U.S. Government Institutions

Course Overview:

This course is designed to provide a deeper understanding of U.S. national government for students of the TAMUCC Masters of Public Administration Program. This course will consist of a survey of the major institutions of the U.S. national government, with special attention to the presidency, Congress, and the U.S. Supreme Court. There will be some comparative discussion of federalism, parliamentary systems of government, and proportional representation. There will also be a brief review of the U.S. Constitution and the federal court structure. This course looks beyond simply the institutions of government and the policymaking process towards a deeper analysis of political actor motivations, policy outputs and impacts, and citizen rights and responsibilities.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe key political concepts related to U.S. institutions such as Congress, the Presidency, and the Judiciary.
- Identify key debates in contemporary American public policy as well as the issues at stake and the arguments advanced by each side of the debate.
- Describe various decision frameworks used by policymakers in creating, developing, and executing various public policies.
- Identify key actors and agencies involved in the making of public policy within the United States and their respective roles in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policy.

Major Course Requirements

- Forum Participation 20 points
- Response Papers 50 points
- Course Exams (1 @ 30 pts.) 30 points
  Total Points 100 points

- **Response Papers:** Assignments will be completed as a means of formative assessment. You will be responsible for completing 10 one-page essays that pertain to that module’s learning objectives and incorporate relevant contemporary policy issues. Completing the homework demonstrates that you have engaged the material prior to the exams. Correct assignments turned in on-time via this portfolio will receive 7 points. If you want additional feedback on your assignment, it must be substantially attempted and self-corrected prior to making an appointment. These essays should be completed as though they are going to be a professional report.
• **Forum Participation**: On two occasions, I will be leading discussions on blackboard. Each of these discussions will be worth 10 points for students. Grades will be based on 1. Frequency of Participation (At least 3 responses required) and 2. Quality of contribution (is contribution meaningful? Simply stating you agree will not suffice).

• **Course exams**: A final exam will be given to assess student learning. The exam will cover all of the chapters in the book. Exam will be released on an individual basis for each student. Students must have substantially completed the homework assignments for each module and turned the homework in via Blackboard prior to the exam being released.

**Required or Recommended Readings:**


Additional Readings on Blackboard

**Course Policies**

**Attendance/tardiness**

Students should log into Blackboard on a regular basis to download material, watch videos and turn in assignments.

**Late work and Make-up Exams**

The course is asynchronous, therefore you are able to log in and complete course learning anytime that is convenient to you. There are requirements, however, for completion of unit work and exams. If the student is late in meeting these dates, the work will not be accepted, nor will exams allowed to be made up.

**Extra Credit**

There is no extra credit offered in this course.

**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 the grade of an F for the class.**

**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.

**Statement of Civility**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

**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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**DISABILITY SERVICES**

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, Room #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.

**GRADE APPEALS PROCESS**

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.
Statement of Academic Continuity

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

Schedule

Chapter 1: Policy Lightning

Response Paper 1 due June 3

Chapter 2: Coordination Dilemma

Response Paper 2 due June 5

Chapter 3: Reshaping the Bureaucracy

Response Paper 3 due June 8

Chapter 4: Federalism Jumble

Forum Discussion June 11

Chapter 4: Federalism Jumble

Response Paper 4 due June 15

Chapter 5: The Political Cost of Managing Risk

Response Paper 5 due June 18

Chapter 6: Balancing Liberty with Protection

Forum Discussion June 22

Chapter 7: Goldfish Bowls

Response Paper 6 due June 25

Chapter 7: Goldfish Bowls

Response Paper 7 due June 29

Final Exam must be completed by July 2nd