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
(Physical copies are available at both the campus and off-campus bookstores. If you prefer an ebook, you can purchase Connect access directly through the publisher’s website. More details will be given in class.)


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

Class Websites
As a significant portion of this course is conducted online, the following websites are crucial to your success:

Blackboard – 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 Objectives
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 Texas 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 Objectives
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 is calculated based on the total number of points earned throughout the semester. Points are earned from in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
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</table>
| Online Assignments | Throughout the semester, you will complete three types of online assignments: Connect chapter quizzes, chapter LearnSmarts, and discussion boards. Extensions are not granted for online assignments, and late assignments are not accepted.  
1) Quizzes  
- 12 multiple-choice chapter quizzes will be conducted through the publisher’s online learning system, McGraw-Hill Connect.  
- Each quiz is worth **10 points**. Your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped. This means that 100 points of your final grade will come from chapter quizzes: 10 quizzes x 10 points each = 100 points.  
- Quizzes cover material from assigned chapter readings only; they do not draw from lecture material.  
- For each quiz, you will have **30 minutes** to answer 10 questions. You have two attempts for each quiz. Your highest score for the quiz will be recorded.  
- One hour after the due date for the quiz, you will be able to log back in and review the questions. | **400 points** |
questions you missed and the correct answers.

2) LearnSmarts
   - 12 chapter LearnSmart exercises will be conducted through McGraw-Hill Connect.
   - LearnSmart exercises are graded based on your completion of the practice questions. Each exercise is worth 10 points. To earn those points, you must complete all the practice questions. If you complete 75% of the questions, you will receive 7.5 points.
   - As with chapter quizzes, your two lowest LearnSmart grades will be dropped. This means that LearnSmarts will make up 100 points toward your final course grade: 10 LearnSmarts x 10 points per exercise = 100 points.
   - You are not able to make up LearnSmart exercises, nor is late work accepted.

3) Discussion Boards
   - Students will post 3 writing assignments to the discussion board throughout the semester.
   - Discussion boards will be conducted via Blackboard.
   - Each discussion board is worth a total of 100 points. Your lowest discussion board will be dropped. Accordingly, discussion boards will make up 200 points of your final grade: 2 discussion boards x 100 points per assignment = 200 points.
   - Discussion board assignments are graded based on both content and writing.
   - Assignments must be posted to the correct discussion board on Blackboard according to posted instructions. Assignments will not be accepted via email or other means.
   - Late assignments will not be graded, and makeup work is not permitted.

Exams
   - There are three exams for the course.
   - Exams are given in-class.
   - Each exam is worth 200 points, for a total of 600 points (3 x 200 points = 600 points).
   - Each exam is 50 questions in length, with one additional bonus questions.
Exams are multiple-choice, and they are non-cumulative.
Scantrons will be provided, but students will need to bring pencils and erasers.
Once the first student has submitted his or her exam and left the classroom, no additional students will be able to begin the exam. Do not be late on exam dates!
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
- Attendance and active participation is a vital component of success in a college course. To encourage student attendance, attendance will be taken regularly via sign-in sheets and reading quizzes.
- While attendance does not make up part of your final course grade, strong attendance will count for bonus points on exams.

Grading Scale

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

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 regularly, and while it will not count for your final course grade, strong attendance in each exam period will count as extra credit on the exam.

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 2306.002). 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 often do not receive 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 respond to emails during traditional business hours (i.e., between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM Monday through Friday).

