POLS 2306 Triad L - State and Local Politics Fall 2011
Sections 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 490, 491
TR 12:30-1:45 PM, CI 113

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Office Hours: M 2-3:30 pm, W 10-11:30 am, TR 2-3, & by appointment

Try not. Do or do not. There is no try. -- Yoda

Introduction
State and local governments affect the lives of citizens everyday. They build roads, fund public schools, promote economic development, and operate public universities (including A&M-Corpus Christi). In democracies, the idea is that the people are in charge. It may not always appear that way; nonetheless citizens can and do influence state and local governments. Thus, it is essential that students understand the politics, processes, and institutions of state and local government and are knowledgeable about politics.

State and Local Government:
The politics, government, and administration of American states, counties, cities, and special districts, with special emphasis on Texas. Meets the University core requirement and the Texas state statutory requirement for U.S. and Texas constitutions.

Triad L Learning Community:
This political science course is linked with First-Year Seminar and First-Year Composition to create the Triad L Learning Community.

POLS 2306 Themes:
It's All Political: The unifying theme for our learning community is "It's All Political." As a learning community, we'll address the theme by addressing questions regarding education and water. The knowledge and skills you learn from political science, seminar, and English composition will help you developing a deeper understanding of issues related to water.

Civic Engagement: “Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.” (http://www.aascu.org/programs/adp/about/default.htm). Rather than simply examining political institutions, the course will have a focus on understanding how citizens can influence government to make a difference. The expectation is that students will become civically engaged as a result of this learning community.

POLS 2306 Student Learning Outcomes
On completion of this course students will be able to:
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.
POLS 2306 Course Requirements
Please read and be familiar with the following course requirements. Please ask for clarification if there is a component of the requirements that are not understood. Students are expected to understand and be familiar with the course requirements.

Blackboard
Students in this class must have Blackboard accounts. Blackboard is used for communication, announcements, class materials, and grade posting.

Class Presentations and Discussions
Regular and consistent class attendance is essential for students wishing to do well in the course.

Required Book/Materials
- Americans Governing (online assignments)

Documentary (shown in POLS 2306)
- *Flow: For the Love of Water*

Exams
There will be five exams during the course of the semester. The exams will typically consist of 25-50 multiple-choice questions. The exams are not comprehensive and will cover the material from class discussions, readings, and syllabus.

Students are allowed to re-take an exam (except the final exam) if their grade is less than a 70. The maximum grade a student can earn on a re-take is a 70. Students will be allowed to take a re-take during the dates and times specified in the syllabus.

Americans Governing
Americans Governing is a series of online materials designed to support the class. Students will purchase access to the site and complete assignments that are designed to relate to and support concepts and topics we discuss in class. Students will have 10 Americans Governing Assignments. The 2 lowest grades will be dropped so 8 will count towards their grade for a total of 100 points (12.5 points each).

Integrative Experiences Assignment
Students will have opportunities to earn up to 100 points from the Triad L Integrative Experiences Assignment. With this assignment students will address issues related to water. In political science students will write a paper using material from POLS 2306. They will also have activities in seminar that support the work in the areas of water. Furthermore, students in composition will apply their information literacy skills to their work (students not in composition will use resources from the Writing Center. The assignment will conclude with a reflective piece with the students documenting how they successfully integrated material from the LC classes to obtain a better understanding of their water issue.

Please note that a student choosing to drop Seminar or Composition risks forfeiting the chance to earn these points. Specific criteria and due dates for the assignments are forthcoming.

Integrative Experiences Assignment project points 100 pts

Participation
Students are able to earn a maximum of 10 participation points based on their participation grade from First Year Seminar. In FYS, students may earn a maximum of 100 participation points. To calculate
participation points for Political Science, simply divide the total FYS participation points by 10. Furthermore, negative participation in the political science class (disruptive behavior) will lead to a loss of 1 participation point per citation.

**Evaluation**

In this course, students have a significant amount of control over their grades. Students make the choice to come to class prepared, perform well on the exams and quizzes, participate in seminar, and complete the projects. Furthermore, students need to understand that assignments in the learning community are interrelated. Thus, if a student drops seminar, they lose the chance to earn quiz and project points. Likewise, if a student drops composition, they forfeit the chance to earn project points. DO NOT ASK FOR ADDITIONAL POINTS FOR THE FINAL GRADE -- THEY WILL NOT BE AWARDED.

**Summary of Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>5 x 100 = 500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrative Experiences Assignment</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americans Governing</td>
<td>8 x 12.5 = 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>710 points</strong></td>
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**Points/Grade Breakdown**

710-630 = A; 629-560 = B; 559-490 = C; 489-420 = D; 419 or less = F

**Course Policies**

Please read and be familiar with the following course policies. Please ask for clarification if there is a component of the policies that are not understood. Students are expected to understand and be familiar with the course policies.

