COURSE SYLLABUS
POLS 2306
TEXAS STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Fall 2011
T-TH 12:30 – 1:45 pm
BH 128

Dr. Daniel J. Jorgensen
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Office Phone: 825-3269
E-mail: dan.jorgensen@mail.tamucc.edu
Web: Blackboard
Office Hours: T- R 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; MT 5:00 – 7:00 p.m., by appointment as necessary.

Students now arrive at the University ignorant and cynical about our political heritage, lacking the wherewithal to be either inspired by it or seriously critical of it.


COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers an examination of the politics, government, and administration of American states, counties, cities, and special districts, with special emphasis on Texas. Topics include the role of state and local governments in the federal system and an examination how Texas State and local governments are influenced by historical context, local power structures, group pluralism, special interests and economics. “State and Local Government” is designed to give you a broad review of how government works at the local level in Texas. The Texas Constitution and government will be emphasized. This course meets the Texas State statutory requirement for Texas State government.

Attendance and punctuality are expected in all classes. If an absence is essential, please indicate the reason for the absence. Each class will be devoted to discussion and analysis of the specific topics indicated for that class on the syllabus. It is important that each student come to each class well prepared to participate in discussions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Recall basic facts related to the foundations of Texas State government.

2. Describe key political concepts related to U.S. institutions such as the legislature, the governor, and the judiciary.

3. Demonstrate understanding of key concepts relating to the political behavior in the state of Texas such as voting, elections, and political parties.
REQUIRED TEXTS:


EVALUATION:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three exams @ 15 points each</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web-based Discussion (4@5 pts)</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written projects (2@10)</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total points</td>
<td>100</td>
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Exams – These exams will be multiple choice over the chapters covered in each section. Final exam -- Will be similar to the others in that it will be multiple choice and not comprehensive. Make-Up Exams – All make-up exams will be given on make-up exam day without exception unless the absence is approved by the University.

Web Based Discussion – There will be several opportunities to participate in discussions on the BlackBoard page. You must participate in four of those discussions. The rubric for grading the discussion questions is on BlackBoard.

There will be two writing assignments which will be integrative in nature that will be turned in via BlackBoard. The rubric for grading is on BlackBoard.

Grading Criteria:

- A = 90 – 100
- B = 80 – 89
- C = 70 – 79
- D= 60 – 69
- F = below 60

Extra Credit Work:
Extra credit work will not be assigned nor allowed under any circumstances.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

By necessity, this course will be largely lecture driven. However, there will be ample opportunity for class discussion. Student opinion is encouraged as long as it is informed by reading or experience and is presented in a courteous manner to all in the room. Keep in mind that there will not always be consensus on a point but we will be considerate and respectful of others. One of the greatest offenses to this rule is talking while the lecture is proceeding or talking while other students are talking. Respect for classroom decorum also means that all
ringers on cell phone, beepers, etc. should be turned off. No cell phone communication is allowed in the classroom. Students are expected to be to class on time and stay for the entire period. Excessive interruption by students arriving late and leaving early takes away from the learning experience and will not be tolerated. Finally, please do not bring things to eat into the classroom, drinks are ok only if you take your trash with you when class is over.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 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 contact the Disability Services Office at (361) 825-5816 or visit the office in Driftwood 101.

ACADEMIC ADVISING OFFICE

If you are majoring, or planning to major, in a field taught in the College of Liberal Arts, and if you have not yet obtained a signed degree plan, you should see your Academic Advisor immediately. Degree plans are important and useful to successful progress toward graduation.

COURSE OUTLINE (tentative)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>COURSE INTRODUCTION --</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 25</td>
<td>Cover the syllabus/class policies/expectations</td>
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PART I

THE CULTURE, PEOPLE, HISTORY, of TEXAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>August 30</th>
<th>Reading: Maxwell &amp; Crain, Chapter 1</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A political history of Texas beginning with migration to Texas and how history may define our future</td>
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<tr>
<th>September 1</th>
<th>Reading: Maxwell &amp; Crain, Chapter 2</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The roles of federalism, history and culture in Texas and their effects on drafts of the Texas Constitution</td>
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<tr>
<th>September 6</th>
<th>Introduction of the movie: Lonestar and writing assignment 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 8</td>
<td>Complete the Movie, Discussion and review for Exam 1</td>
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<tr>
<th>September 13</th>
<th>Exam 1</th>
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PART II INSTITUTIONS OF TEXAS GOVERNMENT

September 15 Reading: Maxwell & Crain, Chapters 6 & 7
The organization, structure and legislative process of the Texas Legislature

September 20 More on the Legislative Process – Todd Hunter – District 32 Representative

September 22 Reading: Maxwell and Crane, Chapter 8
The Office of the Texas Governor; Constitutional, Legislative and Political perspectives.

