U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A basic survey of American government, including fundamental political institutions, with special attention to the United States Constitution. Meets the University core requirement and the Texas state statutory requirement for U.S constitution.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of Definitions, Concepts, and Theories

2. Demonstrate Ability to Conduct and Interpret Research, Write Effectively, Interpret and Analyze Data

3. Demonstrate Advanced Knowledge in One Major Area

4. Translate Skills to Professional or Graduate Program, or Career

MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be required to take three in-class tests during the course of the semester, in addition to one comprehensive final exam at the end of the semester. Students are also required to write a civic engagement paper. Students will also earn credit for attendance and in class clicker quizzes. There are also online computer assignments, which are accessible via Blackboard

Tests
The tests will all be multiple choice. There will be 50 objective multiple choice questions. Each objective question will be worth 2 points each.

Test Schedule

Test 1- Feb 5  
Test 2- Feb 26  
Test 3- Mar 26

Learnsmart (Smartbook) assignments

Students are required to submit regular online assignments through the Connect Platform, which is accessible through Blackboard. There is one assignment due for each chapter of the textbook. The list of assignments, together with relevant deadlines is available within Connect. You are responsible for meeting the relevant deadlines without any further reminders from the instructor. No late work is accepted under any circumstance. However, the lowest two scores are dropped from the calculation of your average assignment score.

The assignments are “open book.” However, you are expected to work alone, and any collusion/working in groups/sharing of answers represents academic dishonesty (see below for policy on academic dishonesty).

Final Exam

The comprehensive final exam will comprise of 100 objective multiple choice questions relating to material covered in class and in readings. The final exam is at 7.15pm on 7th May.

Civic Engagement Paper

Students are required to write a paper on a topic related to civic engagement. According to Thomas Ehrich, “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.” All topics must be submitted for approval of the instructor. The topic needs to fulfill the following criteria:

1. Relevance to civic engagement
2. Be the product of independent research and practical involvement in activities relating to civic engagement
3. Contain appropriate referencing- please refer to civic engagement paper guide
4. 3-4 pages text in length

Papers are due by class time on Apr 02. A 10% off per day late penalty will apply for every day the paper is late. Students must submit a hard copy of their paper to the instructor AND submit an electronic copy of their copy to the class account on www.turnitin.com. The paper is deemed late until both the hard copy and electronic submission have been received. Late papers should be instructed electronically via e-mail attachment and to Turnitin.com

Turnitin.com

You must create an account at www.turnitin.com as soon as possible, and by no later than 14th March in any event. The process for creating an account and submitting your papers is set out as follows:

Step 1
To register and create a user profile, go to www.turnitin.com and select your language from the drop down menu.

Click on the "Create Account" link on the homepage and the Create a User Profile page will open.

Click on the "Student" link. Fill in the required information in the new user profile form. In order to create a profile, you must have a class ID and an enrollment password. You can get this information from your instructor.

Class ID: 16819786
Enrollment Password: 2305-002

Once you have created your profile, click the "I Agree" button to log into Turnitin.

Step 2 - Student Homepage
Your class will show up on your Student Homepage. Click on the name of your class to open your class portfolio.

Step 3 - Class Portfolio
Your Class Portfolio shows the assignments your instructor has created and your submissions to the class.

Step 4 - Submitting a Paper
To submit a paper, click the "Submit" button next to the paper assignment.
The paper submission page will open. Enter a title for your paper. To select a paper for submission, click the browse button and locate the paper on your computer. We accept submissions in these formats:

- MS Word, WordPerfect, RTF, PDF, PostScript, HTML, plain text (.txt)

After entering a title for your paper and selecting a file, click "Upload" to upload your paper.

If your paper is in a format that we do not accept, you can submit it by cut and paste. To submit a paper this way, select cut & paste upload using the pulldown at the top of the form.

Copy the text of your paper from a word processing program and then paste it into the text box in the submission form. If you submit your paper using the cut and paste method, you can skip the next step.

Step 5 - Submitting a Paper Confirmation

The paper you chose to submit will be in the preview. Look over all the information and make sure that it is correct. To confirm the submission, click the "Submit" button.

