Please read this syllabus in full. You are responsible for its contents throughout the length of this course. Portions of this course will be conducted online. Please be careful to note which days the class meets on campus and which days instruction will take place online.

Course Description
This course serves to introduce the politics, constitutions, and political institutions of the state of Texas. Students will explore the relationship between the federal, state, and local branches of government.

Required Text (Available at campus and off-campus bookstore.)

*Please note: Access to McGraw-Hill Connect is required for the course.*

Class Websites
Blackboard – [https://bb9.tamucc.edu/](https://bb9.tamucc.edu/)
McGraw-Hill Connect –

*Note: To ensure that your assignment grades properly transfer to Blackboard, you should always access the course and your assignments from Blackboard, rather than from Connect. Follow the assignment links from Blackboard; this will allow your two accounts to connect.*

Student Learning Outcomes
Upon completion of the course, students should be able to complete the following:

- Recall basic facts related to the foundations of the Texas state government.
- Describe key political concepts related to U.S. institutions such as the legislature, the governor, and the judiciary.
- Demonstrate their understanding of key concepts relating to the political behavior in the state of Texas such as voting, elections, and political parties.

Core Student Learning Outcomes
The four Core Objectives related to this course are Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. By the end of the semester, the course will have met these objectives:
• 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.
• 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.
• By having students engage in course-related activities that connect personal responsibility and political ideology to encourage ethical decision making.
• By having students engage in course-related activities that connect social responsibility to civil rights, civil liberties, and to voting and voting behavior, and the policy making process.

Major Course Requirements
Your grade in this course will be based on the following components:

• Online Assignments – 400 points
  o Throughout the length of the semester, you will have the opportunity to complete a variety of assignments during our online course sessions. In total, there are 480 possible points of online assignments offered. Students will not receive extra credit for completing more than 400 points.
  o Students receive credit for all the online assignments they complete by the relative due dates. Late work is not accepted in the course. Instead, students are offered additional opportunities to make up their online points. Students should not ask to make up late work or submit late assignments.
  o 12 quizzes – administered through McGraw-Hill Connect (180 points)
    ▪ Quizzes are based solely on textbook reading
    ▪ 10 question quizzes worth 15 points each
    ▪ Additional information will be provided in class and on Blackboard
  o 12 LearnSmarts – administered through McGraw-Hill Connect (180 points)
    ▪ Interactive chapter readings utilizing McGraw-Hill’s SmartBook feature
    ▪ Worth 15 points each
    ▪ Additional information will be provided in class and on Blackboard
  o 6 discussion forums – conducted on Blackboard (120 points)
    ▪ Original post (worth 15 points) and response to classmate (worth 5 points)
    ▪ Additional information will be provided in class and on Blackboard

• Exams – 400 points
  o There will be four exams administered in-class throughout the semester. Exams are noncumulative.
  o Each exam is 50 multiple-choice questions and is worth 100 points.
  o Scantrons will be provided for in-class exams, but students will need to bring pencils and erasers.
  o NO individual make-ups are given for missed exams. In place of individual make-ups, students who miss an exam will have the opportunity to make up a single missed test during the final exam period by taking a cumulative make-up exam. The cumulative make-up is not an opportunity to replace a low exam score. Students may only make up one exam.

• Attendance – 200 points
We will meet in person 22 times throughout the semester. Attendance will be taken via a sign-in sheet at the beginning of each class meeting. As our class is only 50 minutes long, it is vital that you arrive in class on time. If you are not present to sign the roll sheet, you will be counted absent for the day and will forfeit the day’s attendance points.

I will forgive your first two absences from the course. After that, for each absence, you will lose 10 points from your attendance grade.

Total Course Points = 1,000 points

Grading Scale

\[
\begin{align*}
A &= 900 – 1,000 \text{ points} \\
B &= 800 – 899 \text{ points} \\
C &= 700 – 799 \text{ points} \\
D &= 600 – 699 \text{ points} \\
F &= 599 \text{ points and below}
\end{align*}
\]

Course Policies

Attendance/Tardiness

Because a significant portion of this course will be conducted online, attendance in those classes that are conducted in-person is vital. Attendance will be taken daily via a sign-in sheet. (The act of forgery of a classmate’s signature will be addressed using the Academic Integrity policy discussed within this syllabus.) If you are not present to sign the attendance sheet when it circulates, you will be counted absent for the day. Two absences are forgiven for the semester; additional absences will negatively impact your course grade. Course attendance is recorded in Starfish. Students will receive automated notifications if they have accumulated multiple absences.

Late Work and Makeup Exams

Late work is not accepted in this course. Deadlines are stated in the syllabus and are posted on Blackboard/Connect. Students are responsible for tracking their own assignments and due dates.

If you miss one exam, you will be eligible to take a cumulative makeup exam at the end of the semester during the course’s final exam period. No individual makeup exams are permitted during the semester.

Student athletes should notify the professor at the beginning of the semester of their participation in campus athletics. Athletes are responsible for notifying the professor of any travel dates and for completing assignments before scheduled travel.

Extra Credit

I do not offer any individual extra credit opportunities in this course. There are no exceptions to this policy. Please do not request individual extra credit at any point during the semester.

Email Policy

Email is a form of professional communication and should be treated as such. I will use email and Blackboard to communicate with you throughout the semester, and you are expected to regularly check your Islander email account.
Please respect the following policies regarding email communication:

- Email should include your first and last name, your class number, and your section number (e.g., Jane Doe – POLS 2305.004). I teach multiple classes and sections during the semester. Providing this information allows me to locate your information and respond in a timely manner.
- All email to the professor must be sent from your official TAMUCC email address. This is to ensure your privacy and to avoid spam filters. I will not respond to emails originating from Gmail, Yahoo, or other domains. There is a good chance that I will not respond to emails sent from other domains.
- I do my best to respond quickly, but please allow 24 hours for responses.

Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage
Please silence your cell phone during class. If you need to use your phone (or other electronic device) during class time for any reason, please leave the room. However, if you are leaving on a regular basis to use your phone, you will be counted absent. (If there are special circumstances, please let me know.)

Laptop computers and tablets are permitted in the class for note-taking purposes. If your computer usage is distracting to fellow students or the professor, you will be asked to discontinue.

Classroom Decorum
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 Integrity
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. According to the TAMUCC Student Code of Conduct, plagiarism is “[i]ntentionally, knowingly, or carelessly presenting the work of another as one’s own without proper acknowledgment of the source” (Code of Conduct, http://judicialaffairs.tamucc.edu/assets/Article%20III.pdf). In this course, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment will be handled with the utmost gravity; not only will offenses receive lowered grades in the course, but they will also be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs, in accordance with TAMUCC guidelines.
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. You will need to check online for the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

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 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 #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 outline 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, where 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., email, websites, 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 secondary means of contact.

**Academic Calendar Reminders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W 1/20</td>
<td>Classes begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 1/27</td>
<td>Last day to register or add a class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 3/14 – F 3/18</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 4/8</td>
<td>Last day to drop a class</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 5/2</td>
<td>Last day to withdraw from the University</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 5/3</td>
<td>Last day of classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 5/4</td>
<td>Reading Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 5/5 – F 5/6; M 5/9 – W 5/11</td>
<td>Final Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 5/12 – F 5/13</td>
<td>Grading Days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Schedule**

*Please note: Readings should be completed before class on the date they are listed. (For example, you should come to class on Monday, January 25 having read Ch. 1, “Introduction to Texas History and Politics.”) On online course days, please locate your assignments in the “Online Course Meetings” folders under “Content” on Blackboard.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Location</th>
<th>Topic (Reading) Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W 1/20</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Course Introduction and Syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 1/22</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Discussion Board – Post and Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 1/25</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Texas Political Culture (Ch. 1, “Introduction to Texas History and Politics”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 1/27</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Texas History (Ch. 1, “Introduction to Texas History and Politics”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 1/29</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Ch. 1 Quiz  Ch. 1 LearnSmart</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 2/1</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Texas Constitution (Ch. 2, “The Texas State Constitution and the American Federal System” – pp. 27-45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 2/3</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Federalism (Ch. 2, “The Texas State Constitution and the American Federal System,” – pp. 46-54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 2/5</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Ch. 2 Quiz  Ch. 2 LearnSmart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Class Location</td>
<td>Topic (Reading)</td>
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<td>W 2/10</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 2/12</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>View “FRONTLINE: The Storm”</td>
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<td>Discussion Board – Post and Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 2/15</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Ch. 6 Quiz</td>
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<td>Ch. 6 LearnSmart</td>
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<td>Exam Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 2/17</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td><strong>EXAM 1</strong> in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 2/19</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Ch. 3 Quiz</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Ch. 3 LearnSmart</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 2/22</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Texas Legislature</td>
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<td>W 2/24</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>The Governor</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 2/26</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Discussion Board – Post and Response</td>
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<td>Ch. 4 Quiz</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ch. 4 LearnSmart</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 2/29</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>The Plural Executive</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 3/2</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Texas Courts</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 3/4</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Ch. 5 Quiz</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Ch. 5 LearnSmart</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 3/7</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Exam Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 3/9</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td><strong>EXAM 2</strong> in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 3/11</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Discussion Board – Post and Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 3/14 thru F 3/18</td>
<td></td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 3/21</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Voting &amp; Political Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 3/23</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>The Voting Rights Act of 1965</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 3/25</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Ch. 7 Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ch. 7 LearnSmart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Class Location</td>
<td>Topic (Reading) Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 3/28</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>In-Class Viewing: <em>Last Man Standing</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 3/30</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>In-Class Viewing: <em>Last Man Standing</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| F 4/1  | Online | *Discussion Board – Post and Response*  
*Ch. 8 Quiz*  
*Ch. 8 LearnSmart* | *Ch. 9 Quiz*  
*Ch. 9 LearnSmart*  
*Exam Review* |
| M 4/4  | Classroom | Campaigns and Elections  
(Ch. 8, “Elections and Campaigns in Texas”)* | Political Parties  
(Ch. 9, “Political Parties in Texas”)* |
| W 4/6  | Classroom | *Exam 3 in class*  
(Chs. 7-9)* | *Exam 3 in class*  
(Chs. 7-9)* |
| F 4/8  | Online | *Ch. 9 Quiz*  
*Ch. 9 LearnSmart*  
*Exam Review* | *Ch. 10 Quiz*  
*Ch. 10 LearnSmart*  
*Ch. 12 Quiz*  
*Ch. 12 LearnSmart* |
| M 4/11 | Classroom | Financing State Government  
(Ch. 12, “Financing State Government”)*  
Intro to Public Policy  
(Ch. 11, “Public Policy in Texas” – pp. 275-280)* | Education Policy  
(Ch.11, “Public Policy in Texas” – pp. 285-292)* |
| W 4/13 | Classroom | Interest Groups  
*Discussion Board – Post and Response*  
*Ch. 11 Quiz*  
*Ch. 11 LearnSmart*  
*Exam Review*  
*Ch. 11 Quiz*  
*Ch. 11 LearnSmart*  
*Exam Review*  
*EXAM 4 in class*  
(Chs. 10-12)*  
Cumulative Make-Up to be given during Final Exam time slot. |

*This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.*  
*Students are responsible for using the most current version.*