POLS 2306-003 State and Local Government

Dr. Joshua Ozymy
Fall 2013
Class Time: T&TR 12:30-1:45 BH 103
Office Hours: T&TR 3:15-4:45 and W 3-5:00 in BH 304
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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 local and national context.

Grading:
Exams: (4) exams in multiple-choice format.
Exam 1: 20%
Exam 2: 35%
Exam 3: 35%
Exam 4: 10%

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

Learning Outcomes:
1. Students shall be able to recognize and recall fundamental facts related to the: foundations of the state and local government, state and local political institutions, state and local political behavior, and state and local public policy.

2. Students shall be able to express and interpret information concerning key political concepts related to the: foundations of the state and local government, state and local political institutions, state and local political behavior, and state and local public policy.

Method of evaluating outcomes:
These goals will be accomplished through formal testing via multiple-choice exams.

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:  
Text on Texas Politics available in the campus bookstore or online ISBN# 9781259110924

Class Schedule:

Section I: Public Policy

Week 1: Introduction  
: Cover the syllabus/class policies/expectations/Blackboard

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

Week 3: Gun Control Policy  
: The moral right to own weapons  
: The right to carry in public places

Week 4: Prisons and Criminal Justice Policy in Texas  
: Prisons and Crime policy  
: Courts (review sheet for exam 1 distributed)  
*Read chapter in your textbook on due process

Week 5: Test 1 is upon us…..  
: Exam 1 review (PowerPoint plus Q&A session)  
: Exam 1

Section II: Political Actors and Behavior

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

Week 7: Political Parties and Party Organization  
: Functions of Political Parties
History of Political Parties in Texas
* Read chapter on political parties in your textbook

Week 8: Interest Groups and Lobbying
* Lobbyists and Influence in Texas Politics (review sheet for exam 2 distributed)
* Vote for me
* Read chapter on interest groups in your textbook

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

Section III: Political Institutions

Week 10: Federalism
* How federalism is structured in the U.S. Constitution
27: Federalism between states/policymaking in modern America
* Read chapter on the Governor in your textbook

Week 11: The Judiciary
* The judicial system in Texas
* The Plea bargaining process in Texas
* Reads chapter on the Judiciary in your textbook

Week 12: Legislative and Administrative Branches
* The Texas legislature in comparative perspective
* The Texas Bureaucracy (exam III review sheet distributed)
* Read chapters on the legislative branch and the bureaucracy in your textbook

Week 13: Exam III- Local Government
* Exam 3
* The structure and problems of local government
* Read chapter on local government in your textbook

Week 14: Local Government Continued
* Local government
* No class (Thanksgiving holiday)

Week 15: Civil Rights
* The quest of equal treatment in Texas: The case of Mexican Americans
* Makeup exam day

Week 16:
* Exam 4

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.