (March 23 – March 27)
• 3/23 – FYI: Last Day to Drop/Withdraw From Classes
• 3/23 – Continue, The Legislature and Legislative Process
- 3/25, 3/27, 3/30, & 4/1 – The Governor (President) and the Bureaucracy
  - Maxwell et al. Chapters 9 & 10
  - *Federalist # 70* (Blackboard)
  - Article 2 of the Constitution (Blackboard)

Week 12 (March 30 – April 3)
- 3/30 – *Continue, The Governor (President) and the Bureaucracy*
- 4/1 – Continue, The Governor (President) and the Bureaucracy
- 4/3 & 4/6 – The Electoral College
  - Wendland, Jay, Eric Lopez, and Nikkita Edmond. “Moving Beyond Debate and Speculation: The Role of Federalism in Electoral College Reform.” (Blackboard)

Week 13 (April 6 – April 10)
- 4/6 – *Catch-Up and Prepare for Exam 3*
- 4/8 – Optional Class Day (Review for Exam 3)
- 4/10 – *EXAM 3*

Unit 4

Week 14 (April 13 – April 17)
- 4/13 – *Review Exam 3 and Introduce Unit 4*
- 4/13, 4/15, 4/17, & 4/20 – The Judiciary
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 11
  - *Federalist # 78* (Blackboard)
  - Article 3 of the Constitution (Blackboard)

Week 15 (April 20 – April 24)
- 4/20 – *Continue, The Judiciary*
- 4/22 & 4/24 – Taxing and Budgeting
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 13

Final Exam
- TBD