POLS 2305-002: U.S. Government and Politics  
Time: 3:30-4:15 MWF CI-113  
Dr. Joshua Ozymy  
Phone: 361-825-2215  
Spring 2011  
Office Hours: MWF 10:50-12:00/W 1-2:30  
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Class Overview:  
This is a lower-division course that introduces students to the fundamentals of American Government. The class will tend to focus more on political behavior, but will also provide a complementary overview of U.S. political history.

Learning Objectives:  
On completion of this course students will be able to:  
1. Recall basic facts related to the foundations of US national government.  
2. Describe key political concepts related to US institutions such as Congress, the Presidency, and the Judiciary.  
3. Demonstrate their understanding of key concepts relating to the US political behavior such as interest groups, political parties and the media.

Method of evaluating outcomes:  
These goals will be accomplished through formal testing via essay exams. Furthermore, formal testing will be supported through a series of less-formal means, such as short-paper assignments and attendance points.

Format:  
The class will be structured around instructor led lectures. The book will reinforce my lectures. Class Participation….please!

Grading:  
Exam 1: 10%  
Exam 2: 25%  
Exam 3: 20%  
Exam 4: 20%  
Short-Papers: 20% (5% per paper*4)  
Attendance: 5%

Exams: (4) exams. (Multiple choice format will be used and expect around 30-50 questions). Exams will not be comprehensive. Scantrons will be provided, but pencils will not. Please bring one.

Posting Grades: Grades will be posted via WebCt for your convenience as soon as possible following the exam (app. 3 days)

Short-Papers: You will be required to turn in at least a (1-3) page, typed summary on the topic. Each paper will represent 5% of your grade. I will not accept late or emailed papers

Attendance: I will not check attendance everyday. However, I will randomly check attendance during the semester to account for the 5% of your grade.

Missed Exams: Missing an exam will not preclude you from taking it. If you happen to be absent on exam day (for any reason), you will have an opportunity to re-take it on April 30. The only caveat to this policy is for those possessing a university approved excuse in writing (i.e. sports, academic conference, etc). If you fall into the latter category we will schedule the test soon after the original test date.
Communicating with your professor: If you have any questions about the exam, your test grades, progress in the class, etc, please come by my office, give me a call, email, or contact one of my graders

Letters of Recommendation: Many students are interested in going on to graduate school and require letters of recommendation from their professors. Many reach this point and are at a loss to find someone to write such a letter, perhaps because they have never made a personal connection with a professor in the course of their studies or they are afraid to ask. I will be more than happy to write a letter of recommendation for students, but bear in mind that the quality of the letter is greatly impacted by the extent of our relationship which is going to be rather limited in this large section. I will write a maximum of (3) letters per semester.

Interested in Graduate School? I cannot speak for every discipline, but would love to chat with you about furthering your education beyond the undergraduate level, costs, trade-offs, pros and cons, etc. Just come by my office and ask.

Political Science Major? Interested in my discipline? Wondering if there are any decent job prospects for the Polisci major? Again, come by my office and we can weigh the pros and cons.

Extra Credit: None. Please do not ask.

Books:

Class Schedule:
*Test dates are set, but may change during the semester due to unforeseen circumstances. If this occurs students will be notified well in advance.

Week 1: Introduction
Wednesday 13: An introduction to the class. I will explain my expectations for the class, hand out your syllabus, etc.
Read Chapter 2

Week 2: Origins of the Current Economic Crisis/Federalism
January: 15, 20, 22, 25
**No January 18th (MLK Holiday)
Read Chapter 3

Week 3: National Security after 911
January: 27, 29

Weeks 4: Political Parties
February: 1, 3, 5, 8
*Short-paper #1 due on February 3
Read chapter 11

Week 5: Interest Groups and Lobbying
February: 10, 12, 15
**End of material for exam 1**
Review for exam February 17
Exam 1: Friday, February 19

Week 6: Congress
February: 22, 24, 26
Read Chapter 6

**Week 7: Regulatory Policy-Interest Groups**
March: 1, 3, 5 
*Short-paper #2 due on March 4

**Week 8-9: The Judiciary**
March: 8, 10, 12
Read Chapter 9

**Week 10:**
**Spring Break March 15-19**

**End of material for exam 2**

**Week 11:** Review for exam March 22

Exam 2: Wednesday, March 24

**Week 12: Energy Policy and Alternative Energy**
March 26, 29, 31

**Week 13: Political Participation and Elections**
April 2, 5, 7
Read Chapter 12

*Short-paper #3 due on April 7

**End of material for exam 3**

Exam 3: Friday, April 9

**Week 14: American Foreign Policy**
April 12, 14, 16
Read Chapter 14

**Week 15: Civil Liberties**
April 19, 21, 23
Read Chapter 4

**Week 16: Civil Rights**
April 26, 28
Read Chapter 5

**Week 17:**
Makeup exam day April 30 *no class if you were present for all of the previous exams*
Federal Government Short-Paper Assignment Guidelines

You will be required to turn in a series of short papers assignments. These papers are due on the day listed in your syllabus. I will not accept late papers, hand-written papers, nor will I allow you to email them. This is a short assignment that is meant to demonstrate that you have researched and the issue. It should be about a page or two, typed. You do not need to cite any sources unless you use direct quotes. Feel free to use (but not copy) Wikipedia. Here is what I expect you to include in each paper:

Assignment #1: The Real ID ACT
What is the Real ID Act? What are the major goals of the act? What are the problems with it? What can we learn about U.S. federalism from the Real ID Act? Do you think it is a good or a bad public policy and why?

Assignment #2: Plea Bargaining
Why is plea bargaining used so much in our judicial system? Do you think it is a fair system? How could we change it if we should go about such a process?

Assignment #3: American Foreign Policy
Many people feel that America’s role as the dominant hegemonic power in the world is coming to an end. Do you agree that America’s power is waning, and if so why? If not, why? Should America continue to project its power across the globe or should we engage in a more limited foreign policy?

Assignment #4: Energy Policy
The United States is currently experiencing a host of economic and political problems because of its dependence on fossil fuels (especially imported oil). Please describe the environmental and economic drawbacks of our energy dependency. Next, discuss some alternative fixes to help out policymakers

Student Responsibilities:
TURN OFF CELL PHONES!!!
Pay attention during class. Private conversations, sleeping, and reading non-class related material will not be tolerated.
Learn something! Participate in class discussions.

Students with Disabilities/Religious Needs:
If you are a student with a disability or have special needs, please let me know during the first week of class. In addition, students observing religious holidays that conflict with class exams/presentations must let me know during the first week of class.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Driftwood 101.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Academic Honesty:
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) If unsure of what honesty entails or if for more information regarding the penalties for academic dishonesty, please refer to the University Catalog.

Academic Advising
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

Grade Appeal Process
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, the student may take the steps below.

1. Presentation of grievance to instructor. (This step must be taken within fourteen calendar days after the beginning of the next term.)

2. Appeal to department chair or area coordinator.

3. Written appeal to the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.

4. Preliminary review and advising by an ombudsman appointed by the Provost.

5. Submission of file by department chair to the chair of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.

6. Review of file by committee chair and submission of case to committee.

7. Proceedings of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee. (Committee holds hearing, reviews data, presents findings to all parties, and makes recommendation to Provost.)

8. Decision by Provost.

9. Final appeal in writing to the Provost if student or instructor thinks appropriate procedures have not been followed.

For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.htm.

For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.