POLS 2305.003
American Government
Spring 2016
TR 9:30-10:45 AM
Island Hall 163

Instructor: Dr. Robert J. Dillard
Office: Bay Hall 303
Office Hours: TWR 1:30 to 3:30
Phone: 361-825-5511
Email: Robert.Dillard@tamucc.edu

Course Description:
POLS 2305 is a survey course in American Government. What that implies is that we will be covering quite a bit of ground in this course and will not have time to focus in depth on any particular subject. However, I do have three major objectives that I hope to accomplish over the course of the semester: first, to familiarize students with the development of our constitutional system of government; second, to make students aware of their rights and responsibilities as members of this political community; and third, to outline the structure of our federal system and the functions of the branches of our national government. I do not lecture directly from the book. Therefore, it is essential that students attend class on a regular basis and listen and take notes.

Student Learning Outcomes:
On completion of this course students will be able to:
1. Recall basic facts related to the foundations of U.S. national government
2. Describe key political concepts related to U.S. institutions such as Congress, the Presidency, and the Judiciary.
3. Demonstrate their understanding of key concepts relating to U.S. political behavior such as voting, elections, political parties, interest groups and the media.

Core Outcomes

1. By having the students engage in critical thinking activities related to the Constitution, the political and philosophical foundations of the nation, governmental institutions, and political behavior.

2. By having students engage in written, verbal or visual activities related to the Constitution, the political and philosophical foundations of the nation, governmental institutions, and political behavior.
3. By having students engage in course related activities that connect personal responsibility and political ideology to encourage ethical decision-making

4. By having students engage in course related activities that connect social responsibility to civil rights, civil liberties, and to voting and voting behavior.

**Grading Criteria:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90 – 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80 – 89</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60 – 69</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
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**Evaluation:** There will be a total of four exams in this class, including the final. There are also Chapter Review Exercises through McGraw-Hill Connect. Links to the Chapter Review Exercises will appear on Blackboard. The “Fragile Freedom” Project will account for 10% of your grade.

**Grading Structure:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 4</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Extra Credit</td>
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**Evaluation:** The exams will consist of multiple choice questions. The exams will be computer graded which means that students must bring a number 2 pencil on exam days. **SCANTRONS WILL BE PROVIDED.** Make up exams will be given only upon receipt of an acceptable and legitimate excuse.

- If you arrive after the first student has completed and turned in their exam, you will not be able to take the exam that day.

**Required Materials for the Course:**


**Course Policies:**

You are expected to come prepared for class. If you do not understand something, ask. If you are not comfortable asking a question during a lecture, talk to me after class or during my office hours. It is very important that we discuss issues related to government and their impact on the community. You should be exposed to a variety of opinions that
may differ from your own. Respect those opinions and use them to help you reflect on why people hold different views.

Class lectures provide the basis for the course. I will present a great deal of material not covered in the book which may end up on the tests. Regular and consistent attendance is essential if you want to do well in the course.

Slides from class will be posted on blackboard 48 hours prior to the exam, and not before.

**Class Attendance:**
All students are expected to attend EVERY class. The major valid excuses for missing a class are illness and death. In order to maximize attendance, I will take random roll call using sign-in sheets throughout the semester. If you have an excused absence (university-related, illness with M.D. excuse), you must bring me documentation. I may issue random extra credit based on attendance at my discretion.

**Makeup Exams:**
Make-up exams will be allowed only for emergencies or with advanced approval. These exams will be different from the regular exams and may require documented proof of emergency.
- You need to contact me to determine if you can take a make-up exam.
- If you have an unexcused reason for missing the exam, talk to me.

**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 an F in the course.

**Dropping a Class**
Dropping a Class (strongly suggested):

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. April 8th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.
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 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.

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 contact the Disability Services Office at (361) 825-5816 or visit the office in Corpus Christi Hall #116.

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 Grade Appeals*
**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>POLITICS: WHO GETS WHAT, AND HOW?</td>
<td>KTR Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 28</td>
<td>DEMOCRACY AND AMERICAN POLITICS</td>
<td>KTR Chapter 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>DEMOCRACY AND AMERICAN POLITICS</td>
<td>KTR Chapter 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>DEMOCRACY AND AMERICAN POLITICS</td>
<td>KTR Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>THE FOUNDING AND THE CONSTITUTION</td>
<td>KTR Chapter 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>THE FOUNDING AND THE CONSTITUTION</td>
<td>KTR Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>AMERICAN FEDERALISM</td>
<td>KTR Chapter 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>American Federalism</td>
<td>KTR Chapter 4</td>
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Exam #1 – February 23rd

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>CONGRESS</td>
<td>KTR Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mar 1: CONGRESS  
KTR Chapter 7

Mar 3: CONGRESS  
KTR Chapter 7

Mar 8: THE PRESIDENCY  
KTR Chapter 8

Mar 10: THE PRESIDENCY  
KTR Chapter 8

March 15-17 Spring Break (no class)

Mar. 22: THE JUDICIARY  
KTR Chapter 10

Mar. 24: THE JUDICIARY  
KTR Chapter 7

Exam #2 – March 29th

Mar. 31: THE BUREAUCRACY  
KTR Chapter 9

Apr 5: THE BUREAUCRACY  
KTR Chapter 9

Apr. 7: CIVIL LIBERTIES  
KTR Chapter 5

Apr. 12: CIVIL LIBERTIES  
KTR Chapter 5

Apr. 14: CIVIL RIGHTS  
KTR Chapter 6

Apr. 19: CIVIL RIGHTS  
KTR Chapter 6

Exam #3 – April 21st

Apr 26: INTEREST GROUPS  
KTR Chapter 13
Apr 28: Public Opinion
      KTR Chapter 11

May 3: Final Class - Review

FINAL EXAM* – Thursday, May 5th, 2016, 8:00 am. – 10:30 am.
In our regular classroom.

*-Final Exam is cumulative. Roughly 50% of the material will come from the final block of instruction. The other half will be material from the first 3 blocks.
- The final exam is mandatory