POLS 2306.006: State and Local Government
Fall 2016
Department of Social Sciences
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Dr. Juan Urbano Jr.
Email: Juan.Urbano@tamucc.edu
Office: BH 3.06
Phone: 361-825-3474
Class Meeting Time: TTR 11-12:15pm, CI-113
Office Hours: Office Hours: TThr 1:45-3pm, Wednesday 2-4:30

Course Description and Goals
Welcome to State and Local Government. As an introductory course, we will discuss a multitude
of concepts and theories that date back from the founding of Texas. We will discuss that are
Texans encounter on a daily basis, either through state government or their local government
entities. At the end of the semester, you should be familiar with Texas’ government institutions
and the expanse of their power, political groups and interests that play a role in Texan politics,
and the citizens and non-citizens who shape Texas politics and why.

Student Expectations
To ensure a good semester, please observe the following class expectations:

• Respect for others is very important. Each person should feel comfortable sharing
opinions and ideas in an appropriate fashion.
• Make every effort to be on-time to class. Latecomers are a distraction to your fellow
classmates and me.
• Reading newspapers, doing anything on a laptop that is not related to class, working on
crossword puzzles, listening to music, texting or doing any outside work is not allowed in
class.
• Turn off all cell phones.
• You are expected to have all readings complete BEFORE class. Preparation before class
will facilitate better class discussions, aid in your completion of in class assignments, and
enhance your overall learning experience.
• You are also expected to complete all assignments on time. No late work will be
accepted.

Learning Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes:
1. Students should be able to understand key concepts of the Texas constitution and the
reasons we have a bicameral legislature, a part-time legislature, and limited government
powers
2. We will cover the differences between parties and elections. Students will learn the
general ideas of campaigns in Texas, theories on gerrymandering, and local voting laws.
3. Students should be able to articulate the complexities of Texas government institutions
including interest groups pressure and the political behavior of Texas residents.
Contact Preferences
If you would like instruction and clarification beyond the lectures and discussions, please feel free to come to my office hours which are listed at the top of this page. If these times do not work into your schedule, I am also willing to set up an appointment to meet with you at a time that works for both of us. A face-to-face meeting is the most effective means of communication for more complex issues and allows me to work with you at your individual level of understanding. Please use email (juan.urbano@tamucc.edu) to voice any questions/comments you may have that will involve a ‘quick’ response. Effort will be made to address you email within 48 hours, if you do not receive an email within than time frame please send me another email. I do not answer emails on the weekends and I will not answer exam questions on the day of or the day before an exam.

Students with Disabilities/Religious Needs:
If you are a student with a disability or have special needs, please let me know during the first week of class. In addition, students observing religious holidays that conflict with class exams/presentations must let me know during the first week of class.

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.

Academic Honesty:
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, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) If unsure of what honesty entails or if for more information regarding the penalties for academic dishonesty, please refer to the University Catalog.

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.

Intellectual Property Issues
Course materials prepared by myself, including the course syllabus, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by me are my property alone. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without my consent is prohibited. On request, I usually
grant permission for students to audiotape lectures, on the condition that the individual making the recording only uses these audiotapes as a study aid. Unless explicit permission is obtained by me, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course. Any individual or organization violating my copyright on course materials and lectures could be subject to charges of academic misconduct and/or to civil action for copyright violations.

Grading
Your POLS 2305 grade is broken down in the following fashion:

- Pop Quiz Writing Assignment Given In Class or Online 15%
- Online homework assignments 10%
- 4 Exams, Best 3 are counted, 75%
  Final is the make-up exam and is cumulative

A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, F=Below 60

Grade Appeals:
Students who feel they have 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. 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 (http://cla.tamu.edu/about/student-resources.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

Exams
A total of 4 exams are administered in class during the semester (including the final) and will test students on the content COVERED IN CLASS AND IN THE ASSIGNED READING MATERIALS. Each of the student’s highest 3 exam scores count as 25% of the total grade (totaling 75%) and the lowest score is dropped from the student’s grade. The make-up exam will be the fourth/final exam that will be administered during the time and date of the class final. The final will be cumulative.

Online Homework
With the purchase of your new textbook, you will also get an online code that will allow you to access the homework from the content tab on blackboard. Each homework will be available EXACTLY one week before its due, so you will have one week to complete the homework. THERE WILL BE NO LATE HOMEWORK ACCEPTED. So i.e. your first homework will be due at noon on Monday, September 14. After the noon deadline passes you will not be able to access the homework again or do it again, the online link will not be available to you anymore. However, you can do the homework as many times as you’d like within that week, you have an unlimited amount of chances to try and get full credit, please use this to your advantage.
Pop Quiz Writing Assignments, Given in Class or Online
These assignments will be announced by me in class and will be due on an assigned date. I will give you advanced notice of when the assignments are due. They will be assignments based on readings and current events.

Required Text: (Available at campus bookstore)
Book MUST INCLUDE Connect code; you will need the code to complete your online homework.

TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR
As the topic of American government is ever changing, I reserve the right to adapt our course calendar if new issues arise that begs for our attention.

Week 1 8/25:
Introduction, review course syllabus

Week 2 8/30-9/1
Chapter 1 Introduction to Texas History and Politics

Week 3 9/6-9/8:
Chapter 2-The Texas State Constitution and the American Federal System

Week 4 9/13-9/15:
Chapter 3-The Texas Legislature
Online Homework 1, Due 9/13
Blackboard Online Assignment

Week 5 9/20-22:
Chapter 4-The Executive Department and the Office of the Governor of Texas
Online Homework 2, Due 9/21
Chapter 5-The Court System in Texas
Online Homework 3, Due 9/20

Week 6 9/27-9/28:
9-28-16
Exam 1 Covering Chapters 1-5
Exam is online on Blackboard

Week 7 10/4-10/6:
Movie

Week 8 10/11-13:
Chapter 7-Voting and Political Participation in Texas
Online Homework 4, Due 10/11
Week 9 10/18-20:
Chapter 10-Elections and Campaigns in Texas
Online Homework 5, Due 10/18

Week 10 10/25-27
Chapter 9-Political Parties in Texas
Online Homework 6, Due 10/25

Week 11 11/1-11/3:
Exam 2 Covering Chapters 7-9
Exam is online on Blackboard

Week 12 11/8-10:
Election Day-11/8
Chapter 6-Local Governments in Texas
Online Homework 7, Due 11/8

Week 13 11/15-17:
Chapter 10-Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas
Online Homework 8, Due 11/15
Blackboard Online Assignment

Week 14 11/22-11/24:
11/22-Reading day no class
11/24-Thanksgiving no class

Week 15 11/29-12/1
Chapter 11-Public Policy in Texas
Online Homework 9, Due 11/29
Chapter 12- Financing State Government
***Online homework 10, Due 11/29

Week 16 12/6
Last Day of Class-Exam 3 Covering Chapters 6, 10-12
Exam is online on Blackboard

Final Exam Thursday, December 8 11:00am-1:30pm