POLS 2305.W02 – U.S. Government and Politics (fully online)

**Summer II (2017) Syllabus, Version 1.0**

**Instructor:** Dr. Jennifer L. Epley  
**Office Location:** Bay Hall 341  
**Office Telephone:** (361) 825-2554

**Office Hours:**
- By appointment by office phone or online via Skype. Students may need to download Skype from the internet. It is a free program for computer-to-computer phone calls and video conferencing. Skype charges fees for phone-to-computer or computer-to-phone calls.

**Email:** jennifer.epley@tamucc.edu  
- Please consider e-mail as official correspondence.  
- Efforts will be made to address your e-mail within 48 hours. If you do not receive an email within 48 hours, please send a follow-up email.  
- No email correspondence on weekends.  
- No email correspondence on the day before an examination or deadline.  
- E-mail communications should be about class business. E-mail is not the place for summaries of lectures, discussions, or readings, however.  
- **Please use the subject line in a way that indicates the content of the message. Please also use professional language and include your full name, section number, and a complete inquiry in the body of the message. Unprofessional emails will result in non-response.**  
- Please keep copies of e-mails that are sent and received for records purposes.

**Required Course Website:**  
- Blackboard online ([https://iol.tamucc.edu/](https://iol.tamucc.edu/))  
  Free access for university students

**Course Section Details for Registered Students:**  
POLS 2305.W02 - U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (online only)  
CRN 35601: This class does not meet physically face-to-face in a classroom.

**Course Description and Outcomes:**  
Political Science 2305 (online version) is an introductory course about political science in general and American politics in specific. Together in this course we will develop your ability to analyze various political processes and institutions. We will go beyond the basic facts of history and civics—what political institutions exist, how did they arise, who are the key political figures, etc.—to address basic questions of political science such as: What is the function of government and when does it fulfill or abdicate this function? How do political actors such as politicians and parties attain power? What is the role of institutional rules and procedures? What do citizens think about and do with regard to politics? Such questions and the answers we will find are applicable to us as citizens, residents, and visitors in the United States. These issues are also relevant elsewhere in the world. Through a process of collaboration, cooperation, and discovery, we will develop our knowledge base and skills. Substantive knowledge, critical thinking and analysis, developing and defending arguments, and the clear and concise articulation of ideas and evidence will be important components of the discussions, writings, and evaluations in this course.
Topics covered include, but are not limited to: federalism, the U.S. Constitution, the three branches of government, the bureaucracy, the legal system, public opinion, political behavior, the mass media and politics, political parties, campaigns and elections, interest groups, and how the government and society deal with issues such as personal liberty, rights, the economy, and different domestic and foreign public policies.

Student Learning Outcomes for POLS 2305 per the Department of Social Sciences:
The four University Core Curriculum Program outcomes 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…

- 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.

Required Textbook Available from University Bookstore and Direct from Publisher:

Title: Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship in American Politics [7th brief edition]
Authors: Christine Barbour and Gerald C. Wright
ISBN 978-1-5063-4995-4 and Publisher: Sage and CQ Press
(The ISBN may be different at the university bookstore; the book cover will be mostly green with a watercolor painting of the Statue of Liberty on the front.)

The textbook is available on course reserve at the university library’s front desk on campus as well.

Additional readings, websites, and multi-media will be required. These materials will supplement the textbook chapters and the instructor’s lecture notes. The instructor will provide the copies and links to students via Blackboard and/or by email.

Performance Evaluation and Grading: Your final course grade will consist of the following assessments…

60%  Four Online Major Examinations (individual work) – Each examination is worth 15% of the course grade. The format will be a combination of multiple choice and true/false items. See the attached schedule for details. The format will be a combination of 40 to 50 multiple choice and true/false items. Exams are administered completely online. See the attached schedule for details. On the designated day in the schedule, the online system in Blackboard will be open from 8am to 11pm (Corpus Christi, Texas time). Students will have one hour to complete each examination online as an individual unless prior accommodations are made in advance for extended time (documentation
needed). Students are permitted to use their books, notes, and the internet, but are not allowed to work with any other people.

**40% Four Case Study/Application Responses [CSAR] (group work)** – There will be four CSARs to be submitted during the course of the summer semester online in Blackboard (see schedule for details). The CSARs are collaborative group assignments (i.e., wiki-technology documents). Instructions and video tutorials are included with each assignment online.

**Make-Up Policy:**
No late work is accepted for any assessment. No exceptions.

If, for any reason, a student misses a major examination, he/she has permission to take one make-up examination on the same day of the university-scheduled final in the allotted time slot. No more than one make-up examination is permitted. No exceptions. Make-up examinations may be different in content and format from those given previously in class. Students must sign up in advance so that the instructor has time to make the necessary versions before the final test day. Students who do not sign up in advance will not be permitted to make up any missing exams. Make-up examinations are not opportunities to retake an examination for a better grade.

*Example Scenario:* A student misses the first exam and takes the other three exams on time. That student has the option to take the first exam on the day of finals. He/she will sign up on the list, thus getting permission to take the first exam. That student will then need to re-study the course material to perform well on the make-up of the first exam.

**Grading Scale:**
A = 90 – 100  B = 80 – 89  C = 70 – 79  D = 60 – 69  F = 59 and below

**Additional Notes:**
No extra credit options are available for this course. No exceptions. Please do not request extra credit from the instructor at any point in time (especially at the end of the semester).

