POLS 2305.W03 – U.S. Government and Politics  
(FULLY ONLINE: 7 WEEK SESSION)  
Fall 2017 Syllabus, Version 1.0  
Instructor: Dr. Jennifer L. Epley  
Office Location: Bay Hall 341  
Office Telephone: (361) 825-2554

Office Hours:  
- Via Skype, by telephone, or in person on campus: Tuesdays from 11:00am-12:15pm, Wednesdays from 11:00am-1:30pm, and Thursdays from 11:00am-12:15pm  
- By appointment (in case of class or employment conflicts only)

Email: jennifer.epley@tamucc.edu  
- Please consider e-mail as official correspondence.  
- Please address emails to “Dr. Epley.”  
- Efforts will be made to address your e-mail within 48 hours, but between the regular business hours of 9am-5pm. If you do not receive an email within 48 hours, please send a follow-up email inquiry.  
- No email correspondence on weekends.  
- No email correspondence on the day before or day of an assessment deadline.  
- E-mail communications should be about class business. E-mail is not the place for summaries of course content material, 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.  
- Remember that Blackboard sends emails to students’ Islander accounts. Check that account regularly. Students are responsible for forwarding their Islander email to their preferred address if they do not use their Islander email. Course email announcements are archived in Blackboard for your reference as well.

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

Course Section Details for Registered Students:  
POLS 2305.W03 - U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (online only)  
CRN 40805: This class does not meet physically face-to-face in a classroom.  
7-week session: 08/28/2017 to 10/13/2017

Required Book: The Secrets of Carter House (2013) [collegiate academic bundle version]. The Secrets of Carter House is a historical fiction novel that follows an ensemble of Galveston/Houston-area teachers and learners as the 2008 onset of Hurricane Ike begins to renegotiate the boundaries between their in-school and out-of-school lives. This Southern tale explores how government structures, public policies, and political culture shape the choices that
people make when disaster strikes. The Secrets of Carter House was written by Dr. Kenyatha V. “Ellie Mae” Loftis.

The Secrets of Carter House is available electronically and may be purchased online at http://secretsofcarterhouse.com/. Be sure to use the coupon code: TAMUCC2017 to get a discount.

*** Each item in the collegiate academic bundle version package can be downloaded only once. PDF versions can be printed and are ADA accessible. If accommodations are needed, please contact Dr. Epley and/or the publisher L.SMURPHE.F Productions via email at PRODUCTIONS@LSMURPHEF.COM as soon as possible.

Additional readings, websites, and multi-media will be required. The instructor will provide the copies and links to students in Blackboard and/or via email.

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.

Special Fall 2017 Semester Theme

“When Disaster Strikes” – We will cover the aforementioned topics through the lenses of disaster preparedness, emergency response, and recovery or change. We will analyze the social, historical, and political contexts of disaster at the individual, community, state, and national levels. We will do so by taking a learner-centered approach that emphasizes:
  a. Background Knowledge – Combine theory with empirical data (qualitative and quantitative)
  b. Applied Learning – Problem-based and project-based individual and group assessments

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

1% Introductory Requirements (individual assessment) – Syllabus contract and CITI Plagiarism Training Report (5/5 or 100% required score) before scheduled deadline.

40% Online Content Assessments (individual assessment) – There will be four online content assessments during the semester. See the attached schedule for assignment deadlines.

24% Online Chapter Quizzes (individual assessment) – There will be four online quizzes related to the assigned book. See the attached schedule for assignment deadlines.

30% Case Study/Application Responses (CSAR) (group assessment) – There will be two CSARs to be submitted online via Blackboard as wiki-documents by small assigned groups during the semester (see schedule for details). Students are expected to thoughtfully engage in active, professional collaborations on the CSAR wiki-documents.

The group assessments follow the university’s recommended “High Impact Practice” of “collaborative learning.”

“Collaborative Assignments and Projects: Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one’s own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.” ([https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips](https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips))
5% Critical Thinking and Civic Engagement/Social Responsibility Essay (individual assessment) – Individual students will produce a 2-page single-spaced essay using a formal prompt and set of guidelines from the instructor. This assessment is part of the Core Curriculum assessment evaluation cycle from the Office of the Provost and the College of Liberal Arts.