**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 Advising 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, 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.
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 sps 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, 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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W 1/18</td>
<td>Classes begin</td>
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<td>W 1/25</td>
<td>Last day to register or add a class</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 9/5</td>
<td>Labor Day – No Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 3/13 – F 3/17</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 4/7</td>
<td>Last day to drop a class</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 5/1</td>
<td>Last day to withdraw from the University</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 5/2</td>
<td>Last day of classes</td>
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<td>W 5/3</td>
<td>Reading Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 5/4 – F 5/5; M 5/8 – W 5/10</td>
<td>Final Exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 5/11 – F 5/12</td>
<td>Grading Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sa 5/13</td>
<td>Fall Commencement</td>
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</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 Tuesday, January 24 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>Meeting Date</th>
<th>Topic and Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R 1/19</td>
<td>Course Introduction; Syllabus Overview</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| T 1/24       | Lecture: Texas Political Culture & History  
                (Ch. 1, “Introduction to Texas History and Politics”; Fernandez, “What Makes Texas Texas”*)  
                *Reading available online |
| R 1/26       | **Online Course Meeting**  
                Due:  Chapter 1 quiz (by 1:00 PM)  
                        Chapter 1 LearnSmart (by 1:00 PM)  
                        Chapter 2 quiz (by 1:00 PM)  
                        Chapter 2 LearnSmart (by 1:00 PM) |
| T 1/31       | Lecture: Texas Constitution  
                (Ch. 2, “The Texas State Constitution and the American Federal System,” pp. 27-45)  
                Lecture: Financing State Government  
                (Ch. 12, “Financing State Government”) |
| R 2/2        | **Online Course Meeting**  
                Due:  Chapter 12 quiz (by 1:00 PM)  
                        Chapter 12 LearnSmart (by 1:00 PM) |
| T 2/7        | Lecture: Federalism & Local Government  
                (Ch. 2, cont., pp. 46-54; Ch. 6, “Local Governments in Texas) |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
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</table>
| **R 2/9**    | **Online Course Meeting**  
Study guide for Exam 1 available on Blackboard.  
View FRONTLINE: The Storm (http://www.pbs.org/video/155897742/)  
**Due:**  
Chapter 6 quiz (by 1:00 PM)  
Chapter 6 LearnSmart (by 1:00 PM)  
Discussion Board 1 (by 1:00 PM)  
**Reminder:** Discussion boards are conducted on Blackboard. Assignments will not be accepted via email. Late assignments will not be graded. |
| **T 2/14**   | **EXAM 1** conducted in class from 8:00 AM-8:50 AM.  
- Bring: pencil(s), eraser(s), TAMUCC student ID.  
- Once the first student has submitted his or her exam and left the classroom, no additional students will be able to begin the exam. |
| **R 2/16**   | **Online Course Meeting**  
**Due:**  
Chapter 3 quiz (by 1:00 PM)  
Chapter 3 LearnSmart (by 1:00 PM) |
| **T 2/21**   | Lecture: Texas Legislature  
(Ch. 3, “The Texas Legislature”) |
| **R 2/23**   | **Online Course Meeting**  
**Due:**  
Chapter 4 quiz (by 1:00 PM)  
Chapter 4 LearnSmart (by 1:00 PM) |
| **T 2/28**   | Lecture: The Governor & the Plural Executive  
(Ch. 4, “The Executive Department and the Office of the Governor of Texas”) |
| **R 3/2**    | **Online Course Meeting**  
**Due:**  
Chapter 5 quiz (by 1:00 PM)  
Chapter 5 LearnSmart (by 1:00 PM) |
| **T 3/7**    | Lecture: Texas Courts  
(Ch. 5, “The Court System in Texas”) |
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<th>Meeting Date</th>
<th>Topic and Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>R 3/9</td>
<td><strong>Online Course Meeting</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Due: Chapter 11 quiz (by 1:00 PM)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chapter 11 LearnSmart (by 1:00 PM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 3/14</td>
<td>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 3/16</td>
<td>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 3/21</td>
<td>Lecture: Introduction to Public Policy (Ch. 11, “Public Policy in Texas,” pp. 275-280)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lecture: Education Policy (Ch. 11, cont.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 3/23</td>
<td><strong>Online Course Meeting</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Study guide for Exam 2 available online.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Due: Discussion Board 2 (by 1:00 PM)</strong></td>
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<td>Reminder: Discussion boards are conducted on Blackboard. Assignments will not be accepted via email. Late assignments will not be graded.</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 3/28</td>
<td>Lecture: Criminal Justice Policy (Ch. 11, cont.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lecture: Healthcare Policy (Ch. 11, cont.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 3/30</td>
<td>EXAM 2 conducted in class from 8:00 AM-8:50 AM.</td>
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<td>• Bring: pencil(s), eraser(s), TAMUCC student ID.</td>
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<td>• Once the first student has submitted his or her exam and left the classroom, no additional students will be able to begin the exam.</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 4/4</td>
<td>Lecture: Political Parties (Ch. 9, “Political Parties in Texas”)</td>
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<td>R 4/6</td>
<td><strong>Online Course Meeting</strong></td>
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<td>Due: Chapter 9 quiz (by 1:00 PM)</td>
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<td>Chapter 9 LearnSmart (by 1:00 PM)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chapter 7 quiz (by 1:00 PM)</td>
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<td>Chapter 7 LearnSmart (by 1:00 PM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting Date</td>
<td>Topic and Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 4/11</td>
<td>In-Class Viewing: <em>Last Man Standing: Politics, Texas Style</em></td>
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| R 4/13       | Lecture: *Voting and Political Participation*  
                (Ch. 7, “Voting and Political Participation in Texas”) |
| T 4/18       | Lecture: *The Voting Rights Act of 1965*  
                (Ch. 7, cont.)  
                In-Class Viewing: *Eyes on the Prize – Mississippi: Is This America?* |
| R 4/20       | **Online Course Meeting**  
                **Due:**  
                Chapter 8 quiz (by 1:00 PM)  
                Chapter 8 LearnSmart (by 1:00 PM)  
                Discussion Board 3 (by 1:00 PM)  
                Reminder: Discussion boards are conducted on Blackboard. Assignments will not be accepted via email. Late assignments will not be graded. |
| T 4/25       | Lecture: *Elections in Texas*  
                (Ch. 8, “Elections and Campaigns in Texas”)  
                Lecture: *Interest Groups*  
                (Ch. 10, “Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas”) |
| R 4/27       | **Online Course Meeting**  
                Study guide for Exam 3 available online.  
                **Due:**  
                Chapter 10 quiz (by 1:00 PM)  
                Chapter 10 LearnSmart (by 1:00 PM) |
| T 5/2        | **EXAM 3** conducted in class from 8:00 AM-8:50 AM.  
                • Bring: pencil(s), eraser(s), TAMUCC student ID.  
                • Once the first student has submitted his or her exam and left the classroom, no additional students will be able to begin the exam. |
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<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
<th>Topic and Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Final Exam Time to Be Announced</td>
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**CUMULATIVE MAKE-UP** conducted in class during final exam time.
- Bring: pencil(s), eraser(s), TAMUCC student ID.
- Once the first student has submitted his or her exam and left the classroom, no additional students will be able to begin the exam.

*Note: The cumulative make-up exam is **only** for students who have missed one of the four in class exams. Students **may not** take the cumulative make-up to replace a low score.*

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