POLS 2305.W01 – U.S. Government and Politics

**Summer II (2013) Syllabus, Version 1.0**

**Instructor:** Dr. Jennifer L. Epley  
**Office Location:** Bay Hall 3.41  
**Office Telephone:** (361) 825-2554

**Office Hours:**  
- To be determined  
- By appointment  
- Available via Skype (free computer-to-computer phone and video calls)

**Email:** jennifer.epley@tamucc.edu  
- Please consider e-mail as official correspondence.  
- Efforts will be made to address your e-mail within 48 hours. If you do not receive an email within 48 hours, please send a follow-up email.  
- No email correspondence on weekends.  
- No email correspondence on the day before an examination or deadline.  
- E-mail communications should be about class business. E-mail is not the place for summaries of lectures, discussions, or readings, however.  
- Please use the subject line in a way that indicates the content of the message. Please also use professional language and include your full name, section number, and a complete inquiry in the body of the message. Unprofessional emails will result in non-response.  
- Please keep copies of e-mails that are sent and received for records purposes.

**Required Course Websites:**  
- Blackboard online ([https://iol.tamucc.edu/](https://iol.tamucc.edu/) → Free access  
- Aplia online ([http://www.aplia.com/](http://www.aplia.com/) → Must purchase access with textbook (see page 2)

**Course Section Details for Registered Students:**  
89594.201306: [SS1-13] POLS-2305-W01 - U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (online only)

**Course Description and Objectives:**  
Political Science 2305 (online version) is an introductory course about political science in general and American politics in specific. Together in this course we will develop your ability to analyze various political processes and institutions. We will go beyond the basic facts of history and civics—what political institutions exist, how did they arise, who are the key political figures, etc.—to address basic questions of political science such as: What is the function of government and when does it fulfill or abdicate this function? How do political actors such as politicians and parties attain power? What is the role of institutional rules and procedures? What do citizens think about and do with regard to politics? Such questions and the answers we will find are applicable to us as citizens, residents, and visitors in the United States. These issues are also relevant elsewhere in the world. Through a process of collaboration, cooperation, and discovery, we will develop our knowledge base and skills. Substantive knowledge, critical thinking and analysis, developing and defending arguments, and the clear and concise articulation of ideas and evidence will be important components of the discussions, writings, and evaluations in this course.
Topics covered include, but are not limited to: federalism, the U.S. Constitution, the three branches of government, the bureaucracy, the legal system, public opinion, political behavior, the mass media and politics, political parties, campaigns and elections, interest groups, and how the government and society deal with issues such as personal liberty, rights, the economy, and different domestic and foreign public policies.

Learning Objectives / Student Learning Outcomes:
Upon completion of this course students will be able to:
1. Describe “basic facts” about the American political system in historical and contemporary terms.
2. Understand and evaluate key concepts, theories, research methods, evidence, and conclusions by experts on U.S. politics.
3. Effectively and efficiently conduct their own analysis of certain political processes and institutions.

Required Bundled Textbook, Ebook, and Online Aplia Access Available from the university’s Campus Bookstore:

ISBN 978-1133-29585-3

***It is more expensive to buy the aforementioned materials separately or used. Please use the bundled deal available from the university since it was the best negotiated deal on behalf of students.

Additional readings (paper and online), websites, and multi-media will be required. These materials will supplement the textbook chapters and the instructor’s lectures. The instructor will provide the copies and links to students via Blackboard and/or by email.

Performance Evaluation and Grading: Your final course grade will consist of…

64% Four Online Major Examinations – Each examination is worth 16% of the course grade. The format will be a combination of multiple choice and true/false items. Exams are administered online during scheduled class time and university-assigned finals day. See the attached schedule for details.

20% Online Homework via Aplia – There will be regular online homework assignments during the semester. These homework assignments will supplement and reinforce material from the textbook and lectures. See the attached schedule for the homework deadlines.

16% Case Study/Application Responses (CSAR) – There will be five CSARs to be submitted during the course of the summer semester (see schedule for details).

Make-Up Policy:
No late work is accepted for the Online Homework via Aplia or Case Study/Application Responses. No exceptions.

If, for any reason, a student misses a major examination, he/she has permission to take one make-up examination on the same day of the university-scheduled final in the allotted time slot. No more than one make-up examination is permitted. No exceptions. Make-up examinations may be different in content and format from those given previously in class. Students must sign up in advance so that the
instructor has time to make the necessary versions before the final test day. Students who do not sign up in advance will not be permitted to make up any missing exams. Make-up examinations are not opportunities to retake an examination for a better grade.

Example Scenario: A student misses the first exam and takes the other three exams on time. That student has the option to take the first exam on the day of finals. He/she will sign up on the list, thus getting permission to take the first exam. That student will then need to re-study the course material to perform well on the make-up of the first exam.

Grading Scale:
A = 90 – 100  B = 80 – 89  C = 70 – 79  D = 60 – 69  F = 59 and below

Additional Notes:
No extra credit options are available for this course. No exceptions. Please do not request extra credit from the instructor at any point in time (especially at the end of the semester).

