First Year Seminar
US Government & Politics, Triad F, Spring 2013

Gateways

Course Syllabus

Instructor:  Chelsie Hawkinson  Office:  Faculty Center 120
Email:  chelsie.hawkinson@tamucc.edu  Phone:  361-825-3603
Office hours:  MW 10:00-11:00;  T 12:00-2:00;  F 12:00-1:00 & by appointment
Class Plans:  http://chawkinson.pbworks.com/w/page/62642644/Triad%20F%3A%20Gateways

Courses:
FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR II – UCCP 1102.291 – OCNR 255 – 10:00-10:50
FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR II – UCCP 1102.283 – OCNR 255 – 11:00-11:50
FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR II – UCCP 1102.290 – BH 201 – 3:30-4:20

Course Description

First Year Seminar II is a continued discovery of the skills necessary for your success as a university student taking political science. Seminar is an integral part of your political science learning community. You must succeed in seminar to do well in large lecture, as a significant portion of your large lecture final grade will come from seminar. Seminar is a one credit hour discussion course where you learn to communicate verbally and work collaboratively on complex and often heated political topics and relate them to your role as a developing professional.

To achieve professionally you will need 4 basic things:

- Expert knowledge and critical thinking ability.
- Effective communication skills.
- The ability to get along with others and work as a team.
- An open mind to grapple with different forms of technology.

Course Theme

Gateways will be the theme of Triad F this semester. You will examine how understanding different topics in Political Science, including ideology, can serve as a gateway to participation in politics. We will also explore the different types of gateways we will encounter throughout our collegiate experience and future careers. Throughout the semester, you should continually ask yourself how different concepts serve as open or closed gateways.

Seminar Course Objectives

The primary objectives of First Year Seminar are for students to:

- Explore the interconnections among the Triad/Tetrad courses;
- Develop critical thinking skills and significant learning;
- Clarify personal values, goals, and strengths
- Develop the ability to learn through study, discussion, writing, cooperation, and collaboration

Seminar Learning Outcomes:

- Students will apply interdisciplinary knowledge to address and analyze real-world issues
- Students will interpret and evaluate various research materials and/or perspectives

Seminar Specific Learning Outcomes:

- Take personal responsibility and become a self-directed college learner.
- Understand divergent political viewpoints.
- Effectively read and comprehend articles, reports, and books.
- Evaluate the accuracy of claims made in literature relating to politics.
- Collaborate effectively as both an effective leader and follower.
- Communicate on controversial topics related to politics.
Course Materials

Seminar is a discussion course that will focus on the readings and information gained in your Triad F courses. You will work with the books from US Government and Politics, and Composition (if applicable). Additional readings will also be supplied to you as handouts, online postings, or from your textbooks for discussion in seminar. It is vitally important that you keep up with readings that are assigned at all times. If you do not keep up with readings it will affect your ability to participate in seminar discussions and will lower your participation grade.

You will need a Turning Technologies clicker or ResponseWare on your smart device. Clickers are available at the bookstore or ResponseWare may be purchased as an application for web-enabled (or "smart") devices at: http://store.turningtechnologies.com with school code TaMcc3. Clickers devices and ResponseWare applications must be registered at: http://webreg.turningtechnologies.com/.

It is highly recommended that you join the Triad F Facebook Group, http://www.facebook.com/groups/373621339400533/. The Facebook group is primarily used for informal communication with your peers and instructors.

You will also need the following for seminar and other learning community courses:

- Regular computer access with Microsoft Office (available on campus).
- Islander email and Blackboard. Be sure to check both regularly.
- Ability to save your computer generated work and transfer it between school and home and among university computers (Laptop, USB Flash Drive, or internet drive).
- Positive attitude 😊

Course Evaluation

Attendance and Participation: (30%)
Attendance is a gateway to success in this class. To learn about politics and begin your journey as an active member of a democracy (as most of us are) you must be present and prepared for class. Your knowledge and opinion is valued and appreciated at every class meeting. Attendance will be taken randomly throughout the semester.

Reflective Assignments (30%): You will complete two reflective assignments this semester for seminar each worth 15% of your grade. Consider these assignments to be like your “exams.” The reflective assignments are designed to develop your metacognitive abilities. Metacognition basically means thinking about your own thinking. The more you reflect on your own experiences in college and make positive steps to improve, the better you will do. The assignments are as follows. More information will be given in class.

