POLS-2306.006
State and Local Politics
Spring 2013

Dr. David Smith
Office: BH 303
Office Telephone: On Campus: 5511 Off Campus: 361-825-5511
Office Hours:
Email: david.smith2@tamucc.edu

COURSE LOCATION AND TIME: Tuesday/Thursday 2-3:15 CI-106

COURSE OBJECTIVES/DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the study of politics, the constitutions and the political institutions of Texas. The information in this course is more practical than you might think: whether you are an engineering, business, or political science major, as a citizen it is important that you be informed about how government works. Businessmen find it difficult to navigate government that they do not understand, and engineers cannot get a patent unless they know the rules and laws that protect inventions, and citizens have almost no hope of finding out anything by calling a government agency in a phone book.

Required Texts (available at the campus bookstore):

Maxwell, William Earl and Ernest Crain. Texas Politics Today. (10th ed.)

Student 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.

Expectations and Assignments

This class will be largely lecture driven. That being said, Politics is about the free exchange of ideas, beliefs and values amongst an organized group of individuals. Keeping that in mind, I encourage and welcome questions, comments and discussions amongst the class. If you do not understand a concept or a point, there is a very good chance that one of your fellow classmates is having the same problem.

During the semester there will be four exams that cover material from the lectures and the book. There will be four assignments over the course of the semester that allow you an opportunity to explore more in-depth the government of Texas and your interaction/place within that structure. The assignments will be posted and turned-in online. Third, you will have 10 online quizzes that will prepare you for the exams. These quizzes are designed to help you identify concepts and terms that may appear on the exams. Finally, you will have a short paper that will be discussed further in class and online that will look at how the election could change the political
situation both locally and nationally. This will be discussed in more detail as we
progress through the course.

Instructions for the assignments will be posted online along with the due dates for
each assignment. There are different options contained within each assignment in
order for you to have a little bit of choice in the assignment. There are no late
assignments accepted in this course. You will have approximately two weeks for each
assignment. It generally will take between 10 days to 2 weeks for each assignment
to be graded and returned.

GRADING/EVALUATION:

Your grade will consist of four exams (400 points), four written assignments (400
points), ten online quizzes (100 points) and paper regarding what you look for in a
politician (100 points); for a total of 1000 points. The exams will not be cumulative.

4 Exams @ 100 points = 400
4 Assignments @ 100 points = 400
10 Quizzes (online) @ 10 points = 100
1 Political Attributes Paper = 100
Total Points Possible= 1000

Grading Scale:

A: 900-1000 points;
B: 800-899 points;
C: 700-799 points;
D: 600-699 points;
F: 0-599 points.
General Course Policies and Exam Policies:

1. Make-ups (Examinations) – Make-up exams will be offered at the end of the semester. It is your responsibility to arrange to make up all missed exams, which are excused.

2. Freedom of Speech – Feel free to raise your hand with a question or comment. Reducing confusion, providing clarification, or responding to student curiosity is an important part of the classroom process and will be undertaken to the extent that time and class size permit. In most cases, if you did not understand something, it is because I did not explain it clearly, so you will be doing your colleagues and yourself a service if you request a clarification.

3. Academic etiquette – Universities must maintain standards of academic etiquette in order to affect an atmosphere conducive to learning. You are expected to demonstrate courtesy to one another in and out of the classroom. Talking to one’s neighbor(s) during class lectures or general discussions, chronic lateness, leaving class before it has been dismissed, etc., is inherently disruptive and thus injurious to the rights of others to the opportunity to learn. As such, it is unacceptable in a university classroom. Please do not bring things to eat into the classroom, but drinks are okay. As a courtesy to others, take your trash with you when class is over. Students who are unable to abide by these rules of academic etiquette and normal civility will be removed from the class.

4. Academic Integrity – Cheating or plagiarism on an assignment or test, or failure to complete any of the course requirements, will result in a zero grade for the assignment in question.

5. Dropping a Class – I hope no student needs to drop this course. However, events sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. November 2 is the last day to drop a course for the semester with an automatic grade of “W”.

6. Grade Appeals – 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.
8. *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.

9. *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.

**Things I must say:**

**Computer Usage and Cell Phones in the Classroom:** Understandably, many students now use laptops to take notes in class. Please know that laptop usage is a privilege, not a right, and I will ban all computers in class if they become a distraction to others. If you must use a computer in class, please sit in the back 2 rows or the first row of the class. Do not use your computer for anything other than note taking. Use of computers to play games, Skype your friends, update your Facebook status, or for any other reason than note taking is strictly prohibited. If you are found doing these things, at the very least your computer will be closed and you will not be able to use it for the remainder of the class period. You may also be asked to leave the class. Additionally, cell phone use is prohibited. In fact, you should not have your cell phones out or visible during class. If you are waiting for an emergency phone call, please notify me before class. Otherwise, if you use your cell phone for any reason during class, you will be asked to leave and will be given a zero for any in-class assignments due that day.
**GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE**

The readings listed below are to be done before you come to class on the day listed. For example, when you come to class on Thursday, August 30 you should have read *Chapter 1: Texas Culture, Introduction.*

We will attempt to stick as closely to this schedule as possible; however, this serves as a guideline and may be updated as the semester progresses. Updates will be posted on WebCT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>1/23-1/25</th>
<th>Introduction and Syllabus</th>
<th>Read Chapter 1-Chapter 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>1/28-2/1</td>
<td>Texas History &amp; Constitution (Comparative)</td>
<td>Reading Chap 2 &amp; Ch 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>2/4-2/8</td>
<td>Federalism &amp; Local Governments</td>
<td>Preparing for First Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>2/11-2/15</td>
<td>Finish Local Govts and Exam #1 Prep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>2/18-2/22</td>
<td>Exam #1 and Voting/Elections</td>
<td>Reading Ch 3 &amp; Ch 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>2/25-2/29</td>
<td>Voting/Elections and Parties</td>
<td>Reading Ch 4 &amp; Ch 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>3/4-3/8</td>
<td>IGs and Exam #2</td>
<td>Reading Ch 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8 – Spring Break</td>
<td>3/11-3/15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>3/18-3/22</td>
<td>Legislature &amp; Legislative Process</td>
<td>Reading Ch 6 &amp; Ch 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>3/25-3/29</td>
<td>Legislative Process and the Governor</td>
<td>Reading Ch 8 &amp; Ch 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>4/1-4/5</td>
<td>Bureaucracy &amp; the Courts</td>
<td>Reading Ch 10 &amp; Ch 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>4/8-4/12</td>
<td>Law &amp; Due Process</td>
<td>Preparing for Exam #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>4/15-4/19</td>
<td>Exam #3 and Tax &amp; Budget</td>
<td>Reading Ch 12 &amp; Ch 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>4/22-5/3</td>
<td>Finish Tax &amp; Budget and Spending &amp; Services</td>
<td>Last Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>5/6-5/7</td>
<td>Prep for Exam #4 (Final Exam)</td>
<td>Exam #4 (Final Exam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>