Grade Appeal Process:
Major Examinations, Aplia Homework, and CSARs – Students have one week from the date that a score is posted on Blackboard or Aplia for each individual component to make a grade appeal. First see the instructor during office hours to discuss the matter. Students may be asked to submit a written/typed appeal letter for documentation purposes. If after the meeting a student wants to file a formal appeal, he/she should then follow the university’s appeal procedures, which are explained at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. Students may also contact the Office of Student Affairs for assistance.

Final Grade – 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. Students may be asked to submit a written/typed appeal letter for documentation purposes. 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.

Dropping a Class: The instructor hopes 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 the instructor 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. Please refer to the academic calendar online for information about the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Academic Honor Code: Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in the University Student Handbook. The Academic Honor Code is based on the premise that each student
has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student’s own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community. Violations of the Academic Honor Code will not be tolerated.

***Academic Dishonesty, Cheating, and Plagiarism***: Academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism of any kind are unacceptable. There are no exceptions. Consequences for academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism include, but are not limited to, a failing grade for an assignment, a failing grade for the course, noncredit for an assignment, additional work, and/or direct referral to university officials.

**Academic dishonesty** includes, but is not limited to, the use of unauthorized information during a quiz or exam, plagiarism, submitting the same paper for multiple courses without permission, or depriving another student of the ability to perform his or her work. The term **cheating** includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments, plagiarism; or (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the university faculty or staff. The term **plagiarism** includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. Plagiarism also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling or distribution of term papers or other academic materials. If you have questions about the university’s policy on academic dishonesty, please see the Student Code of Conduct at [http://judicialaffairs.tamucc.edu/StudentCofC.html](http://judicialaffairs.tamucc.edu/StudentCofC.html).

**Online Classroom Policies:**
- 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 online or in person may be instructed to leave the virtual classroom, office, meeting space, etc.**
- The instructor will assume that you have made an earnest effort to understand the material. This will allow you to be prepared to engage the material in more detail or address misunderstandings during any online sessions and in person.
- To foster an intellectually supportive environment, students should adhere to the dialogue guidelines (see extra handout).

**Students with Disabilities:** 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 contact the Disability Services Office at (361) 825-5816 or visit them in CCH 116. Please also contact the instructor early if you require assistance.
Veterans: If you are a veteran who is experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the instructor and/or the Disability Services Office at (361) 825-5816. Veterans can find more information online at http://vets.tamucc.edu/.

Student Caregivers: If you have caregiving responsibilities (e.g., parent of a child or care for elderly parents) and you anticipate scheduling difficulties, please discuss this at the beginning of the semester with the instructor to work out an appropriate strategy.

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 their phone number is (361) 825-3466.

S.A.I.L. System: S.A.I.L. is a secure online student portal where you can access your student, academic, and financial aid records at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Students can find information related to registration, class schedules, course catalogs, tuition and fees, grades, etc. at http://sail.tamucc.edu/.

Academic Calendar Reminders from http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/academic_cal.html:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Summer Session II 2013</th>
<th>Important Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>July 8, Monday</td>
<td>Classes begin</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 9, Tuesday</td>
<td>Last day to register or add a class</td>
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<td>July 26, Friday</td>
<td>Last day to drop a class</td>
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<td>August 6, Tuesday</td>
<td>Last day to withdraw from the University</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 8, Thursday</td>
<td>Last day of classes</td>
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<td>Summer Session II final examinations</td>
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<td>Last day to apply for December 2013 graduation</td>
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→ For the latest information on dates and deadlines, please inquire at the appropriate university office (e.g., Academic Affairs Office, Office of the Registrar, Dean’s Office of your major, main department of your major, etc.), with your academic advisor, and your professors.

Course Schedule: All dates, assignments, and evaluations are subject to change with advanced notice. Please pay attention to Blackboard (https://iol.tamucc.edu/) for updates.

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<th>POLS 2305 – U.S. GOVERNMENT &amp; POLITICS (online)</th>
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**Thursday, August 8, 2013: Make-up exams (limit of one)**
GUIDELINES FOR DIALOGUE

1. Confidentiality. We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange.

2. Our primary commitment is to learn from each other. We will listen to each other and not talk at each other. We acknowledge differences amongst us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values. We realize that it is these very differences that will increase our awareness and understanding through this process.

3. We will not demean, devalue, or “put down” people for their experiences, lack of experiences, or difference in interpretation of those experiences.

4. We will trust that people are always doing the best they can.

5. Challenge the idea and not the person. If we wish to challenge something that has been said, we will challenge the idea or the practice referred to, not the individual sharing this idea or practice.

6. Speak your discomfort. If something is bothering you, please share this with the group. Often our emotional reactions to this process offer the most valuable learning opportunities.

7. Step Up, Step Back. Be mindful of taking up much more space than others. On the same note, empower yourself to speak up when others are dominating the conversation.

8. Maintain a safe atmosphere.

Source: The Program on Intergroup Relations, University of Michigan, CRLT Handout (page 8), August 26, 2008.
Syllabus / Contract Agreement

I, _________________________________________, have read all of the pages of Dr. Epley’s
(Print your name.)

Summer 2013 syllabus for Political Science 2305 – U.S. Government & Politics.

I fully understand the expectations, rules, regulations, resources, and schedule explained in that
syllabus. I agree to abide by its conditions as well.

_________________________________________
(Name / Signature)

_________________________________________
(Student Number)

_________________________________________
(Date)

_________________________________________
(Course Number & Section)