Introduction

Politics and government affect students in many ways. Things that are taken for granted such as drinking water, roads, and A&M-Corpus Christi are the result of politics and government. Many students are enrolled at A&M-Corpus Christi in order to get good jobs after graduation. Politics and governmental policies affect job markets and the economy. Hence, students have much at stake in the political system of the United States. Thus, it is essential that students understand the political processes and political institutions of the U.S. national government because governmental decisions and policies affect students everyday.

U.S. Government and Politics Course Description: A basic survey of American government, including fundamental political institutions, with special attention to the United States and Texas Constitutions. (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 Theme: Civic Engagement: The unifying theme for Triad L is 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. In POLS 2306 the class will address sustainability issues, specifically water sustainability. Sustainability will be used an example of how citizens can become civically engaged.

POLS 2306 Student Learning Outcomes: On completion of this course students will be able to:
1. Recall basic facts related to the foundations of State and Local Politics.
2. Describe key political concepts related to state institutions such as legislatures, the executive, and the judiciary.
3. Demonstrate their understanding of key concepts relating to political behavior such as voting, elections and political parties, interest groups and the media.

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 will use Blackboard accounts. Blackboard is used for assignments, communication, announcements, class materials, and grade posting. (iol.tamucc.edu)

Turnitin.com: Students will submit written work via turnitin.com. Instructions on setting up accounts will be distributed to students at a later date.

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.

**Film Documentary (shown in class):** Flow: For the Love of Water

**Exams:** There will be five exams during the course of the semester. The exams will typically consist of 25-50 multiple-choice questions. The exams are not comprehensive and will cover the material from class discussions, readings, and syllabus.

Students are allowed to re-take an exam (except the final exam) if their grade is less than a 70. The maximum grade a student can earn on a re-take is a 70. Students will be allowed to take a re-take during the dates and times announced via Blackboard.

**Connect -- Online Assignments:** Connect is a textbook companion of online materials designed to support the class. Students will purchase access to the site (it comes bundled with the book if purchased at the University Bookstore) and complete assignments that are designed to relate to and support concepts and topics we discuss in class. Students will have 10 Connect Assignments, worth 40 points each, that count towards their grade for a total of 300 points. Students successfully completing the assignment, by the due date, receive the full 40 points. A total of 12 assignments are assigned, meaning students have 2 extra opportunities. Specific due dates for assignments are listed in the Provisional Course Outline. The specific assignments will be released on Blackboard. All Connect Assignments are due by 11:30 AM on the due date.

**Integrative Experiences Assignment:** Students will have opportunities to earn up to 200 points from the Triad L Integrative Experiences Assignment. With this assignment students will address issues related to sustainability. The assignment will count for credit in all the courses in your learning community. Specific criteria and due dates for the assignments are forthcoming. Please note that a student choosing to drop Seminar or Composition risks forfeiting the chance to earn these points.

**Online Quizzes:** Four online quizzes, worth 10 points each, are assigned with due dates listed in the Provisional Course Outline of the syllabus. These quizzes are administered after class discussions of the assigned chapters.

**Participation:** Students are able to earn a maximum of 10 participation points based on their participation grade from First Year Seminar. In FYS, students 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 be prepared for class, complete the assignments on Connect, perform well on the exams, participate in seminar, and complete the projects. **DO NOT ASK FOR ADDITIONAL POINTS FOR THE FINAL GRADE -- THEY WILL NOT BE AWARDED.**

**Summary of Requirements:**
- **Exams:** 4 x 100 points = 400
- **Integrative Experiences Assignment:** 200
- **Connect:** 400
- **Online Quizzes:** 4 x 10 points = 40
- **Participation:** 10
- **Total:** 1050 points

**Points/Grade Breakdown:**
- A = 900 or more
- B = 800-899
- C = 700-799
- D = 600-699
- F = 599 or less

**Course Policies**

*Please read and be familiar with the following course policies and 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 for official university excused absences, or in the event of a medical or family emergency (preferable with advance notification). Make-up exams will be given on specific dates announced via Blackboard. 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 all of students, documented proof of the excused absence should be requested.
Connect And Other Work: Late assignments without a valid reason (special circumstances with advance notification and documentation) will not be accepted.

