The University of Texas at Tyler

Introduction to American Government and Politics

Political Science 2305 May 2016

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and I welcome appointments. J

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Check Blackboard for announcements!

Welcome to POLS 2305! I congratulate you for choosing to study American Government! This will be an exciting course taught from a “global” perspective! I am thrilled to have you in this course! We will have a wonderful semester together as we focus our efforts on the critical analysis and the communicating a clear and coherent understanding of American government and politics as well as our social and personal rights, duties, and responsibilities!

Course Description: Through our government, we shape our society and the lives of people all over the world. In this course we will explore some basic analytical frameworks – culture, social structure, and institutions – that will enable us to better examine American politics. We will then use these frameworks to increase your interest in and understanding of important questions, issues, and viewpoints relating to the American government and political processes. In this course, I will invite you to examine American politics from a global perspective. We will address questions about the structure and function of government in the United States and around the world. We will examine the cultural and ideological perspectives of Americans and others around the world. Placing the United States in a comparative perspective, we will examine central features of American government, including constitutionalism, institutions, elections, political parties, and bureaucracy.
We will use theoretical arguments, empirical data, and a wide range of case studies to address several important questions:

What is politics?  
How does political culture shape political outcomes?  
Do people hold different perspectives on the scope and purpose of government around the world?  
What are “American values”?  
What are the basic values of American political culture and how are our values and beliefs created?  
What are the connections between your life in East Texas, American Government and the rest of the world?  
What lies behind policy? Justice? Efficiency?  
How do we as individuals relate to our government?  
How are policy decisions made?  
As this course will be taught from the global perspective we will use examples from a wide range of countries including Japan, Argentina, Brazil, Germany, Iraq, Italy, Mexico, and, of course, the United States. The lessons drawn from these countries will prepare you to analyze the US government from a global perspective. At the end of the course, you should have substantial knowledge of the American government, current global concerns, understand where to go to get information, and readily distinguish fact and opinion in the presentation of politics.

Learning Outcomes (What I hope you will learn and accomplish in this course):

Students will demonstrate:

- an orientation to national, state, and local government and to stimulate interest in participation in the public sector;
- understanding of the linkage between political socialization, individual values, and government and policy;
- an understanding of various political systems, ideologies, and policy processes; and
- a global perspective (with respect to both cross-cultural and comparative United States studies) of political phenomena.

- familiarity with terminology used to study political science and American government
- a basic knowledge of the historical evolution of American governmental structures
- an understanding of the constitutional, institutional, political and legal processes and structures of the United States
- a comprehension of the interrelationships of American governmental institutions
- an awareness of basic values of American political culture and that values and beliefs are culturally-created
- an understanding of the connection between major global issues and the East Texas region.
an understanding of current world events (political, economic, social, geographic and technological).
Students will demonstrate the ability to explain the practices (beliefs, values, perspectives, practices) of other cultures and states (this will be reflected in the student’s MUN position paper).

Following the THECB 2014 Core Requirements this course also places special emphasis and assessment on these four learning outcomes:

Critical Thinking Skills – this learning outcome includes creative thinking, innovation, inquiry and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
Communication Skills – this learning outcome includes effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
Social Responsibility – this learning outcome includes intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global communities.
Personal Responsibility – this learning outcome includes the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

Each of these four outcomes will be assessed by in-class projects and participation, written assignments, and the more traditional assessment of learning – examinations. This course will provide students with daily opportunities to learn and use these four learning outcomes.

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

Examination # 1 30%
Examination # 2 30%
Examination # 3 30%
MindTap Assignments 10%

Exams: There are three examinations. The exams will be drawn from the material covered in the most recent section of the course.

Make-up examinations: Please see me if you miss an examination. I will work with you to get it made up.

In this course we will be using MindTap (via Blackboard) online.
What is MindTap? MindTap empowers you to produce your best work – consistently. MindTap is designed to help you master the material. Interactive videos, animations, and activities create a learning path designed by your instructor to guide you through the course and focus on what's important. Get started today!

How do you register for MindTap? See MindTap In Blackboark instructions on the main menu. Follow the prompts to register your MindTap course.

Payment: After registering for your course, you will need to pay for access using one of the options below: Online: You can pay online using a credit or debit card, or PayPal.

Bookstore: You may be able to purchase access to MindTap at your bookstore. Check with the bookstore to find out what they offer for your course.

System Check: To check whether your computer meets the requirements for using MindTap, go to http://ng.cengage.com/static/browsercheck/index.html Please Note: the System Check is also accessible in the drop down box next to your name located in the upper right corner of your MindTap page.

Grade Appeals: If you wish to dispute a grade on a particular assignment for any reason other than an obvious arithmetic error on my part, you will need to type a clear explanation of your position and turn it in, along with the original graded assignment, at least one week after the assignment is returned to you. I will then consider your appeal and make a determination.

Required Reading: Gateways to Democracy: An Introduction to American Government, Essentials, 1st Edition, John G. Geer et al. Readings total approximately 30 pages per week and should take you about two hours, depending on how fast you read. Mark up your book. Take notes as you read. Enjoy reading/learning!

BlackBoard: This class will heavily utilize Blackboard. This is where all course materials, your reading quizzes, and your grades will be posted. You will need to log in to Blackboard and make sure that this course is listed as one of your courses. If this course does not appear, let me know as soon as possible. To save class time, I will often use Blackboard for administrative reminders and background information, so please check your email regularly. In addition, you are invited to post substantive comments and questions about readings, lectures, or section discussions. In this way, Blackboard can help us to have the kind of exchanges and conversations that are otherwise difficult or impossible in a large class.
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.utterly.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.utterly.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 federal law, a student requesting accommodation must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services counselor. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services office in UC 3150, or call (903) 566-7079.
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 reenter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.