September 27 Reading: Maxwell & Crain, Chapter 9
The role of the administration in Texas, its bureaucracy and public policy machine.

September 29 Reading: Maxwell & Crain, Chapter 10
The Texas Judiciary, its structure and politics

October 4 Maxwell & Crain, Chapter 11
Types of law, law enforcement and what due process means in Texas

October 6 Crime, courts and punishment in Texas.

October 11 Review for Exam 2

October 13 Exam 2

PART III POLITICAL BEHAVIOR IN TEXAS

October 18 Reading: Maxwell and Crain, Chapter 3
Political participation, campaigns, voting and elections in Texas.

October 20 Reading: Maxwell and Crain, Chapter 4
Political Parties in Texas – Democrats, Republicans, Tea Party?

October 25 MOVIE: R.A.C.E. – writing assignment 2

October 27 Reading: Maxwell & Crain, Chapter 5
The role of special interests in Texas

November 1 Review for Exam 3

November 3 Exam 3.
PART IV  FISCAL OUTCOMES IN TEXAS

November 8  Reading: Maxwell & Crain, Chapter 12
         The budget process

November 10  Taxation in Texas

November 15  Reading: Maxwell and Crain, Chapter 13
         Spending and Services: Education in Texas

November 17  Spending: Health and Human Services & Transportation
         in Texas

November 22  Movie

November 24  Thanksgiving!!!!!!

November 29  Reading: Maxwell and Crain, Chapter 14
         Local governments in Texas: Municipalities and Counties

December 1  Special Districts and COGS

December 6  Review for Final exam

December 15  Final Exam

IMPORTANT NOTES

1. Syllabus Disclaimer and Changes. The instructor reserves the right to make changes in the
   syllabus. Such changes will be announced in class.

2. Attendance Policy. Please understand that your contribution has a bearing on the value of the
   course, both to yourself and to your colleagues; if you believe that your contribution is not
   important, and then please take another course. Each student is expected to come to class having
   read the material for the session and able to discuss the topic. The lack of class attendance will
   affect student learning and, hence, performance.

3. Late Hand-in. Acceptance of late hand-ins or postings is at the discretion of the instructor.
   Points will be deducted for late hand-ins or postings. Some postings may require replies. Replies
   must be substantive, providing more than merely a statement of liking or not liking something.
   They should include suggestions for improvement. Replies that are too brief may not receive all
   points. Points for replies are part of points associated with postings, above.

4. Distance Learning. Electronic, on-line learning may be substituted for in-class lectures.
   Students are responsible for accessing modules and completing assignments according to
announced time tables. As noted earlier, acceptance of late hand-ins or postings is at the discretion of the instructor, and points will be deducted for late hand-ins.

5. **Contacting the Instructor.** The preferred way of contacting the instructor is through e-mail or during office hours. I check my e-mail almost daily (except when on travel), and will respond. If you send an e-mail, I may ask you for a phone number to contact you for follow-up, if necessary.

6. **Student Conduct.** Students should conduct themselves in ways that are consistent with promoting an efficient learning environment for themselves and everyone else. Students should be conscientious, helpful, properly motivated to learn, honest, and respectful of others and their opinions at all times. Such conduct is consistent with generally regarded norms of professionalism, including those found in graduate, professional degree programs. Points may be deducted for inappropriate conduct, and students referred to the University for further investigation of the matter.

   Students should also familiarize themselves with the university Code of Student Conduct. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructors, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act. Other acts of misconduct are stated in the Code of Student Conduct. Please note that plagiarism is a serious academic offense that may result in a student being expelled from an academic program or institution.

7. **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. 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.html.

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