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, Dec. 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 Dec. contact the Associate Dean.

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 discretely enter from the 2nd floor rear entrance to CI113.

Extra Credit Work: Extra credit work will not be assigned nor allowed under any circumstances.

Assistance: Please visit during office hours, make an appointment, call, or e-mail to visit about class. You can also call TALK2ME (825-5263) to learn more about services on campus that support students (advising, financial aid, tutoring, etc.). The Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA) will offer Supplemental Instruction for State and Local Politics. Details are forthcoming. Visit CASA's website at http://casa.tamucc.edu/ for additional services.

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 CCH 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.

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.

iPhone, iPad, iCopy, Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage: A learning environment free from distractions will be maintained at all times during this class. Silence your ringtones and put these devices away during class. Laptops can only be used for POLS 2306 work.

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 Dec. 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 Dec. 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."

**Dropping a Class:** Events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your professors before deciding 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.

**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.

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**Provisional Course Outline**

**Week 1**
- Aug. 28
  - Welcome and Introductions
  - Connect ch. 1 is available (sign in and practice)

**Week 2**
- Sept. 2
  - Introduction to Texas History and Politics, ch. 1
  - Connect ch. 1 (due by 11:30 AM)
- Sept. 4
  - The TX State Constitution and the American Federal System, ch. 2
  - Connect ch. 2 (due by 11:30 AM)

**Week 3**
- Sept. 9
  - The TX State Constitution and the American Federal System, ch. 2
- **Sept. 11**
  - Exam 1, chs. 1 & 2
- Sept. 12
  - Online Quiz 1 (due by 11:59 PM)

**Week 4**
- Sept. 16
  - Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas, ch. 10
  - Connect ch. 10 (due by 11:30 AM)
- Sept. 18
  - Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas, ch. 10

**Week 5**
- Sept. 23
  - Flow
- Sept. 25
  - Flow

**Week 6**
- Sept. 30
  - Political Parties, ch. 9
  - Connect ch. 9 (due by 11:30 AM)
- Oct. 2
  - Political Parties, ch. 9

**Week 7**
- Oct. 7
  - Exam 1 Re-Take/Make-Up
- **Oct. 9**
  - Exam 2 (Chs. 9, 10, and Flow)
- **Oct. 10**
  - Online Quiz 2 (due by 11:59 PM)

**Week 8**
- Oct. 14
  - Texas Legislature, ch. 3
  - Connect ch. 3 (due by 11:30 AM)
- Oct. 16
  - Texas Legislature, ch. 3

**Week 9**
- Oct. 21
  - Executive Department and the Office of the Governor, ch. 4
  - Connect ch. 4 (due by 11:30 AM)
- Oct. 23
  - Executive Department and the Office of the Governor, ch. 4

**Week 10**
- Oct. 28
  - The Court System in Texas, ch. 5
  - Connect ch. 5 (due by 11:30 AM)
- Oct. 30
  - Voting and Political Participation, ch. 7
  - Connect ch. 7 (due by 11:30 AM)

**Week 11**
- Nov. 4
  - Voting and Political Participation, ch. 7
- Nov. 6
  - Exam 3 (chs. 4, 5, & 15)
- Nov. 7
  - Online Quiz 3 (due by 11:59 PM)
| Week 12 | Nov. 11 | Elections and Campaigns in Texas, ch. 8  
|         |         | Connect ch. 8 (due by 11:30 AM)  
|         | Nov. 13 | Elections and Campaigns, ch. 8  
| Week 13 | Nov. 18 | Public Policy, ch. 11  
|         |         | Connect 11 (due by 11:30 AM)  
|         | Nov. 20 | First-Year Celebration  
| Week 14 | Nov. 25 | Financing State Government, ch. 12  
|         |         | Connect 12 (due by 11:30 AM)  
|         | Nov. 27 | Thanksgiving Holiday  
| Week 15 | Dec. 2  | Financing State Government, ch. 12  
|         |         | Online Quiz 4 (due by 11:59 PM)  
| Dec. 9  |         | Final Exam 11-1:30 (chs. 8, 11, & 12)  
|         |         | Final Date for Make-Up and Re-Takes Exams.  
