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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>Feb 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td>Mar 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 3</td>
<td>Mar 30</td>
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</tbody>
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**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 11th 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 April 6. A 10% off per day late penalty will apply for every day the paper is late. Papers should be submitted electronically through the Civic Engagement Paper tab (Turnitin Direct Assignment) in Blackboard. Papers should be uploaded to Blackboard as a Word compatible file attachment. Instructions on how to make a submission can be viewed on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CROa6A0_3_o It is not necessary to make a hard copy submission. Please confirm that the submission has correctly been made by viewing your submission in Blackboard. The instructor is unable to provide technical assistance with making submissions. For any technical questions, please contact the IT Help Desk at 361-825-2692 or submit a request via email ithelp@tamucc.edu Technical issues do not constitute an excuse for late submission, and can be avoided by making a timely submission prior to the deadline.

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
POLS 2305-002
To watch a video on setting up your Reef account, please see

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX13GhlIg8E&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
Where and How to Get It:

Student Options for Purchasing AND Registering Into the Course

CHOICES:

1. **Bookstore/Blackboard Purchase Course Materials:** Your bookstore has two purchase options.
   i) PATTERSON CNCT AMER GOV AC WE PPL 13TH 19 #9781260165739 (this is for the access card for Connect only)
   ii) PATTERSON GEN CMB LL WE PPL; CNCT 13TH 19 #9781260525373 (this is for the access card AND the loose leaf text)

   The Connect only option will provide full access to the eBook, so you are **not required** to have a print text. Please be aware if you purchase a used textbook, you must **still** purchase Connect access. A print-upgrade option is also available via Connect throughout the semester. This will be a full color binder-ready version of the 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 $25 after you have purchased the digital version of the textbook. You also have the option of purchasing Connect access plus rented bound text when you register.
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** – There is no extra credit for this course.

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/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 0 for the assignment.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism
Definition: In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation of academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:
- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- Using resource materials without correct documentation,
- Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
- Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University’s OWL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/, and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

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 10th 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.* You are not permitted to record the instructor’s lectures electronically without his express consent, which will only be granted if it is necessary as an approved accommodation.

**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**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.c0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf.

**DISABILITIES ACCOMODATIONS**

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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>Chapter 1 - Critical Thinking and Political Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 3</td>
<td>Chapter 2 - Constitutional Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>Chapter 3 - Federalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Test 1:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Feb 10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>Chapter 4 - Civil Liberties</td>
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Feb 24  Chapter 5- Civil Rights
Mar 2    Chapter 06- Public Opinion

Test 2:   Mar 2

Mar 9    Spring Break

Mar 16   Chapter 07- Political Participation
         Chapter 08- Political Parties
Mar 23   Chapter 09- Interest Groups

Mar 30   Chapter 10- The Media

Test 3:  Mar 30

Apr 6    Chapter 11- Congress

PAPERS DUE    Apr 6

Apr 13   Chapter 12- Presidency
Apr 20   Chapter 13- Bureaucracy
         Chapter 14- The Judiciary
Apr 27   Chapter 15- Economic Policy
May 4    Chapter 16- Income, Welfare and Education Policy

May 11   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.