**Grade Appeal Process:**
*All Assessments* – Students have five days from the date that a score is posted in Blackboard for each individual component to make a typed grade appeal to the instructor.

**Final Grade - Grade Appeals Process:** As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that she 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.
Dropping a Class: The instructor hopes 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 the instructor 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. Please refer to the academic calendar online for information about the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

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.

***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 an assignment, a failing grade for the course, noncredit for an assignment, additional work, and/or direct referral to university officials.

Please note that the university requires that faculty members formally report all instances of academic misconduct. Here is the form:
http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/assets/Academic%20Misconduct%20Incident%20Form%208-17-11-1.pdf and here are the procedures:
http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/assets/procedure_academicmisconductcases.pdf

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the use of unauthorized information during a quiz or exam, plagiarism, submitting the same paper for multiple courses without permission, or depriving another student of the ability to perform his or her work. The term cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments, plagiarism; or (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the university faculty or staff. The term plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. Plagiarism also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling or distribution of term papers or other academic materials. If you have questions about the university’s policy on academic dishonesty, please see the Student Code of Conduct at http://judicialaffairs.tamucc.edu/StudentCofC.html.

Online Classroom Policies:
- 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 online or in person may be instructed to leave the virtual classroom, office, meeting space, etc.**

- The instructor will assume that you have made an earnest effort to understand the material. This will allow you to be prepared to engage the material in more detail or address misunderstandings during any online sessions and in person.
- To foster an intellectually supportive environment, students should adhere to the **dialogue guidelines** (see extra handout).

**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, 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 Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Veterans:** 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. Veterans can find more information online at [http://vets.tamucc.edu/](http://vets.tamucc.edu/). Please also communicate with your instructor for assistance.

**Student Caregivers:** If you have caregiving responsibilities (e.g., parent of a child or care for elderly parents) and you anticipate scheduling difficulties, please discuss this at the beginning of the semester with the instructor to work out an appropriate strategy.

**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.

**S.A.I.L. System:** S.A.I.L. is a secure online student portal where you can access your student, academic, and financial aid records at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Students can find information related to registration, class schedules, course catalogs, tuition and fees, grades, etc. at [http://sail.tamucc.edu/](http://sail.tamucc.edu/).

**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.

**Academic Calendar Reminders from** [http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/academic_cal.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/academic_cal.html)
**Summer II 2017 Academic Calendar:**

- **July 3**: Classes begin
- **July 4**: Independence Day Holiday
- **July 5**: Last day to register or add a class
- **July 24**: Last day to drop a class
- **August 2**: Last day to withdraw and Last day of classes
- **August 4**: Summer Session II final examinations
- **August 5**: Summer Commencement
- **August 8**: All Summer Grades Due

→ For the latest information on dates and deadlines, please inquire at the appropriate university office (e.g., Academic Affairs Office, Office of the Registrar, Dean’s Office of your major, main department of your major, etc.), with your academic advisor, and your professors.

**Course Schedule:** *All dates, assignments, and evaluations are subject to change with advanced notice. Please pay attention to Blackboard (https://iol.tamucc.edu/) for updates.*

Also, we do not go in the exact same numerical order as the book chapters. You will read chapters in a thematic order as needed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>ASSESSMENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Theme: Legal System, Liberties, &amp; Rights</strong>&lt;br&gt;Chapter 9: The American Legal System and the Courts&lt;br&gt;Chapter 4: Fundamental American Liberties&lt;br&gt;Chapter 5: The Struggle for Equal Rights</td>
<td>Individual: Second Major Examination (Available on &amp; due Friday, July 14, 2017 by 11pm)&lt;br&gt;Group: CSAR #2 - Civil Rights (due Sunday, July 16, 2017 by 11pm)</td>
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Thursday, August 3, 2017: Make-up exam if needed (limit of one per person; must sign up in advance)

*** No “traditional” final exam in this online course. ***

GUIDELINES FOR DIALOGUE

1. **Confidentiality.** We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange.

2. **Our primary commitment is to learn from each other.** We will listen to each other and not talk at each other. We acknowledge differences amongst us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values. We realize that it is these very differences that will increase our awareness and understanding through this process.

3. **We will not demean, devalue, or “put down” people** for their experiences, lack of experiences, or difference in interpretation of those experiences.

4. **We will trust that people are always doing the best they can.**

5. **Challenge the idea and not the person.** If we wish to challenge something that has been said, we will challenge the idea or the practice referred to, not the individual sharing this idea or practice.

6. **Speak your discomfort.** If something is bothering you, please share this with the group. Often our emotional reactions to this process offer the most valuable learning opportunities.

7. **Step Up, Step Back.** Be mindful of taking up much more space than others. On the same note, empower yourself to speak up when others are dominating the conversation.

8. **Maintain a safe atmosphere.**

(Source: The Program on Intergroup Relations, University of Michigan, CRLT Handout (page 8), August 26, 2008.)
Syllabus / Contract Agreement

I, ________________________________, have read all of the pages of Dr. Epley’s
(Print your name.)

Summer II 2017 syllabus for Political Science 2305.W02 – U.S. Government & Politics (online
course). I fully understand the expectations, rules, regulations, resources, and schedule
explained in that syllabus. I agree to abide by its conditions as well.

_________________________________________
(Name / Signature)

_________________________________________
(Student Number)

_________________________________________
(Date)

_________________________________________
(Course Number & Section)