After you confirm your submission, a digital receipt will be shown. A copy of the receipt will be e-mailed to you. To return to your portfolio and view your submission, click the "Go to Portfolio" button.

Clicker Quizzes/Attendance

Students will be assessed on the basis of their performance on regular in class clicker quizzes. There will usually be 10 clicker questions each week with students receiving 1 or 2 points for every correct response. The quizzes will be based on the reading/lecture material for the previous and/or current week. Students will also receive credit for attendance (typically 5 points at the beginning of each class and 5 points at the end of class). There are no makeups for missed class quizzes. However, the lowest class quiz score is dropped. Attendance and your performance on in class quizzes will account for 15% of your final grade.

Clicker Options

You may purchase one of the following models:
- iClicker + Remote
- iClicker2 Remote
Participation with the mobile application, iClicker Reef will be allowed.

Registration

You are required to purchase an iclicker remote or an iClicker Reef subscription for in-class participation. iclicker is a response system that allows you to respond to questions I pose during
class, and you will be graded on that feedback and/or your in-class participation (iClicker Reef works the same way). In order to receive this credit, you will need to register your i>clicker remote or set up your iClicker Reef account by February 10. If you have decided to iClicker Reef instead of a remote, please see below for registration instructions.

**iclicker Remote Registration:**

You must have come to class at least once and voted on at least one question in order to complete this registration properly. Once you have responded to a question with your iclicker remote, go to http://www.iclicker.com/registration. Complete the fields with your first name, last name, student ID, and remote ID. Your student ID will be your Islander ID. The remote ID is the series of numbers and sometimes letters found on the bottom of the back of your iclicker remote. iclicker will be used every day in class, and you are responsible for bringing your remote daily. There will not be an option for you to do the quiz with the pen and paper or any other alternative provided. You must also ensure that you regularly check your scores are being recorded accurately in the Blackboard gradebook. Issues may arise with clickers not being correctly synced or registered. Any such issues must be reported to instructor within a week of their occurrence so that future corrective action may be taken. The instructor will not take retrospective corrective action for weeks of missing clicker grades.

**iClicker Reef**

You also have the option of using iclicker REEF in class this term. You can use iclicker REEF on a laptop, smart phone, or tablet connected to the university’s Wi-Fi. You may also use your iclicker remote in combination with your iclicker REEF account.

**Creating Your iClicker Reef Account**

To create an iClicker Reef account, visit app.reef-education.com or download the app for Android or iOS. Creating an account automatically starts a free 14-day trial subscription. Please use this trial period to make sure iCicker Reef will work for your iClicker classes before purchasing a subscription as it is not possible to receive a refund after your purchase a subscription.

Once you create your iClicker Reef account, be sure that you’ve added your Student ID to your profile to complete the registration process. Your Student is your islander ID

You will need to add this course in Reef after registering

Institution: Texas A&M University Corpus Christi
To watch a video on setting up your Reef account, please see

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX13GhIIG8E&feature=youtu.be

At the end of your trial, should you decide to purchase iClicker Reef, you can purchase a subscription or an access code. You can purchase an access code from the bookstore, or you can purchase a new iClicker remote, which may come with a code for 6 months of iClicker Reef access. Please note that access codes can only be entered in the iClicker Reef web application, not the mobile application. Check with the bookstore if you have questions.

Cheating

I consider bringing a fellow student’s iclicker to class to be cheating and a violation of the University Honor Code. If you are caught with a remote other than your own or have votes in a class that you did not attend, you will forfeit all clicker points for the semester and may face additional disciplinary action. It is specifically prohibited to use iclicker Reef app to claim credit for attending class while outside of the classroom.

Other forms of cheating include calling out/whispering answers and looking at another student’s response to questions. Such behavior will also result in disciplinary action.

