POLS-2306 Triad L  
(Sections: 480,481,482,483,484,490,491,492,493)  
State and Local Politics  
Spring 2016

Dr. David Smith  
Office: BH 337  
Office Telephone: x2870  
Office Hours: T(12-1pm) W(11-2:30) R(12-1pm)  
Email: david.smith2@tamucc.edu

COURSE LOCATION AND TIME: BH-103 Tuesday and Thursday 2-3:15

COURSE OBJECTIVES/DESCRIPTION

Introduction  
State and local governments affect the lives of citizens everyday. They build roads, fund public schools, promote economic development, and operate public universities (including A&M-Corpus Christi). In democracies, the idea is that the people are in charge. It may not always appear that way; nonetheless citizens can and do influence state and local governments. Thus, it is essential that students understand the politics, processes, and institutions of state and local government and are knowledgeable about politics.

State and Local Government:  
The politics, government, and administration of American states, counties, cities, and special districts, with special emphasis on Texas. 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.

Required Texts (available at the campus bookstore):  
The textbook and access code to Americans Governing are available at the University Bookstore. The access code is also available online.

- Mora et al., The State of Texas: Government, Politics and Policy  
  ISBN: 9781259330285
- Connect/LearnSmart Software (THIS IS BUNDLED IN WITH THE CUSTOM ED.)

Yes, you will need the CONNECT code which is bundled in either of the two options that you choose.
The four Core Outcomes (SLOs) 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 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.

Expectations and Assignments

This class will be largely lecture driven. That being said, Politics is about the free exchange of ideas, beliefs and values amongst an organized group of individuals. Keeping that in mind, I encourage and welcome questions, comments and discussions amongst the class. If you do not understand a concept or a point, there is a very good chance that one of your fellow classmates is having the same problem.

During the semester there will be four exams that cover material from the lectures and the book. There will be four assignments over the course of the semester that allow you an opportunity to explore more in-depth the government of the United States and your interaction/place within that structure. The assignments will be posted and turned in online. Third, you will have 12 online quizzes that will prepare you for the exams. These quizzes are designed to help you identify concepts and terms that may appear on the exams.

Instructions for the assignments will be posted online along with the due dates for each assignment. There are different options contained within each assignment in order for you to have a little bit of choice in the assignment. There are no late assignments accepted in this course.
GRADING/EVALUATION:

Your grade will consist of the following components: The exams will not be cumulative. Please note, THE EXAMS WILL NOT BE CUMULATIVE!

4 Exams @ 100 points = 400
17 Chapter Assignments for differing point values = 220
4 LearnSmart Modules @ 50 points = 200
12 Quizzes (online) @ 10 points = 120
Integrated Assignment = 100
Total Points Possible = 1040

Grading Scale:

A: 936-1040 points;
B: 832-935 points;
C: 728-831 points;
D: 624-727 points;
F: 0-623 points.

EMAIL: david.smith2@tamucc.edu

1. Please consider email as official correspondence
2. Efforts will be made to respond to address your email within 24-48 hours. If you do not receive an email response within 48 hours, please send a follow-up email.
3. No email correspondence on weekends.
4. No email correspondence on the day before an exam or deadline.
5. Emails should be in regards to class business. It is NOT the place for summaries of lectures, discussions or readings.
6. PLEASE use the subject line in a way that indicates the content of the message. Please use professional language and include your full name, section number, and a complete inquiry in the body of the email. Unprofessional emails will result in a non-response.
General Course Policies and Exam Policies:

1. *Make-ups (Examinations)* – Make-up exams will be offered at the end of the semester. The make-up exam (for whatever reason) will be offered at the end of the semester during the window of time of the final exam. There are no other times that a make-up will be offered. There are no exceptions to this time. Make-up exams will only be offered for the first three exams. There is not a final exam make-up that will be offered.

2. Exam format – All exams can be a combination of the following types of material: essay, short answer, multiple choice and/or true/false. The quizzes will follow this same type of formatting.

