Introduction

Politics and government affect students in many ways. Things that are taken for granted such as drinking water, roads, and A&M-Corpus Christi are the result of politics and government. Many students are enrolled at A&M-Corpus Christi in order to get good jobs after graduation. Politics and governmental policies affect job markets and the economy. Hence, students have much at stake in the political system of the United States. Thus, it is essential that students understand the political processes and political institutions of the U.S. national government because governmental decisions and policies affect students everyday.

State and Local Government Course Description: 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 Learning Community: This political science course is linked with First-Year Seminar and Foundations of Communication to create the Triad L Learning Community.

Theme: The unifying theme for the learning community “Spheres of Sustainability – Food for Thought.” The learning community will use examples of economic, environmental, and social sustainability to learn concepts and knowledge from Political Science and Seminar. Food sustainability will be used as an example. Central to this theme will be the importance of understanding the role of science, evidence, and facts. Furthermore, students will learn about how they can influence the political system. This is known as Civic Engagement. “Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.” (www.aascu.org/programs/adp/about/default.htm).

Core 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:

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, and the policy making process.

Course Requirements

Please read and be familiar with the following course requirements. Please ask for clarification if there is a component of the requirements that are not understood. Students are expected to understand and be familiar with the course requirements.

Blackboard: Students in this class will use Blackboard accounts. Blackboard is used for assignments, communication, announcements, class materials, and grade posting. (iol.tamucc.edu)

Announcements: All class announcements are made via Blackboard.

Turnitin.com: Students will submit written work via turnitin.com. Instructions on setting up accounts will be distributed to students at a later date.

Class Presentations and Discussions: Regular and consistent class attendance is essential for students wishing to do well in the course.

Required Book/Materials: Practicing Texas Politics, 2015-16 Edition (with Mindtap), is the required textbook and is available at the University Bookstore. Mindtap is the online supplement for the book and is also required.

Film Documentary (shown in class): A Place at the Table

Exams: There will be four exams, each worth 125 points, during the course of the semester. The exams will typically consist of 25-50 multiple-choice questions. The exams are not comprehensive and will cover the material from class discussions, readings, and syllabus. Students are allowed to re-take an exam (except the final exam) if their grade is less than a 60. The maximum grade a student can earn on a re-take is a 60. Students will be allowed to take a re-take during the dates and times announced via Blackboard. The re-take exam grade will replace the original exam grade, even if it is lower.
**Mindtap Assignments:** Mindtap is a textbook companion of online materials designed to support the class. Students will purchase access to the site (it comes bundled with the book if purchased at the University Bookstore) and complete assignments that are designed to relate to and support concepts and topics we discuss in class. Students will have 10 Mindtap Assignments, worth 30 points each, that count towards their grade for a total of 300 points. Students successfully completing the assignment, by the due date, receive the full 25 points. A total of 12 assignments, and 1 practice assignment, are assigned, meaning students have 2 extra opportunities. Specific due dates for assignments are listed in the Provisional Course Outline, and are accessed via Blackboard. All Mindtap Assignments are due by 8 AM on the due date.

**Integrative Experiences Assignment:** Students will have opportunities to earn up to 200 points from the Integrative Experiences Assignment. With this assignment students will address issues related to sustainability. The assignment will count for credit in all the courses in your learning community. Specific criteria and due dates for the assignments are forthcoming. Please note that a student choosing to drop Seminar risks forfeiting the chance to earn these points.

**Online Quizzes:** Five online quizzes, worth 8 points each, are assigned with due dates listed in the Provisional Course Outline of the syllabus. These quizzes are administered after class discussions of the assigned chapters.

**Participation:** Students are able to earn a maximum of 10 participation points based on their participation grade from First Year Seminar. In FYS, students may earn a maximum of 100 participation points. To calculate participation points for Political Science, simply divide the total FYS participation points by 10. Furthermore, negative participation in the political science class (disruptive behavior) will lead to a loss of 1 participation point per citation.

**Evaluation:** In this course, students have a significant amount of control over their grades. Students make the choice to be prepared, complete assignments on time, perform well on the exams, participate in seminar, and complete the Integrative Experiences Assignment. DO NOT ASK FOR ADDITIONAL POINTS FOR THE FINAL GRADE -- THEY WILL NOT BE AWARDED.

**Summary of Requirements:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>4 x 125 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrative Experiences Assignment</td>
<td>10 x 30 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Quizzes</td>
<td>5 x 8 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
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**Points/Grade Breakdown:** A = 900 or more; B = 800-899; C = 700-799; D = 600-699; F = 599 or less

**Course Policies**

Please read and be familiar with the following course policies and ask for clarification if there is a component of the policies that are not understood. Students are expected to understand and be familiar with the course policies.

