**Please read the introduction letter to the class before reviewing the syllabus. The syllabus provides a calendar of readings and due dates, but the same information is found in each week’s learning module in much greater detail.**

*A WORKSHOP TO HELP STUDENTS ENGAGE THE ONLINE PLATFORM USED IN THIS CLASS WILL BE HELD WEDNESDAY, MAY 12 AT 2:00 IN BAY HALL ROOM 204. AN INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR ACCESSING THE COURSE HAS ALSO BEEN EMAILED TO ALL STUDENTS IN ADVANCE VIA THEIR ISLANDER ACCOUNTS.*

**POL$S$ 2305-001: U.S. Government and Politics**
**Dr. Joshua Ozmy**
**Summer I 2012**
**Office BH 304**
**Class Schedule June 1-July 2, 2012**

**Time:** Virtual
**Office Phone:** 361-825-2215
**Virtual Office Hours:** MW 11-12:00
**Email:** Joshua.ozmy@tamucc.edu (or through the “mail” icon in Blackboard)

**Contact information:** It is best to contact your instructor either via email or in the discussion forums in Blackboard. If you call the above office phone number it will route your call to my voicemail, which I will check regularly and then return your call as soon as possible.

**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. We will be interacting with one another via the Blackboard online format.

**Content areas covered:**
American political institutions: The Executive, Judicial, and Legislative Branches.
American political structure: The U.S. Constitution and Federalism
Political actors and behavior: Elections, Political Participation, Interest Groups, Political Parties
Public policies: Foreign Policy, Energy, Civil Rights and Liberties, Plea Bargaining
Legislative focus: Patriot and Real ID Acts

**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.

**Grading:**
You will have an exam each week beginning in week 2 and a final. All will be timed exams to be taken by the scheduled days and will be multiple-choice format. You will have access to each exam beginning the Monday of the week.

1. Exam 1: 20% covering weeks 1 and 2
2. Exam 2: 20% covering week 3 and 4
3. Final Exam: 15% covering week 5. The final exam is non-comprehensive; it only covers the final week of material.
4. Writing assignment 1: 10% - a writing assignment that is scheduled in module 2/week 2

5. Writing assignment 2: 10% - a writing assignment that is scheduled in module 4/week 4

6. Discussion board participation: (5% each week *5 weeks=25%) - each week you are required to post a thoughtful response in the discussion boards and respond to your peers.

You must post in each forum by Friday of that week or face a 10 point penalty each day for lateness.

Discussion responses are graded on the following criteria: 90% content/10% grammar/spelling

Attendance: I will not check attendance everyday. You are required to post in the discussion boards which will count as attendance in the course

Books:
*You can purchase the most recent edition online, in the bookstore, or buy the previous edition online at a significantly reduced cost.

Instructor lecture notes and web-resources that are placed within the learning modules in the course

Class Schedule:

Below you will find a class calendar, as well as the due dates for your exams, discussion posts, and writing assignments. Each week you are responsible for reading the books chapters, my lecture notes (in Power Point format or Words), and checking the web links in those notes and any additional web content. I have posted the suggested readings on a daily basis that should keep you on track with the course. Good luck!

Week 1 (June 1-4): Federalism, the Real ID, and Patriot Acts
1: Introduce and familiarize yourself with the class and note the due dates and assignments

2: Federalism in the U.S. Constitution
Read Chapter 3 in your book

3: Federalism in practice:
Review lecture slides on Federalism

4: The Real ID and the Patriot Acts:
Study lecture slides on the Real ID and Patriot Acts
*A PBS Frontline documentary that might help you understand some of the consequences of the Patriot Act is called “Spying on the Home front”. A link to the movie is found in this sections lecture notes, but the link can be found below:

*Make sure that you post in the 1st forum and respond to your classmates by Friday, July 4
Week 2 (June 7-11): Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Campaign Finance
7: History of American political parties
Review lectures slides on political parties

8: Functions of political parties and interest groups
Read chapter 11 in your book and lecture slides on interest groups and lobbyists

9: Campaign finance
Read slides on Campaign finance

10: Writing assignment #1: Follow the instructions in the week 2 learning module, which will direct you to web links for a set of ideology quizzes. The instructions will call for you to take the quizzes and reflect on the results and your personal ideology, while deciding which political parties best represent your viewpoints and beliefs

Writing Assignment: What is my political compass?
Follow the web links below and take both of the ideology quizzes. Write an essay describing the results of your quizzes. In your response please state if you agree or disagree with the results of the surveys and if there were inconsistencies in the results why you think this result occurred. Make sure you weave in some of your responses to the survey questions in your answer. Think carefully when reflecting on this one, as you have a (3) page minimum. Please cut and paste the results from the political compass test in your document (i.e. the grid that marks your political ideology that pops up after the quiz).
http://www.politicalcompass.org/test
http://typology.people-press.org/

11: Exam 1: A multiple choice exam to be taken after you finish reading the course content for weeks 1 and 2. You must begin and finish the exam (which is timed) by 5:00 today (Friday, June 11).

*Writing assignment #1 is due by 5:00 on Sunday, June 13. You will receive a 10 point penalty per day for lateness. Graded assignments will be returned by the 18th.

*Make sure you post in the 2nd discussion forum and respond to your classmates by Friday, July 11

Week 3 (June 14-18): The Judicial and Legislative Branches
14: The Judiciary
Read Chapter 9 in your book

15: The Plea Bargaining Process
Read notes on Plea bargaining and be sure to watch the PBS Frontline episode “The Plea”. A link to the documentary can be found in the lecture slides for this section, but a link can also be found below:
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/plea/

16: Congress
Read Chapter 6 in your book

17: Congress continued
Review lectures slides on Congress
*Make sure to post in the 3rd discussion forum and respond to your classmates by Friday, June 18

Week 4 (June 21-25): Executive Branch, Political Participation, and Elections
21: The Executive Branch
Review chapter in your book

Writing assignment #2: Follow the instructions for the writing assignment in learning module 4/week 4.

The Best of the Modern Presidents
In the module you will be required to watch at least (2) movies online concerning the modern Presidents and to write a paper contrasting their major achievements/weaknesses in office. Please set aside time to do this as the documentaries themselves can be 3 hours long a piece. In your paper (minimum of (4) pages) you must discuss the major domestic and foreign policy achievements of each President, discuss their major weaknesses, and discuss which person you feel was a more successful President.
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/

*Writing assignment #2 is due by 5:00 on Sunday, June 27. You will receive a 10 point penalty per day for lateness. Graded assignments will be returned by the 18th.

22: Review movies and continue writing assignment #2
23: Read lecture notes on political participation, voting, and elections
24: Continue to read lecture notes on political participation, voting, and elections
Read chapter 12 in your book
25: Exam 2 Multiple choice exam over weeks 3&4. The exam must be taken and completed by 5:00 on Friday, June 25

*Make sure to post in the 4th discussion forum and respond to your classmates by Friday, June 25

Week 5 (June 28-July 2): American Foreign Policy, Civil liberties, and Civil Rights
28: American Foreign Policy
Read chapter 14 in your book and review lecture slides on foreign policy

29: Civil Liberties
Read chapter 4 in your book and review lecture slides on civil liberties

30: Civil Rights
Read chapter 5 in your book and review lecture slides on civil rights

1: Take a break! Watch “A Class Apart” online (1 hour):
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/class/

2: Final exam: Multiple choice exam over week 5. The exam must be taken and completed by 5:00 on Friday, July 2.

*Make sure to post in the final discussion forum and respond to your classmates by Friday, July 2
You are done! Congratulations on finishing the course.

**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.