POLS 2305.285
American Government
Spring 2017
MWF 11:00 am to 11:50 am
Bay Hall 103

Instructor: Dr. Robert J. Dillard
Office: Bay Hall 303
Office Hours: MWF 1-3 PM
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:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90 – 100</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>80 – 89</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60 – 69</td>
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<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. The integrated assignment will constitute 20% of your final grade.

**Grading Structure:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrated Assignment</td>
<td>20%</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:**

No book required! Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard.

**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 will 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:

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 7th 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**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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. 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf)). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.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 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

Jan 18: INTRODUCTION
Jan 20: POLITICS: WHO GETS WHAT, AND HOW?
Jan 23: DEMOCRACY AND AMERICAN POLITICS
Jan 25: DEMOCRACY AND AMERICAN POLITICS
Jan 27: THE FOUNDING AND THE CONSTITUTION
Jan 30: THE FOUNDING AND THE CONSTITUTION
Feb 1: THE FOUNDING AND THE CONSTITUTION
Feb 3: AMERICAN FEDERALISM
Feb 6: AMERICAN FEDERALISM
Feb 8: AMERICAN FEDERALISM
Feb 10: REVIEW
Exam #1 – February 13th
Feb 15: CONGRESS
Feb 17: CONGRESS
Feb 20: CONGRESS
Feb 22: THE PRESIDENCY
Feb 24: THE PRESIDENCY
Feb 27: THE PRESIDENCY
Mar 1: THE JUDICIARY
Mar 3: THE JUDICIARY
Mar 6: REVIEW

Exam #2 – March 8th

Mar 10: No Class!

March 13-17 Spring Break (no class)

Mar 20: THE BUREAUCRACY
Mar 22: THE BUREAUCRACY
Mar 24: CIVIL LIBERTIES
Mar 27: CIVIL LIBERTIES
Mar 29: CIVIL LIBERTIES
Mar 31: CIVIL RIGHTS
Apr 3: CIVIL RIGHTS
Apr 5: CIVIL RIGHTS
Apr 7: THE MEDIA
Apr 10: THE MEDIA
Apr 12: THE MEDIA
Apr 14: REVIEW

Exam #3 – April 17th

Apr 19: INTEREST GROUPS
Apr 21: INTEREST GROUPS
Apr 24: INTEREST GROUPS
Apr 26: POLITICAL PARTIES
Apr 28: POLITICAL PARTIES
May 1: REVIEW

FINAL EXAM* – Friday, May 5th, 2016, 11:00 am. – 1:30 pm. 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