**Make-up Exams:** Make-up exams will be allowed for official university excused absences, or in the event of a medical or family emergency (preferable with advance notification). Make-up exams will be given on specific dates announced via Blackboard. If a student has a valid excuse for missing a make-up exam they will make-up their exam on the day of the final exam after taking the final exam. Make-up exams will be different from the regular exam. Furthermore, in the interest of fairness to all of students, documented proof may be requested.

**MindTap and Other Work:** Late assignments without a valid reason (special circumstances with advance notification and documentation) will not be accepted.

**Attendance/Tardiness:** There is not a formal attendance policy. Past analyses of grades and attendance indicates that grades and attendance are strongly related. Students that choose not to attend will still be responsible for material discussed in class. If you arrive after class has begun you are asked to discreetly enter from the 2nd floor rear entrance to CI113.

**Extra Credit Work:** Extra credit work will not be assigned nor allowed under any circumstances.

**Assistance:** Please visit office hours; make an appointment, call, or e-mail to visit about class. The Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA) will offer Supplemental Instruction for State and Local Politics. Details are forthcoming. Visit CASA's website at http://casa.tamucc.edu/ for additional services.

**Freedom of Expression:** Universities are exciting environments of learning and ideas. It is inevitable that at times, subjects are going to be discussed and ideas introduced that students are either unfamiliar with or perhaps disagree with. However, in the university environment it is important that different opinions are expressed. In this context, students need to feel free to express themselves in class with questions and comments and to do so without fear of reprisal. Class discussion (when it is relevant to the class) makes for a better class and students are encouraged to ask questions and express thoughtful opinions. Additionally, in order to allow all students an opportunity to participate in discussions, students will be limited to two comments per class.

**iPhone, iPad, ICopy, Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage:** A learning environment free from distractions will be maintained at all times during this class. Silence your ringtones and put these devices away during class. Laptops can only be used for class work.

**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 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 a course grade of “F.”

Dropping a Class: Events occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your professors before deciding 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.

Incompletes: Incompletes will only be given in the event of medical or family emergencies. In addition, incompletes will only be given if there is appropriate documentation.

Grade Appeals Process: 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.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

Academic Advising: (For students in a College of Liberal Arts major) 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.

Provisional Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug. 25</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Environment of Texas Politics, ch. 1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>MindTap ch. 1 is available (sign in and practice)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Aug. 30</td>
<td>Democracy and American Politics, ch. 1</td>
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<td>Sept. 1</td>
<td>A Place at the Table</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sept. 6</td>
<td>A Place at the Table</td>
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<td>Sept. 8</td>
<td>Federalism and the Texas Constitution, ch. 2</td>
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<td>MindTap ch. 2 (due by 8 AM)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sept. 13</td>
<td>Federalism and the Texas Constitution, ch. 3</td>
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<td>MindTap ch. 3 (due by 8 AM)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td>Local Governments, ch. 3</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>MindTap ch. 3 (due by 8 AM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sept. 20</td>
<td>Local Governments, ch. 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>Exam 1, Chs. 1-3 &amp; A Place at the Table</td>
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Week 6  Sept. 26  Online Quiz 1 (due by 11:59 PM)  
Sept. 27  Political Parties, ch. 4  
Sept. 29  MindTap ch. 4 (due by 8 AM)  
Week 7  Oct. 4  Campaigns and Elections, ch. 5  
Oct. 6  Campaigns and Elections, ch. 5  
Week 8  Oct. 11  Media and Politics, ch. 6  
Oct. 13  Exam 2 (chs. 4, 5, & 6)  
Week 9  Oct. 17  Online Quiz 2 (due by 11:59 PM)  
Oct. 18  The Politics of Interest Groups, ch. 7  
Oct. 20  The Politics of Interest Groups, ch. 7  
Week 10  Oct. 25  The Legislative Branch, ch. 8  
Oct. 27  The Legislative Branch, ch. 8  
Week 11  Nov. 1  The Executive Branch, ch. 9  
Nov. 3  The Executive Branch, ch. 9  
Nov. 8  The Judicial Branch, ch. 11  
Nov. 10  Exam 3 (Chs. 7, 8, 9, & 11)  
Week 12  Nov. 14  Online Quiz 3 (due by 11:59 PM)  
Nov. 15  Public Policy and Administration, ch. 10  
Nov. 17  Public Policy and Administration, ch. 10  
Week 13  Nov. 22  Reading Day  
Nov. 25  Thanksgiving Holiday  
Week 14  Nov. 29  First Year Symposium  
Dec. 1  Finance and Public Policy, ch. 13  
MindTap ch. 13 (due by 8 AM)
Week 16

Dec. 6

The Criminal Justice System, ch. 12
MindTap ch. 12 (due by 8 AM)
Online Quiz 4 (due by 11:59 PM)

Dec. 13

Final Exam 11 AM-1:30 PM (chs. 10, 12, & 13)

Final Date for Make-Up and Re-Takes Exams.