POLS 2306.480 Triad L - State and Local Politics Spring 2014

MW 2-3:15, CI 113

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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:
Identity: The unifying theme for our learning community is "State, Local, and Personal Identity." As a learning community, we'll address the theme by addressing questions regarding identity, broadly defined. The knowledge and skills you learn from political science, seminar, and English composition will help you developing a deeper understanding of issues related to understanding your personal, political and hopefully group identity.

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." (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.

Connect
Students will be required to use the Connect system that is being bundled with your textbook. It will have various short assignments related to the content, flash cards and test prep material that will help facilitate your success.

LearnSmart
In each chapter will be an interactive learning tool that will help you understand not only the content of the chapters, but also the concepts that we are discussing in class. Your use of this material is strongly encouraged and part of your overall grade in the course. Your total points achieved in the LearnSmart component will be figured much like your participation grade from Seminar. Divide the total points received by 10 to determine your final grade for the LearnSmart materials.

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

Required Book/Materials
The textbook and access code to Americans Governing are available at the University Bookstore. The access code is also available online. The links for Americans Governing are on Blackboard.
- The State of Texas: Government, Politics and Policy
- Connect/LearnSmart Software

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

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 identity. This annotated bibliography is a shared assignment for Triad L. You will earn a grade in POLS, Seminar, and Composition. The assignment will be supported by all three courses; students not in composition will use resources from the Writing Center (Jarvis, 2013).

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. Finally, if you are one point away from the next grade, you are one point away.

Summary of Requirements
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<tr>
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<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>4 x 100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrative Experiences Assignment</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>LearnSmart</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect</td>
<td>130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Activities</td>
<td>32 x 6.25 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Points/Grade Breakdown
880-792 = A; 791-704 = B; 703-616=C; 615-528 = D; 527 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.

Grade Appeal
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that his or her final grade reflects academic evaluation which is arbitrary, prejudiced, or inappropriate in view of the standards and procedures outlined in the class syllabus, may appeal the grade given for the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. 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 the University Rule 13.02.99.C2.01, in the University Handbook for Rules & Procedures: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/Rules_Procedures/](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/Rules_Procedures/)

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.

Late Work/Extensions
Emailed assignments will not be accepted. The majority of the work that you complete in this class will be online via Blackboard or Connect. Late work will not be accepted. Your seminar and composition instructors will have different policies, but given the nature of the course material there will be no extensions granted in the lecture class.

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 Corpus Christi Hall 116. You can also visit their website at http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu/ and contact them via e-mail at disability.services@tamucc.edu. 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.

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.

Email Guidelines
You will be required to use your Islander email account for any and all communication in this class. I do not email students to their personal accounts as there may be issues with access and spam. If you email me via your external account(s) please be aware of this policy.
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."

The University will not tolerate plagiarism or any other form of intellectual or academic dishonesty. Violations of academic honesty will be processed under the Procedure for Academic Misconduct Cases 13.02.99.C3.01 (see http://ses.tamucc.edu/grievances.html and the Student Code of Conduct http://judicialaffairs.tamucc.edu/assets/2013-2014StudentHandbook.pdf). All cases of academic misconduct are recorded in the student’s file. Consequences are determined by the faculty member and/or the Academic Integrity Hearing Panel. It is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Students sometimes commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes
- using the work of another as your own,
- downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- using resource materials without correct documentation,
- using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation, or
- turning in a researched paper without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

Please be aware that I will be supporting and enforcing the same guidelines for academic dishonesty as found in your COMP 1301 syllabus (Jarvis, 2013).

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. 11/15/2013 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.
| Week 1 | Welcome and Introductions  
Discussion Board: Who Are You |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 2 | Intro to Texas History and Politics (ch. 1)  
Discussion Board: What is your Texas Political Culture  
Assignment: What is your Political Ideological Leaning?  
Connect Assignment (Connect) and LearnSmart |
| Week 3 | Texas State Constitution and the American Federal System (ch. 2)  
Discussion Board: Federalism. Good, Bad or Irrelevant?  
Connect and LearnSmart |
| Week 4 | Local Governments in Texas (ch. 6)  
Discussion Board: Does local government matter?  
Connect Assignment and LearnSmart  
**Exam 1 (Chs: 1, 2 and 6)** |
| Week 5 | Voting and Political Participation in Texas (ch. 7)  
Discussion Board: Do you participate? Should you?  
Connect and LearnSmart |
| Week 6 | Political Parties in Texas and US (ch. 9)  
Discussion Board: What Political Party is closest to you?  
Connect and LearnSmart |
| Week 7 | Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas and US (ch. 10)  
Discussion Board: What Interest Group do you Identify with in Texas/US?  
Connect and LearnSmart |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Discussion Board</th>
<th>Connect and LearnSmart</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Elections and Campaigns in Texas and US (ch. 8)</td>
<td>Who are the voters and where do you fit?</td>
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<td><strong>Exam 2 (chs: 7, 8, 9 and 10)</strong></td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>The Texas Legislature (ch. 3)</td>
<td>Is the Texas Legislature Effective?</td>
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<td>Connect and LearnSmart</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>The Executive Department and the Office of the Governor of Texas (ch. 4)</td>
<td>Is our Governor equal to the US President?</td>
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<td>Connect and LearnSmart</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>The Court System in Texas (ch. 5)</td>
<td>What, if anything, is wrong with our Court System in Texas?</td>
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<td>Connect and LearnSmart</td>
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<td><strong>Exam 3 (Chs: 3, 4 and 5)</strong></td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Public Policy in Texas and the US (ch. 11)</td>
<td>Should Texas allow Federal Laws to impact our state policies?</td>
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<td>Connect and LearnSmart</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Public Policy in Texas and the US (ch. 11)</td>
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<td>Thanksgiving Holiday</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Financing State Government (ch. 12)</td>
<td>How should we fund education?</td>
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<td>Connect and LearnSmart</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Final Thoughts on State and Local Politics</td>
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<td>Discussion Board: TBA</td>
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<td>Week 16</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam (Chs: 11 and 12)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Make-Up Exams given during the Final Exam Period</strong></td>
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