Make-Up Policy and Late Policy:
No make-up or late work is accepted. No exceptions.

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.
*** Special Note: It is the student’s responsibility to trouble-shoot and resolve any technical/technology problems in their online accounts before the syllabus deadlines and before the end of the 7-week semester session. ***

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). 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’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](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](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](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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 28</td>
<td>Classes begin</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 4</td>
<td>Labor Day Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 5</td>
<td>Last day to late register or add a class</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 25</td>
<td>Last day to drop for the 1st 7-Week Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>Last day to apply for December graduation</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 13</td>
<td>Last day of classes for 1st 7-Week Session and final exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>First day of classes for 2nd 7-Week Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>Grades due for 1st 7-Week Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 10</td>
<td>Last day to drop for the 2nd 7-Week Session</td>
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<td>November 15</td>
<td>Last day to drop a class</td>
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<td>November 22</td>
<td>Reading Day-No Class</td>
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<td>November 23-24</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holidays</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 5</td>
<td>Last day to withdraw from the University</td>
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<td>December 6</td>
<td>Last day of classes and Final Exams 2nd 7-Week Session</td>
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<td>December 7</td>
<td>Reading Day</td>
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<td>December 8</td>
<td>Reading Day</td>
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<td>December 11-14</td>
<td>Final examinations</td>
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<td>December 16</td>
<td>Fall Commencement</td>
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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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT DEADLINES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Theme: Foundations</td>
<td>Individual: Introductory Requirements (due Saturday, September 2, 2017 by 11pm in Blackboard as PDF documents only) – Syllabus Contract and CITI Plagiarism Training Transcript (5/5 or 100% required score)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
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<td>Academic Advice</td>
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<td>Assigned online readings: Democracy, Federalism, and Three Branches of Government</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Individual: Online Content Assessment #1 – U.S. Citizenship Test (due Sunday, September 3, 2017 by 11pm in Blackboard)</td>
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<td>Individual: Online Content Assessment #2 – Understanding Institutions Test (due Sunday, September 3, 2017 by 11pm in Blackboard)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Theme:</strong> Legal System, Liberties, &amp; Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>September 4 to 8, 2017</td>
<td>Review Week 1 readings again if needed... Assigned online readings: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>September 11 to 15, 2017</td>
<td><strong>Theme:</strong> The History Behind Current Events Read Assigned Chapters 1-6: The Secrets of Carter House Watch assigned online video documentary and start collaborating with group members for CSAR #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>September 18 to 22, 2017</td>
<td><strong>Theme:</strong> Political Actors &amp; Voices Read Assigned Chapters 7-12: The Secrets of Carter House Work with group members on CSAR #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>September 25 to 29, 2017</td>
<td><strong>Theme:</strong> Political Actors &amp; Voices Read Assigned Chapters 13-18: The Secrets of Carter House Watch assigned online video documentary and start collaborating with group members for CSAR #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>October 2 to 6, 2017</td>
<td><strong>Theme:</strong> Political Actors &amp; Institutions Read Assigned Chapters 19-24: The Secrets of Carter House Work with group members on CSAR #2</td>
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Theme: Real-World Applications
Thinking, researching and writing: Applying course content to your own life and those in your immediate circles/networks

Individual: Critical Thinking and Civic Engagement/Social Responsibility Essay (due Wednesday, October 11, 2017 by 11pm in Blackboard)

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

GUIDELINES FOR DIALOGUE (face-to-face and online)

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.
Please complete this page and submit a PDF copy only via Blackboard.  
Keep a copy for your own records, too.

Syllabus / Contract Agreement

I, ________________________________, have read all of the pages of Dr. Epley’s Fall 2017 syllabus for Political Science 2305.W03 – U.S. Government and Politics. I fully understand the expectations, rules, regulations, resources, and schedule explained in that syllabus. I agree to abide by its conditions as well.

_____________________________________
(Signature)

_____________________________________
(Student Number)

_____________________________________
(Date)

_____________________________________
(Course Number & Section)