**Make-up Exams**

Make-up exams will be allowed in the event of a medical or family emergency and with advance notification. Make-up exams will be given on specific dates found in the course schedule section of the syllabus. If a student has a valid excuse for missing a make-up exam they will make-up their exam on the day of the final exam after taking the final exam. Make-up exams will be different from the regular exam. Furthermore, in the interest of fairness to all of students, documented proof may be requested.

**Americans Governing and other work.**

Make up work for other assignments/quizzes is not permitted.

**Late Assignments**

Late assignments without a valid reason (special circumstances with advance notification and documentation) will not be accepted.

**Grade Appeal**

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.tamu.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance
and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**Attendance/tardiness**
There is not a formal attendance policy. Past analyses of grades and attendance indicates that grades and attendance are strongly related. Students that choose not to attend will still be responsible for material discussed in class. If you arrive after class has begun you are asked to discreetly enter from the 2nd floor rear entrance to CI113.

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

**Assistance**
Please visit during office hours; make an appointment, call, or e-mail to visit about class. You can also call TALK2ME (825-5263) to learn more about services on campus that support students (advising, financial aid, tutoring, etc.).

The Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA) will offer Supplemental Instruction for U.S. Government and Politics. Details are forthcoming. Visit CASA's website at http://casa.tamu.edu/ for additional services.

**Disabilities Accommodations**
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 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.

**Freedom of Expression**
Universities are exciting environments of learning and ideas. It is inevitable that at times, subjects are going to be discussed and ideas introduced that students are either unfamiliar with or perhaps disagree with. However, in the university environment it is important that different opinions are expressed. In this context, students need to feel free to express themselves in class with questions and comments and to do so without fear of reprisal. Class discussion (when it is relevant to the class) makes for a better class and students are encouraged to ask questions and express thoughtful opinions. Additionally, in order to allow all students an opportunity to participate in discussions, students will be limited to two comments per class.

**Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage**
A learning environment free from distractions will be maintained at all times during this class. Turn off the volume of cell phones and pagers.
**Classroom/professional behavior**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism.**
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, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a course grade of "F."

**Dropping a Class**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 1, 2011 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Incompletes**
Incompletes will only be given in the event of medical or family emergencies. In addition, incompletes will only be given if there is appropriate documentation.

**Provisional Course Outline**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Aug. 25</th>
<th>Welcome and Introductions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Aug. 30</td>
<td>Texas History and Culture, ch. 1</td>
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<td>Sept. 1</td>
<td>College Readiness</td>
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<td>Americans Governing Assignment 1</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Sept. 6</td>
<td>The Texas Constitution in Perspective, ch. 2</td>
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<td>Sept. 8</td>
<td>Spending and Services, ch. 13</td>
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<td>Americans Governing Assignment 2</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Sept. 13</td>
<td>Spending and Services, ch. 13</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td><strong>Exam 1 (chs 1-3)</strong></td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Sept. 20</td>
<td><em>Flow</em></td>
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<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td><em>Flow</em></td>
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Week 6
Sept. 27  Local Government, ch. 14
         Americans Governing Assignment 4
Sept. 29  Local Government, ch. 14

Week 7
Oct. 4   Exam 2 (ch. 14 & Flow)
Oct. 6   Exam 1 Re-Take

Week 8
Oct. 11  The Legislature, ch. 6
         Americans Governing Assignment 5
Oct. 13  The Legislature, ch. 7

Week 9
Oct. 17  Outline of POLS Action Paper due by 5 PM via Blackboard
Oct. 18  The Governor, ch. 8
         Americans Governing Assignment 6
Oct. 20  The Bureaucracy, ch. 9

Week 10
Oct. 25  Exam 3 (chs. 7-9)
Oct. 27  Interest Groups, ch. 5
         Final Drafts of POLS Action Paper -- BRING TO SEMINAR

Week 11
Nov. 1   Texas Judiciary, ch. 10
Nov. 3   Exams 2 & 3 Re-Take/Make-up
         Americans Governing Assignment 7
Nov. 4   POLS Action Paper -- Due by 3 PM via Blackboard
         Last day to drop a class

Week 12
Nov. 7   Reflection -- dues by 5 PM via Blackboard
Nov. 8   Voting & Elections, ch. 3
         Americans Governing Assignment 8
Nov. 10  Voting & Elections, ch. 3

Week 13
Nov. 15  Exam 4 (chs. 3-5, 10)
Nov. 17  Political Parties, ch. 4
         Americans Governing Assignment 9

Week 14
Nov. 22  Political Parties, ch. 4
Nov. 24  Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15
Nov. 29  Taxing & Budgeting, 12
         Americans Governing Assignment 10
Dec. 1   Celebration Day

Week 16
Dec. 6   Taxing & Budgeting, 12
Dec. 13  Final Exam 11 AM (chs. 4 & 12)
         Make-Up date for Make-Up and Re-Takes Exams.