U.S. Government and Politics

Course Description

This is a lower-division course that introduces students to the fundamentals of American Government. The class will focus on political behavior and institutions, public policy, and provide a complementary overview of U.S. political history when appropriate.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students shall be able to recognize and recall fundamental facts related to the: foundations of the state and local government, state and local political institutions, state and local political behavior, and state and local public policy.

2. Students shall be able to express and interpret information concerning key political concepts related to the: foundations of the state and local government, state and local political institutions, state and local political behavior, and state and local public policy.

3. 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.

Major Course Requirements

Exams: (3) exams in multiple-choice format and a final quiz.
Exam 1: 30%
Exam 2: 30%
Exam 3: 30%
Final Quiz: 10%

To log into Blackboard for the course go to the following: iol.tamucc.edu
After logging into your Island Online account click on our class (POLS 2305-007) on the right-hand side of the screen.

*The exams will not be comprehensive. Scantrons will be provided, but pencils will not. Please bring one. The final quiz is meant to serve as a final overall assessment of key concepts in the
class. It will be a multiple-choice exam available online in Blackboard and available to students from the final class period to the university-approved final exam time; a review sheet will be provided for every exam.

**Required Readings**

There are no books to purchase for the class. The following textbook is available for free online and a PDF will be provided in your BB shell.


**Format**

The class will be structured around instructor led lectures. The book will reinforce my lectures and students should read the corresponding chapters. Students should participate in class.

**Attendance/PowerPoint:** I will not check attendance everyday. I may issue random extra credit based on attendance at my discretion. Much of the material from lecture is not always covered in the book so attendance is very helpful. Lecture slides will be posted online prior to each exam for all students.

**Note on Exam 1:** Your first exam will be no more difficult than those that follow. Students (especially freshman) tend to do much worse on the first exam than the latter exams. Bear this in mind ahead of time in case this applies to you after the first exam. I will post test reviews on Blackboard a week prior to each exam and hold a comprehensive class review prior to each exam.

**Missed Exams:** All missed exams will be given on Missed Exam Day without exception, unless the absence is due to a university-sanctioned function that is approved and scheduled in advance. *Missed exam day is reserved for students that missed an exam; you cannot retake an exam on missed exam day because you are unhappy with a previous exam grade.*

**Class Schedule:**

**Section I: Political Foundations and Institutions**

**Week 1: Introduction (1/20)**
An introduction to the class: I will explain my expectations for the class, distribute your syllabus, and general process for our class.
Week 2: Ideology (25/27)
Read Chapters 1 and 2

Week 3: Public Policymaking and Federalism (1/3)
Read Chapter 6 and 13

Weeks 4: Political Parties (8/10)
Read Chapters 5 and 11

Week 5: Congress (15/17)
Read Chapters 3 and 4

Week 6: Review Material/Exam 1 (22/24)
Review for exam I

Exam I: Wednesday, February 24

SECTION II: POLITICAL BEHAVIOR AND PUBLIC POLICY

Week 7: Political Participation and Elections (29/2)
Read Chapters 7 and 10

Week 8: Interest Groups and Lobbying (7/9)
Read Chapter 12

Week 9: Spring Break **NO CLASS** (14/16)

Week 10: Foreign Policy (21/23)
Read Chapter 17

Week 11: Review Material/Exam II (28/30)
Review for Exam II

Exam II: Wednesday, March 30

Week 12: Energy and Environmental Policy (4/6)
Reach Chapter 14
Week 13: Civil Liberties (11/13)
Read Chapter 18

Week 14: Civil Rights (18/20)
Read Chapter 14

Week 15: Review Material/Exam III (25/27)
Review for Exam III

Exam III: Wednesday, April 27

Week 16: Final Class Period (May 2)

Missed Exam Day on May 2

*The final quiz will be available on Blackboard from the last day of classes (Monday, May 2 until your university-approved final exam time (TBD at this time)). You must access the exam via BB and take it by this time; no late submissions can be accepted.

Student Responsibilities:
TURN OFF CELL PHONES!!
Pay attention during class. Private conversations, sleeping, and reading non-class related material will not be tolerated. Learn something! Participate in class discussions.

Students with Disabilities/Religious Needs:
If you are a student with a disability or have special needs, please let me know during the first week of class. In addition, students observing religious holidays that conflict with class exams/presentations must let me know during the first week of class.

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 Driftwood 101. 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 Honesty 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, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) If unsure of what honesty entails or if for more information regarding the penalties for academic dishonesty, please refer to the University Catalog. Instances of plagiarism or cheating may result in either a zero on the assignment and/or failing the class, decided at the instructor’s discretion.

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.
**Grade Appeal Process** As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, the student may take the steps below.

1. Presentation of grievance to instructor. (This step must be taken within fourteen calendar days after the beginning of the next term.)
2. Appeal to department chair or area coordinator.
3. Written appeal to the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
4. Preliminary review and advising by an ombudsman appointed by the Provost.
5. Submission of file by department chair to the chair of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee.
6. Review of file by committee chair and submission of case to committee.
7. Proceedings of the University Academic Standards Grievance Committee. (Committee holds hearing, reviews data, presents findings to all parties, and makes recommendation to Provost.)
8. Decision by Provost.
9. Final appeal in writing to the Provost if student or instructor thinks appropriate procedures have not been followed.

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 University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.htm.

For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

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.

*The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the course schedule or material due to instructional needs throughout the semester.*