POLS 2306.413  U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
SPRING 2018   MWF 11:00 AM – 11:50 AM, CI 113
TRIAD J

Instructor:  Professor Kaitlin Nelson
Office:     BH 3.66
Office Hours:  MW 10:00 AM – 10:50 AM; 12:00 PM – 12:50 PM
              2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
              By appointment
Telephone:  361-825-5781 (Email is preferred.)
Email:      kaitlin.nelson@tamucc.edu (Please read email policy.)

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.

Note: This class is conducted 25-49% online. Online course meetings are clearly noted in this syllabus; you are responsible for attending class when it is held in person and for completing assignments when we meet online.

Course Description
This course serves to introduce political science and American politics through an exploration of the nation’s constitution, institutions, and political processes.

Required Text

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

You have multiple options for purchasing the course textbook:
1) On- or off-campus bookstore. The physical textbook available at either of these venues should also include a card with the access code for McGraw-Hill Connect.
2) Purchasing online access. You can purchase online access to McGraw-Hill Connect directly through the publisher. This allows you to complete all your online assignments and also provides you access to the ebook.
3) Two week free trial. McGraw-Hill provides a two week courtesy access period to Connect at the beginning of the semester. During this timeframe, you will have access to assignments and the ebook. At the end of the two weeks, you will need to either purchase a physical book with an access code or a digital access code.
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 U.S. national government.
- Describe key political concepts related to U.S. institutions such as Congress, the Presidency, and the Judiciary.
- Demonstrate their understanding of key concepts relating to U.S. political behavior such as voting, elections and political parties, interest groups, and the media.

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.

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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus Quiz</td>
<td>Before beginning any other assignments in the course, you will have to complete a 10 question, multiple choice quiz on the policies contained in this syllabus. The quiz will be given online on Blackboard.</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus Contract</td>
<td>Following your syllabus quiz, you will sign a digital contract agreeing to the terms of this syllabus. This assignment must be completed before accessing additional course material.</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Component</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Possible Points</td>
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| Online Assignments | Throughout the semester, you will complete two types of online assignments: Connect chapter quizzes and chapter LearnSmarts. Extensions are not granted for online assignments, and late assignments are not accepted.  
1) Quizzes  
• 11 multiple-choice chapter quizzes will be conducted through the publisher’s online learning system, McGraw-Hill Connect.  
• Each quiz is worth 15 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 you missed and the correct answers.  
2) LearnSmarts  
• 11 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 15 points. To earn those points, you must complete all the practice questions. If you complete 70% of the questions, you will receive 10.5 points.  
• You are not able to make up LearnSmart exercises, nor is late work accepted. | 270 points |
| Exams | • There are three exams for the course.  
• Exams are given in-class.  
• Each exam is worth 150 points, for a total of 450 points (3 x 150 points = 450 points).  
• Each exam is 50 questions in length, with one additional bonus questions.  
• Exams are multiple-choice, and they are non-cumulative. | 450 points |
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A study guide is posted to Blackboard roughly one week prior to the exam date.</td>
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<td>• Scantrons will be provided, but students will need to bring pencils, erasers, and TAMUCC student ID.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<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. Do not be late on exam dates!</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>NO</strong> 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 <strong>not</strong> an opportunity to replace a low exam score. Students may only make up one exam.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Assignments</td>
<td>• You will have three short (~1 page) writing assignments this semester that combine class material and personal opinion. Each assignment is worth <strong>50 points</strong>.</td>
<td><strong>150 points</strong></td>
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<td>• Your grade on these writing assignments will be based both on writing skills and content.</td>
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<td>• More details will be given in class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrated Assignment</td>
<td>• In your seminar and/or composition class(es), you will be working on assignment based on the material we discuss in this class. Your grade on that assignment will count toward your grade in this class as well.</td>
<td><strong>100 points</strong></td>
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<td>• More information on the integrated assignment will be given in class.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Possible Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,000 points</strong></td>
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**Grading Scale**

- **A = 900 – 1,000 points**
- **B = 800 – 899 points**
- **C = 700 – 799 points**
- **D = 600 – 699 points**
- **F = 599 points and below**
Course Policies

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.

Occasional extra credit opportunities may be offered in class. These opportunities are only available to students who are present in class that day.

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:

- Make sure that you have reviewed the syllabus prior to sending an email. Most questions can be answered by referring to the syllabus.
- As a form of professional communication, you should include a greeting. Address emails to Professor Nelson. Emails should be written in full, grammatically correct sentences.
- Email should include your first and last name along with your class and section number (e.g., Jane Doe – POLS 2306.410). I teach multiple classes and sections. 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 AND put it away in your bag. Cell phone use is highly distracting to your peers and your instructors. 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 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.

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.
Disabilities Accommodations
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.C2.03, 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 available 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.