Grading Scheme

Attendance/Quizzes (15%)
Learnsmart Assignments (10%)
Tests: (35 %)
Final Exam: (20 %)
Civic Engagement Paper: (20 %)

A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; F = Less than 60

REQUIRED TEXT
Title: We The People
Author: Patterson
Publisher: McGraw Hill
Edition: 12th edition

Where and How to Get It:
Student Options for Purchasing AND Registering Into the Course

CHOICES:
1. Bookstore: Your bookstore has two purchase options.
   i) PATTERSON CNCT AMER GOV AC WE PPL 12 2017 #9781259738333 (this is for the access card for Connect only)
   ii) PATTERSON GEN CMB LL WE PPL; CNCT 12 2017 #9781260049992 (this is for the access card AND the loose leaf text)

OR:

2. Online: All DIGITAL. You can purchase Connect Plus (no print book, Ebook and access to all the Connect/Learnsmart content) directly from the course website.
   • Go to Blackboard, and click on the first assignment listed in “Learnsmart Assignments folder listed under Content (left hand menu).
   • Click the “Register Now” Button.
   • Enter your email address.
   • Enter your access code, select “Buy Online”, or you can “Start Free Trial” if you don't have an access code.
   • Complete the registration form, click “Submit”

There is an option to purchase a loose leaf print copy directly from McGraw Hill for the price of $25 after you have purchased the digital version of the textbook.
REQUIRED HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

iClicker Remote or iClicker REEF Software

In this course, you have the option of using an iClicker, iClicker+, or iClicker2 remote, or using iClicker REEF, which enables you to vote via a web-enabled device like a laptop or smart phone.

COURSE POLICIES

1. Attendance/tardiness- Regular attendance is required for this course. It is in students’ interest to attend class, since there is a strong relationship between attendance and participation and semester grades. Approximately 50% of the Clicker Grade will be based on attendance. Paying close attention and taking notes is essential to your success in the class. Your lowest weekly clicker score will be
dropped at the end of the semester. Students should arrive to class on time, since tardiness is disruptive to class proceedings.

2. Make-ups (Examinations) – Students are required to take examinations at the scheduled class time. In a limited set of circumstances e.g. illness with a supporting doctor’s note, participation in University athletic events- students will be eligible to take a make-up examination. In most circumstances, this should be arranged with the instructor BEFORE the examination, or at the very latest within 24 hours of the time of the test. Failure to comply with this requirement means that the students forfeits the opportunity to sit a make-up. There are NO makeups for missed quizzes, but the lowest class quiz score is dropped. There are no make-ups for missed Learnsmart assignments, but the lowest two scores are dropped.

3. Extra Credit -- A limited amount of extra credit may be available to students over the course of the semester. Any extra credit assignment will be made available to all students on an ad hoc basis and announced in class. Students might, for example, be offered option of attending an on campus lecture, or event, and write a short paper on the event with a strict deadline for the assignment announced in class. Ignorance about an assignment (eg resulting from a failure to attend class) does not entitle students to submit the assignment after the deadline. There will be no “tailor made” extra credit (provided to students on an individual basis) and students should not count on extra credit as a means for remedying poor performance on tests and/or papers. There is no general entitlement to extra credit.

4. Incompletes – Will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

5. Assistance -- Please feel free to talk with me about your work or about politics and political science in general before or after class, or during the class “break”. If you wish to meet me at another time, please see me to arrange an appointment. You should also avail yourself of the opportunity to seek assistance from the Tutoring and Learning Center in the Bell Library. Political Science tutors may also available.

6. Academic etiquette -- Students are expected to attend and participate in class in professional manner.

This means: Arriving to class on time/ or if unavoidably detained, entering class in a quiet manner
Turning off ringers on cell phones
Not reading/texting/using internet while in class
Remaining in class for duration
Not talking to fellow students except to address class
7 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. (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 the score of a 0 for the assignment.

8. 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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. 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 6 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

9. 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.

10. Electronics– Please turn off all electronic communication devices before you enter the classroom. It is an extreme distraction when beepers, pagers, and cell phones ring during class. No electronic devices will be permitted during exams.

PREFERRED METHOD OF SCHOLARLY CITATION

Students should use MLA style for their issue position papers.

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.