Mid-Semester Portfolio- (Individual assignment)- A collection of your college work and a > 2 page reflection on how you see your work as a gateway to success at TAMUCC (15%) due March 8.

Final Reflection- (Group Assignment)- Reflect on the first year college experience by writing and producing a YouTube video on the subject of "My Islander Pledge" as a team. This assignment will ask you to consider how your pledge can be used as a gateway to success (15%) due May 3.

PEW Typology Activities: (10%)
This semester you will take a Typology Quiz to help sort you into a group based on your values, political beliefs and party affiliation. This quiz will be a gateway for many discussions and assignments throughout the semester in all of your Triad courses. You will take this quiz in the beginning and middle of the semester.

The first PEW Typology activity will be due **Thursday, January 31.**
The second PEW Typology activity will be due **Thursday, April 11.**

**Ideology Essay: (15%)**
Throughout the semester we will learn how political ideology shapes American government and politics. You will write a 2-3 page essay about how your personal political ideology serves (or does not serve) as a gateway for affecting politics in the United States. This essay will be due on Blackboard, **Thursday, April 18** by 2pm. It is also counted towards your final grade in Political Science and Composition. More instructions will be given closer to the due date to fully outline the expectations of this assignment.

**Poll Activity: (15%)**
In Political Science, you will learn about different types of polls. To help you practice using polls as a gateway to understanding local public opinion, you will create, conduct, and analyze your own poll. In a group, you will present your results in a professional presentation on **March 28.**

**Grading Policies**

**Make-Up Assignments**
Make-up exams and assignments will be given only if you have an excused absence which include: participation in a university-affiliated activity that requires you to miss class, a religious holiday, death or major illness in your immediate family, illness of a dependent family member, participation in legal proceedings that require your presence, injury or illness too severe to allow you to attend class, or required participation in military duties. To be excused, you should notify me by email prior to the date of absence if possible. In cases where advance notification is not possible due to an emergency, you should provide notification by the end of the second day after the absence. You may be asked to provide documentation substantiating the reason for the absence within one week of your absence. Make assignments must be completed on or by the day we agree upon.

**Late Assignments**
Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade per day late. In the event of an emergency or excused absence, a student may be given additional days to complete the assignment without penalty if we discuss it and agree that additional time is necessary.

**Extra Credit**
Extra credit is given periodically. Only students who are present in class are eligible for extra credit.

**Grade Appeals**
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, if you believe that you have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, you may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon you to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. If you have a complaint, please first discuss it with Dr. Ross. 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](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, you may contact the Office of Student Affairs at 825-2612.

**Dropping the Class**
If you are considering dropping this course, please discuss it with me to be sure it is the best course of action. Should you decide to drop the course, you must initiate the process by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Simply stopping attendance and participation will NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 12, 2013 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.
Classroom Policies

Tardiness
You are expected to be on time. Part of your course grade reflects your attendance and participation in class, and, therefore, it is imperative that you are prepared to attend class to be successful in this course. If you are more than ten minutes late, you will be counted as absent.

Rights Responsibilities and Civil Discourse:
In this course we will engage in active learning including frequent group activities and interactions. To meet these many significant learning objectives it will be necessary to establish some ground rules for class discussions so that no one individual dominates the discussion and so that the diverse opinions of others can be respected. You and your classmates will make suggestions that will ultimately be compiled into a set of rules responsibilities and guidelines for civil discourse in this class. Students are expected to read and follow the University Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook, given to them in class at the beginning of the 1st semester.

Class Decorum
During class you are expected to behave respectfully and contribute to a positive learning environment. This means that refrain from using technology inappropriately (i.e. text messaging) in class. Also, during class discussion, you are expected to be respectful of others’ opinions and open to a diversity of ideas.

Course Communication
All course communication is sent through your university email account (Islander account), and all course materials and announcements are posted to Blackboard. If you need assistance with these, contact the Student Computer Helpdesk at 361-825-5618.

Academic Integrity
You are expected to do your own work. If you are caught cheating in any way, your grade for that assignment will be changed to an F and the appropriate university officials will be contacted regarding your behavior.

Students with Disabilities and Veterans
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 Corpus Christi Hall 116.

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.

Expectations:
In this class we are learning how to be successful both in college and in life as university educated professionals. For this reason my philosophy is to treat you as the professional that you are aspiring to be. Let this thought guide you any time that you are not sure how you should conduct yourself in seminar:

"How would I be expected to conduct myself if I were already working as a professional and if my paycheck depended on professional behavior?"