Class Overview: This course will introduce students to the fundamentals of state and local government in the United States. We will cover the relationship between the federal government and states and also inter-state relationships. The class will concern itself with the primary political institutions and public policies of Texas, while attempting to situate these in a national context.

Grading:
Exams: There will be (3) midterms and one final exam in multiple-choice format.
Exam 1: 20%
Exam 2: 25%
Exam 3: 20%
Final: 15%
Writing assignments 10% *2=20%

*The final exam will not be comprehensive. Scantrons will be provided, but pencils will not. Please bring one.

Communication:
My preferred form of communication is via email or office visits during scheduled office hours. I check email TR.

Learning Outcomes:
1. Recall basic facts related to the foundations of the Texas state government.

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

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

Method of evaluating outcomes:
These goals will be accomplished through formal testing via multiple-choice exams, an integrated assignment in the learning community triad, and supportive class discussion/involvement in the associated seminar.

Format:
The class will be structured around instructor led lectures. The book will reinforce my lectures and students should read the corresponding chapters. Students should participate in class.

Attendance/PowerPoint: I will not check attendance everyday. I may issue random extra credit based on attendance at my discretion. Much of the material from lecture is not covered in the
book so failure to attend will have deleterious consequences for your grade. Abridged lecture slides will be posted online prior to each exam.

**Note on Exam 1:** Your first exam will be no more difficult than those that follow. Students (especially freshman) tend to do much worse on the first exam than the latter exams. Bear this in mind ahead of time in case this applies to you after the first exam. I will post test reviews on Blackboard a week prior to each exam.

**Makeup Exams:** All makeup exams will be given on makeup exam day without exception, unless the absence is approved by the university.

**Books:**
Maxwell/Crain text on Texas Politics available in the campus bookstore

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**Class Schedule:**

**Week 1:** Introduction
August 25: Cover the syllabus/class policies/expectations/explain the concept of a learning community/integrative learning

**Week 2:** Political Ideology and Texas Political Culture
30: Foundations of Political Ideology
1: Foundations of Texas Political Culture and the Texas Constitution
*Read chapters on ideology and the Texas Constitution in your textbook

**Week 3:** Federalism
6: How federalism is structured in the U.S. Constitution
8: Federalism between states/policymaking in modern America
*Read chapter on federalism in your textbook

**Week 4:** Prisons and Criminal Justice Policy in Texas
13: Elections in Texas
15: Watch "Last Man Standing" (review sheet for exam 1 distributed)
*Read chapter in your textbook on elections

**Week 5:** Test 1 is upon us…..
20: Exam 1 review (PowerPoint plus Q&A session)
22: Exam 1
Week 6: Interest Groups and Lobbying
27: Lobbyists and Influence in Texas Politics
29: Vote for me
*Read chapter on interest groups in your textbook

Week 7: Elections and Texas Political Campaigns
4: Elections in Texas
6: "Watch Last Man Standing"
*Read chapter on elections in your textbook

Week 8: Political Parties
11: Functions of Political Parties (review sheet for exam 2 distributed)
13: History of Political Parties in Texas
*Read chapter on political parties in your textbook

Week 9: Exam 2
18: Exam review (PowerPoint plus Q&A session)
20: Exam II

Week 10: The Judiciary
25: The judicial system in Texas
27: The Plea bargaining process in Texas
*Reads chapter on the Judiciary

Week 11: Legislative Branch
1: The Texas legislature in comparative perspective
3: The legislative process + lobbyists and lobbying
*Read chapter on the legislative branch

Week 12: Executive Branch
8: Texas governor (review sheet for exam 3 distributed)
10: In comparative perspective (short review)
*Read chapter on Governorship

Week 13: Exam III- polling and public opinion in Texas
15: Exam 3
17: Understanding polling and public opinion
Week 14: Thanksgiving
22: Interesting movie day
24: No class (Thanksgiving holiday)

Week 15: Gun Control Policy
29: Laws across the U.S.
1: The right to carry

Week 16: It’s almost over….civil rights
6: The quest of equal treatment in Texas: The case of Mexican Americans

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 15 at 11:00

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.