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**

Calendar available online at [http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/calendar/](http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/calendar/)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W 1/17</td>
<td>Classes begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 1/24</td>
<td>Last day to register/add a class (Full semester)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 2/27</td>
<td>Last day to apply for spring graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 3/12 – F 3/16</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 3/19</td>
<td>First day of classes (2nd 7-wk session)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 4/6</td>
<td>Last day to drop a class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 4/30</td>
<td>Last day to withdraw from the University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 5/1</td>
<td>Last day of classes (Full semester, 2nd 7-wk session)</td>
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<td>Final exams (2nd 7-wk session)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 5/2</td>
<td>Reading Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R 5/3 – W 5/9</td>
<td>Final Exams (Full semester)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 5/10 – F 5/11</td>
<td>Grading Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sa 5/12</td>
<td>Spring Commencement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 5/14</td>
<td>Final grades due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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 Friday, January 19, 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W 1/17</td>
<td>Course Introduction &amp; Expectations; Syllabus Overview; Review of McGraw-Hill Connect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| F 1/19       | Lecture: Texas Political Culture  
               (Ch. 1, “Introduction to Texas History and Politics”)  
               **Due:** Syllabus Quiz  
               Syllabus Contract |
| M 1/22       | Lecture: Texas History  
               (Ch. 1, “Introduction to Texas History and Politics”) |
| W 1/24       | Lecture: Texas Constitution  
               (Ch. 2, “The Texas State Constitution and the American Federal System”) |
| F 1/26       | ***Today’s class will be held online.  
               **Due:** Online Assignments (See Blackboard) |
| M 1/29       | Lecture: Federalism  
               (Ch. 2, cont.) |
| W 1/31       | In-Class Viewing: Frontline “The Storm” |
| F 2/1        | ***Today’s class will be held online.  
               **Due:** Online Assignments (See Blackboard) |
| M 2/5        | Lecture: Local Government  
               (Ch. 6, “Local Government in Texas”) |
| W 2/7        | In-Class Exam Review |
| F 2/9        | **EXAM 1** conducted in class from 9:00 AM to 9:50 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.  
               **Reminder:** 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. |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
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</table>
| M 2/12 | Lecture: Texas Legislature  
           (Ch. 3, “The Texas Legislature”) |
| W 2/14 | Lecture: Texas Legislature, cont.  
           (Ch. 3, “The Texas Legislature”) |
| F 2/16 | Lecture: The Governor  
           (Ch. 4, “The Governor and the Plural Executive”) |
| M 2/19 | Lecture: The Plural Executive  
           (Ch. 4, “The Governor and the Plural Executive”) |
| W 2/21 | Lecture: Texas Courts  
           (Ch. 5, “The Court System in Texas”) |
| F 2/23 | ***Today’s class will be held online.  
           Due: Online Assignments (See Blackboard) |
| M 2/26 | In-Class Viewing: Frontline “The Child Cases” |
| W 2/28 | ***Today’s class will be held online.  
           Due: Online Assignments TBD |
| F 3/2 | ***Today’s class will be held online.  
           Due: Online Assignments TBD |
| M 3/5 | Lecture: Voting and Participation  
           (Ch. 7, “Voting and Political Participation in Texas”) |
| W 3/7 | Lecture: The Voting Rights Act |
| F 3/9 | ***Today’s class will be held online.  
           Due: Online Assignments TBD |
| 3/12 – 3/16 | SPRING BREAK |
| M 3/19 | In-Class Viewing: Last Man Standing |
| W 3/21 | In-Class Viewing: Last Man Standing |
| F 3/23 | Lecture: Texas Political Parties  
           (Ch. 9, “Political Parties in Texas”) |
<p>| M 3/26 | In-Class Exam Review |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
<th>Topic and Assignments</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| W 3/28       | **EXAM 2** conducted in class from 9:00 AM to 9:50 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.  
**Reminder:** 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. |
| F 3/30       | Lecture: Interest Groups  
(Ch. 10, “Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas”) |
| M 4/2        | Lecture: Interest Groups  
(Ch. 9, “Interest Groups: Organizing for Influence”) |
| W 4/4        | Lecture: Funding State Government  
(Ch. 13, “Financing State Government”) |
| F 4/6        | ***Today’s class will be held online.  
**Due:** Online Assignments TBD |
| M 4/9        | Lecture: Public Policy and Policy Topic Discussion  
(Ch. 11, “Public Policy in Texas”) |
| W 4/11       | Lecture: Policy Topic Discussion, cont.  
(Ch. 11, cont.) |
| F 4/13       | ***Today’s class will be held online.  
**Due:** Online Assignments TBD |
| M 4/16       | Lecture: Policy Topic Discussion, cont.  
(Ch. 11, cont.) |
| W 4/18       | In-Class Viewing |
| F 4/20       | ***Today’s class will be held online.  
**Due:** Online Assignments TBD |
| M 4/23       | Lecture: Policy Topic Discussion, cont.  
(Ch. 11, cont.) |
<p>| W 4/25       | In-Class Exam Review |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
<th>Topic and Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F 4/27</td>
<td><strong>EXAM 3</strong> conducted in class from 9:00 AM to 9:50 AM.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Bring: pencil(s), eraser(s), TAMUCC student ID.</td>
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<td></td>
<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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<td><strong>Reminder</strong>: 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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBA</td>
<td><strong>CUMULATIVE MAKE-UP</strong> conducted in class from 8:00 AM to 8:50 AM.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Bring: pencil(s), eraser(s), TAMUCC student ID.</td>
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<td></td>
<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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<td></td>
<td><strong>Note</strong>: The cumulative make-up exam is only for students who have missed one of the three in-class exams. Students <strong>may not</strong> take the cumulative make-up to replace a low score.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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