Instructor Information

Dr. Rachel Bzostek  
E-mail: rbzostek@uttyler.edu (best contact method)  
Phone: (903) 566-7410  
Office: BUS 231  
Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday: 8:30 – 10:00 AM or by appointment.

I check my email frequently, and you should expect a response generally within 24 hours.

Email policy: per university request, I will only communicate with students through your Patriot email accounts. The university has had several problems reaching students with vital questions or information because they do not check their Patriot email, and they have asked faculty to require that students use their Patriot email accounts. All responses to student email will be sent only to your Patriot email account (even if you send the email from some other account). After September 8th (the census date), email sent from any non-Patriot email account will not be answered. Furthermore, please be aware that email sent from non-Patriot email accounts may be blocked by the university’s spam filters.

Required Course Materials

*Governing Texas: An Introduction to Texas Politics*  
Champagne and Harpham  

This text is available from the campus bookstore in print or as a NOOKStudy ebook from Barnes & Noble.

Course Description & Objectives

This course offers an introduction to Texas state and local government. It will supply the student with a framework for analyzing the constitutional basis for Texas government, the processes of Texas government as well as the institutions and the policies of Texas government. In addition to understanding the formal structures and processes of government emphasis is also placed on the realities of the political system.

At the conclusion of this class students should:

- be able to identify top elected officials in Texas government and their primary duties
- understand the Texas budget process
- have a basic understanding of the Texas judicial system and the process of electing judges
- have a working knowledge of the legislative process, legislative leaders, the committee system and policy decisions facing state leaders and be familiar with the duties of county and city officials.
This course is meant to be an overview of Texas government with the main purpose of showing students how the process works and the responsibility of citizens to follow politics and become active participants beyond voting.

**Blackboard**

This class will be conducted through Blackboard. All of your course materials, assignments, and exams will be here. If you experience any problems logging into Blackboard, you should seek help from Campus Computing. Their office is located in BUS 101, and they can be reached by email at itsupport@patriots.uttyler.edu. Please include your full name, student ID number and date of birth in any communications you send to them.

You will not be able to successfully complete this course without reliable access to Blackboard. If you are experiencing problems with Blackboard, please contact Campus Computing as soon as possible to get the issues resolved. A Blackboard Wiki is also available that may help you resolve some problems with Blackboard.

**Course Structure**

This course will be conducted in five units and there will be one exam over the material in each unit (note: there is no comprehensive final exam in this course). All units will be available for a limited period of time, and you may work through them at your own pace so long as you complete all required materials for each unit before the exam for that unit begins. The units will close (no longer be available) at the beginning of the exam period for that unit.

Exams will be available for an 12 hour period, and once you begin you will have 1 hour to complete the exam. You will be able to take each exam two times. Should your internet connection be lost, or your computer crashes, you can retake the exam one additional time. Since you will have two attempts to complete the exam, no exams will be reset. After your exam is submitted, you will only see the total score and not specific correct or incorrect answers. If you take an exam for a second time, the questions may be different than what was included in attempt one. After the exam period ends, you will be able to see the correct and incorrect answers for your exam.

Unit availability is as follows:

**Unit 1: Chapters 1, 2 and 3**
Availability: August 25 to September 12
Exam One: September 12, 10:00 AM-10:00 PM

**Unit 2: Chapters 4 and 5**
Availability: September 13 to September 26
Exam Two: September 26, 10:00 AM-10:00 PM

**Unit 3: Chapters 6, 7, and 8**
Availability: September 27 to October 17
Exam Three: October 17, 10:00 AM-10:00 PM

**Unit 4: Chapters 9 and 10**
Availability: October 18 to November 7
Exam Four: November 7, 10:00 AM-10:00 PM

**Unit 5: Chapters 11, 12 and 13**
Availability: November 8 to December 5
Exam Five: December 5, 10:00 AM-10:00 PM
Grading

Your grade in this class will consist of three components:

• **Reading Quizzes (30%)** – There will be a syllabus quiz and one quiz for each learning unit. Your quiz scores will be averaged – no quizzes will be dropped from this average, and it is the average that will count toward your final course grade.

• **Exercises (30%)** – for each unit there will be three assigned exercises (one over each chapter) that must be completed. There will be at least two exercises available for each chapter, and you will be able to choose the exercise you will complete. Scores on all exercises will be averaged – no scores will be dropped, and it is the average that will count toward your final course grade.

• **Exams (40%)** – there will be five exams (one over each unit), and your lowest exam grade will be dropped.

• **Extra Credit** – there will be additional exercises in each unit that can be completed for extra credit. Up to 10 points can be added to your Exercises score through the completion of the extra credit exercises.

Course grades will be assigned as follows:

- A: 90 - 100%
- B: 80 – 89.9%
- C: 70 – 79.9%
- D: 60 – 69.9%
- F: Below 59.9%

Please note that grades will not be rounded, and will be assigned based on the table above.

Late & Make-Up Work

As all quizzes and assignments are available online for a set (and announced in advance) period of time, they cannot be made up if they are not completed before the unit closes.

Since exams are available for an 12 hour period, individual exams may not be made up. If a student misses one exam, that exam score (a zero) will be dropped from their course point total. A second missed exam will stand as a zero. No make-up exams will be offered.

Academic Dishonesty

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 an instructor 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 course instructor
- Obtaining by any means another person’s work and submitting that work as one’s own. This included 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 a discussion of possible penalties, please see the Guide to Student Conduct and Discipline.

University Policies

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

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.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 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 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classes Begin</td>
<td>August 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Date</td>
<td>September 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Day to Drop/Withdraw</td>
<td>October 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday</td>
<td>Nov. 24-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam One</td>
<td>September 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Two</td>
<td>September 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Three</td>
<td>October 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Four</td>
<td>November 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Five</td>
<td>December 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>