Political Science 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 the 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. While the structure of this class is primarily that of lectures, I encourage questions and discussion. I do not lecture directly from the book. Therefore, it is essential that students attend class on a regular basis to listen and take notes.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Understanding of definitions, concepts and theories
2. Improve writing skills and material analysis.

Core Student Learning Outcomes

1. Having students engage in critical thinking activities, related to the Constitution, the political and philosophical foundations of the nation, governmental institutions, and political behavior.
2. Having students engage in written, verbal and visual activities related to the Constitution, the political and philosophical foundations of the nation, governmental institutions, and political behavior.
3. Having students engage in course related activities that connect personal responsibility and political ideology to encourage ethical decision making.
4. Having students engage in course related activities that connect social responsibility to civil rights, civil liberties, and to voting and voting behavior.

Required text


Students should have access to a copy of the text and be prepared to read the assigned chapters. Test questions may come from material in the text that has not been covered in class.
Course policies

Grades in this class will be based on points accumulated from tests and in class writing assignments. There will be four tests administered over the course of the semester, including a final. Each test will count for 100 points. There will be three in class writing assignments. Each assignment will count for up to 25 points and I will drop the lowest of the three. There is no make up for writing assignments. The grading scale will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>450-405</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>404-359</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>358-313</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>312-267</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>266-0</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The format for the exams will be multiple choice questions and all exams will be computer graded which means that the student must bring a number 2 pencil on exam days. Make up exams will be given only upon the receipt of an acceptable excuse. It is the responsibility of the student to talk to me immediately upon return to class regarding a make up exam. Students should also plan to be on time for exams as no exam will be given to a student who enters after the first student has finished, turned in her exam and departed.

Class attendance and extra credit

In my many years of teaching political science, I have found very few students who routinely cut class and do well on the exams. Therefore, in order to encourage class attendance, I will do two things in this class: I will call roll at the beginning of each class and I will provide “bonus” points toward the final exam for regular attendees.

The bonus point incentive will work as follows: students who have fewer than three unexcused absences will receive an additional 20 points toward their final grade. This can provide a significant boost since it represents almost half of a letter grade on the grading scale.

Students have the responsibility of demonstrating that they have met the course attendance requirement. This means that they must be present when roll is called (or on rare occasions when late let me know that they were there in that class) and must provide me with proof of excused absences (as defined by the university) within one week of returning to class.
Additional requirements for POLS 2305

1. Do be on time for this class. Regular tardiness is a form of student behavior totally unacceptable to me. Late arrival distracts both the professor and other students.

2. Do not bring children to class. They also are a distraction, no matter how well behaved they may be.

3. Do your own work on exams. Learning may be a shared endeavor but demonstrating knowledge is a solo effort. Cheating will not be tolerated. I will closely monitor exams and any wandering eyes or other attempts to cheat will result in the exam being picked up and the offender(s) reported for further disciplinary action.

4. If you need to leave class early, see me before class begins and explain why. Do not simply walk out of my class before you are dismissed.

5. Pay attention and take notes. Most of the questions on your exams come from lecture material. Talking to your neighbors or napping will be counterproductive to your final grade.

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 a 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 Disabilities Services office for assistance at 361-825-5816.
Grade appeal process

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards, as outlined in the course 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/studentsinfo.html For assistance and or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

Statement of academic continuity

In the event of an unforeseen adverse effect, 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

Course outline (dates subject to change with notice)

January 20. Go over syllabus, introduction to class.

Ch. 1 in text.

Ch. 2 in text.

February 3, 8. Federalism.  
Ch. 3 in text.

Exam 1, February 10.

February 15, 17, Civil liberties  
Ch. 4 in text.

February 22, Writing assignment 1

February 24, 29. Civil rights.  
Ch. 5 in text.

March 2, Exam 2
March 7, 9. Congress.
   Ch. 10 in text.

March 14-18, Spring break

March 21, Writing assignment 2

   Ch. 11, 12 in text.

March 30, Exam 3

April 4, 6. Judiciary.
   Ch. 13 in text.

April 11, 13. Parties and Interest Groups
   Ch. 7, 8 in text.

April 18, Writing assignment 3

April 20, 25. Voting and elections
   Ch. 9 in text

April 27, May 2, Film

Final exam, Wednesday, May 11, 1:45 p.m.