3. Freedom of Speech – Feel free to raise your hand with a question or comment. Reducing confusion, providing clarification, or responding to student curiosity is an important part of the classroom process and will be undertaken to the extent that time and class size permit. In most cases, if you did not understand something, it is because I did not explain it clearly, so you will be doing your colleagues and yourself a service if you request a clarification.

4. Academic etiquette – Universities must maintain standards of academic etiquette in order to affect an atmosphere conducive to learning. You are expected to demonstrate courtesy to one another in and out of the classroom. Talking to one’s neighbor(s) during class lectures or general discussions, chronic lateness, leaving class before it has been dismissed, etc., is inherently disruptive and thus injurious to the rights of others to the opportunity to learn. As such, it is unacceptable in a university classroom. Please do not bring things to eat into the classroom, but drinks are okay. As a courtesy to others, take your trash with you when class is over. *Students who are unable to abide by these rules of academic etiquette and normal civility will be removed from the class.*

5. Academic Honor Code – Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in the University Student Handbook. The Academic Honor Code is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student’s own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community. Violations of the Academic Honor Code will not be tolerated.

6. Academic Dishonesty, Cheating and Plagiarism – Academic dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism of any kind are unacceptable. There are no exceptions. Consequences for academic dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism include, but are not limited to: a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, noncredit for the assignment, additional work and/or direct referral to university officials.
7. **Dropping a Class** – I hope no student needs to drop this course. However, events sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. April 10th is the last day to drop a course for the semester with an automatic grade of “W”.

8. **Grade Appeals** – 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.tamu.edu/students/studentinfo.html](http://cla.tamu.edu/students/studentinfo.html) For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

9. **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 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 at (361) 825-5816

10. **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.

11. **Computer Usage and Cell Phones in the Classroom**: Understandably, many students now use laptops to take notes in class. Please know that laptop usage is a privilege, not a right, and I will ban all computers in class if they become a distraction to others. If you must use a computer in class, please sit in the back 2 rows or the first row of the class. Do not use your computer for anything other than note taking. Use of computers to play games, Skype your friends, update your Facebook status, or for any other reason than note taking is strictly prohibited. If you are found doing these things, at the very least your computer will be closed and you will not be able to use it for the remainder of the class period. You may also be asked to leave the class. Additionally, cell phone use is prohibited. In fact, you should not have your cell phones out or visible during class. If you are waiting for an emergency phone call, please notify me before class. Otherwise, if you use your cell phone for any reason during class, you will be asked to leave and will be given a zero for any in-class assignments due that day.
**GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE**

We will attempt to stick as closely to this schedule as possible; however, this serves as a guideline and may be updated as the semester progresses. As always, the Professor reserves the right to alter the schedule and dates of material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Introduction and Syllabus</td>
<td>Read Chapter 1-Chapter 2 and Chap 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>Foundations of Government</td>
<td>Reading Chap 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>Concepts of Government</td>
<td>Preparing for First Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>Concepts of Govt cont and Exam #1 Prep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>Exam #1 and Parties</td>
<td>Reading Ch 9 &amp; 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>Parties and Interest Groups</td>
<td>Reading Ch 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>Elections and Exam #2</td>
<td>Reading Ch 6 &amp; 7 \ P Preparing for Exam #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>Legislature and Governor</td>
<td>Reading Ch 12 &amp; 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>Governor and Courts</td>
<td>Finish Reading Ch 13 &amp; Preparing for Exam #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>Exam #3 and the Courts</td>
<td>Reading Ch 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#11</td>
<td>Civil Rights and Liberties in Texas</td>
<td>Reading Ch 4 &amp; Ch 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#12</td>
<td>Civil Liberties &amp; Civil Rights</td>
<td>Finish Reading Ch 5 and Preparing for Exam #4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#13</td>
<td>Texas Policy Issues</td>
<td>Last Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#14</td>
<td>Prep for Exam #4 (Final Exam)</td>
<td>Exam #4 (Final Exam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#15</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>