STATEMENT OF CIVILITY

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

GRADE APPEALS PROCESS

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, 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.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

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.
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         READINGS

Jan 22             Chapter 1- Political Thinking and Political Culture
Jan 29             Chapter 2- Constitutional Democracy
Feb 5              Chapter 3- Federalism

Test 1:            Feb 5

Feb 12             Chapter 4- Civil Liberties
Feb 19             Chapter 5- Civil Rights
Feb 26             Chapter 06- Public Opinion

Test 2:            Feb 26

Mar 5              Chapter 07- Political Participation
                   Chapter 08- Political Parties
Mar 12             Spring Break
Mar 19             Chapter 09- Interest Groups
Mar 26             Chapter 10- The Media
Test 3:            Mar 26
Apr 2  Chapter 11- Congress

PAPERS DUE  Apr 2

Apr 9  Chapter 12- Presidency

Apr 16  Chapter 13- Bureaucracy  
Chapter 14- The Judiciary

Apr 23  Chapter 15- Economic Policy

Apr 30  Chapter 16- Income, Welfare and Education Policy

May 7  Final Exam 7.15-9.45
Civic Engagement Paper Format and Requirements

Structural Requirements

Length: 3-4 pages (typed)
Format- MLA See http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/ for assistance with MLA style
Minimum of 4 sources for research component of the paper, minimum of 2 hours of involvement in civic engagement activity(ies)

What is Civic Engagement?

According to Thomas Ehrich, “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.”


Suggested Civic Engagement activities may include, but is not limited to:

Community Service & Volunteerism: See https://www.volunteermatch.org/ for list of opportunities in Corpus Christi. There are also opportunities through churches, food banks, soup kitchens and other local civic organizations

Campus Student Organizations: These organizations should have a political, community, or policy related focus (as opposed to those mainly focused on social activities)

Activism: This might include involvement in political campaign, Get out the Vote drives, petition drive, contacting public officials, attending marches, protests, hearings, participating in beach clean up etc. You may want to consider mounting an online petition drive via https://www.change.org/

Deliberative Democracy Forum: Student organizes and/or participates in a workshop, seminar, or town hall meeting that includes multiple perspectives on issue and how to make positive changes through various courses of public action.
Paper Topics

1. The starting point for this assignment is to select a policy issue which concerns you. This issue might be linked to your personal interests, background, or something that has recently come to your attention through following the news. Students should begin closely following the news through newspapers, TV, and the internet if they are not already doing so already. You will need to select a suitable issue early in the semester. The topic should be linked to the content of this course.

2. Approval of instructor is necessary. You need to have your topic approved within first month of class (i.e. by end of September). You can do this by email, or orally before class, during class breaks, or by submitting a paper proposal.

3. The topic needs to relate to a policy area and be relevant to course (e.g. poverty, crime, environment, public health, immigration, civil liberties, civil rights, money in politics, education etc)

Format.

1. The first part of the paper is where you explain your selected topic, why this is of personal concern to you, and how it relates to the current context of U.S. politics. In other words, you need to provide the reader with some important contextual background on the current debate and controversies surrounding your selected topic. You will need to conduct some library research on this topic using high quality sources (see below).

2. The second part of the paper relates to civic engagement. You will need to explain and explore various options on how to publicly express your own views and preferences on your selected topic through civic engagement (see above for definition of civic engagement and suggested form of activities). Once you have selected a particular form or forms of civic engagement, you should describe the nature of your activities aimed at promoting your views and preferences. Students should provide photographic evidence of their civic engagement in an Appendix at the end of their papers.

3. The final section of the paper is based on critical reflection. This reflection should address key issues, such as:
   a. Whether you felt you made a difference on your selected issue
   b. How involvement on the issue impacted you personally
   c. Whether your civic engagement affected your own views on the issue (in particular you may want to consider how your attitudes and beliefs may have been affected by working and learning from a diversity of communities and cultures).
   d. Whether your engagement had any effect on other people on the issue.
   e. An evaluation of the relative influence of other people, groups or organizations on the
issue (i.e. place your activities within the context of the overall politics of this issue)

Doing Research

You need to use an academic search engine for your research e.g. EBSCO at the Library and not just an internet search engine, such as Google. You should aim to source high quality article research articles and avoid Web based blogs and encyclopedia. In particular, do NOT use such sources, such as Wikipedia and ProCon.Org.