POLS 2306 – Introductory Texas Politics
( Hybrid/PATSS)
MWF 9:05am – 10:00am
Business Building, Room 212
University of Texas at Tyler
Spring 2016

Professor Eric A. Lopez
Office: BUS 227
Office Phone #: (903) 566-7428
Office Hours: MWF, 11:15pm - 2:00pm & by Appointment
Email: elopez@uttyler.edu
• In your email, please note which class you are in
• Expect a response within 24 hours
• 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.
• Appraise 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 rely primarily on Blackboard. To be successful in the course, you need to have online access since Blackboard will be used to views class lectures, participate in online discussion, 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 Course Outline and Readings section) in Business Building (BUS), Room 212.

A couple important points about the structure of this class:
• Both the syllabus and content on Blackboard are organized into 3 units. Each unit will have required readings, online lectures, and online discussion.
• Traditional in-class lectures will not be held; instead you will be required to view online lectures before class on Mondays.
• Monday classes will be devoted to discussing the online lectures and focusing on important content from both the readings and lectures.
• The lecture schedule is detailed in the Course Outline and Readings section (see below)

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

Online Discussion

Throughout each Unit (with the exception being Week 1, 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 3, in which discussion will close Friday, April 29th 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 (and lectures that should have been viewed) for the day. Absolutely no make-ups will be allowed on these quizzes.

**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 3 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 1/20 – 2/12
- Exam 2 will test your comprehension of material from 2/15 – 3/25
- The Final Exam will test your comprehension of material from 3/28 – 5/6

**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, February 12, 2016</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>Friday, March 25, 2016</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Friday, May 6, 2016</td>
<td>30%</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 February 1, 2016. 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@uttyler.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.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

**The Census Date for this semester is Monday, February 1, 2016.**

**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.utttyler.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](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:


Adobe Flash Player allows you to view content created with Flash such as interactive web applications and animations. http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/


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. http://www.learnthenet.com/learn-about/netiquette/index.php

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.
- This outline also includes the Lecture Schedule discussed above.

Unit 1

Week 1 (January 20 – January 22)

- 1/20 – 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.
- 1/22, 1/25, 1/27, 1/29, & 2/1 – The U.S. Constitution
  - The Declaration of Independence (Blackboard)
  - Barnett, Randy. “What the Declaration of Independence Really Claimed.” The Volohk Conspiracy (Blackboard)
  - Virginia Declaration of Rights (Blackboard)
  - Federalist #’s 10, 39, & 51 (Blackboard)
  - Articles of Confederation (Blackboard)
  - The Constitution of the United States (Blackboard)
  - Geer et al. Chapters 2 & 3 (Blackboard)
Week 2 (January 25 – January 29)
- 1/25 – For class, be sure to have viewed the following lectures:
  - “Revolutionary Thought”
  - “Federalist 10”
  - First half of “The Constitution”
- 1/25, 1/27, & 1/29 – continue, The U.S. Constitution

Week 3 (February 1 – February 5)
- 2/1 – For class, be sure to have viewed the following lectures:
  - “The Constitution”
  - First half of “The Texas Constitution”
- 2/1 – FYI: CENSUS DATE
- 2/1 – continue, The U.S. Constitution
- 2/1, 2/3, & 2/5 – The Texas Constitution
  - The Texas Declaration of Independence (Blackboard)
  - Maxwell et al. Chapters 2 & 3

Week 4 (February 8 – February 12)
- 2/8 – For class, be sure to have viewed the following lecture:
  - “The Texas Constitution”
- 2/8 – Catch-up and Prepare for Exam 1
- 2/10 – Review for Exam 1
- 2/12 – Exam 1

Unit 2

Week 5 (February 15 – February 19)
- 2/15 – Review Exam 1 and Introduce Unit 2 material
- 2/15 & 2/17 – Partisanship and Its Development
  - Green et al. Chapter 1 (Blackboard)
  - Campbell et al. Chapter 7 (Blackboard)
- 2/19, 2/22, & 2/24 – Voting and Elections
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 4

Week 6 (February 22 – February 26)
- 2/22 – For class, be sure to have viewed the following lectures:
  - “Partisanship and Its Development”
  - First half of “Voting and Elections”
- 2/22 & 2/24 – continue, Voting and Elections
- 2/26, 2/29, & 3/2 – Political Parties
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 5

Week 7 (February 29 – March 4)
- 2/29 – For class, be sure to have viewed the following lectures:
  - “Voting and Elections”
First half of “Political Parties”

- 2/29 & 3/2 – continue, Political Parties
- 3/4 & 3/15 – Interest Groups
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 6

Week 8 (March 7 – March 11)
- NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

Week 9 (March 14 – March 18)
- 3/14 – For class, be sure to have viewed the following lectures:
  - “Political Parties”
  - First half of “Interest Groups”
- 3/14 – continue, Interest Groups
- 3/16, & 3/18 – Public Policy in Texas
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 12

Week 10 (March 21 – March 25)
- 3/21 – For class, be sure to have viewed the following lectures:
  - “Interest Groups”
  - “Public Policy in Texas”
- 3/21 – FYI: Last Day to Drop/Withdraw From Classes
- 3/21 – Catch-up and Prepare for Exam 2
- 3/23 – Review for Exam 2
- 3/25 – Exam 2

Unit 3

Week 11 (March 28 – April 1)
- 3/28 – Review Exam 2 and Introduce Unit 3 material
- 3/28, 3/30, 4/1, 4/4, 4/6, & 4/8 – The Legislature and Legislative Process
  - Maxwell et al. Chapter 7
  - Federalist #51 (Blackboard)
  - Article 1 of the Constitution (Blackboard)

Week 12 (April 4 – April 8)
- 4/4 – For class, be sure to have viewed the following lectures:
  - “The Legislature”
  - First half of “The Legislative Process”
- 4/4, 4/6, & 4/8 - continue, The Legislature and Legislative Process

Week 13 (April 11 – April 15)
- 4/11 – For class, be sure to have viewed the following lectures:
  - “The Legislative Process”
  - First half of “The Texas Executive(s)”
- 4/11, 4/13, 4/15, 4/18, & 4/20 – The Texas Executive Branch
Week 14 (April 18 – April 22)
• 4/18 – For class, be sure to have viewed the following lectures:
  o “The Texas Executive(s)
  o “The Electoral College”
• 4/18 & 4/20 – continue, The Texas Executive Branch
  o Maxwell et al. Chapters 9 and 10
  o Federalist #78 (Blackboard)
  o Article 3 of the Constitution (Blackboard)

Week 15 (April 25 – April 29)
• 4/25 – For class, be sure to have viewed the following lectures:
  o “Texas Judicial System”
  o “Judicial Selection and Retention”

Final Exam Week (May 3 –May 7)
• Final Exam: Friday, May 6 from 8:00am – 10:00am