POLS 2305.796
American Government
Fall 2019
MWF 11:00 am to 11:50 am
CI-138

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Office Hours: MWF 12:00-1:00 PM and 2:00-3:00 PM
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Course Description:
POLS 2305 is a survey course in American Government. What that implies is that we will be covering quite a bit of ground in this course and will not have time to focus in depth on any particular subject. However, I do have three major objectives that I hope to accomplish over the course of the semester: first, to familiarize students with the development of our constitutional system of government; second, to make students aware of their rights and responsibilities as members of this political community; and third, to outline the structure of our federal system and the functions of the branches of our national government. I do not lecture directly from the book. Therefore, it is essential that students attend class on a regular basis and listen and take notes.

Student Learning Outcomes:
On completion of this course students will be able to:
1. Recall basic facts related to the foundations of U.S. national government
2. Describe key political concepts related to U.S. institutions such as Congress, the Presidency, and the Judiciary.
3. Demonstrate their understanding of key concepts relating to U.S. political behavior such as voting, elections, political parties, interest groups and the media.

Core Outcomes
1. By having the students engage in critical thinking activities related to the Constitution, the political and philosophical foundations of the nation, governmental institutions, and political behavior.

2. By having students engage in written, verbal or visual activities related to the Constitution, the political and philosophical foundations of the nation, governmental institutions, and political behavior.
3. By having students engage in course related activities that connect personal responsibility and political ideology to encourage ethical decision-making.

4. By having students engage in course related activities that connect social responsibility to civil rights, civil liberties, and to voting and voting behavior.

**Grading Criteria:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90 – 100</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>80 – 89</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60 – 69</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
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**Evaluation:** There will be a total of four exams in this class, including the final. The integrated assignment will constitute 20% of your final grade.

**Grading Structure:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrated Assignment</td>
<td>20%</td>
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**Evaluation:** The exams will consist of multiple choice questions. The exams will be computer graded which means that students must bring a number 2 pencil on exam days. **SCANTRONS WILL BE PROVIDED.** Make up exams will be given only upon receipt of an acceptable and legitimate excuse.

- If you arrive after the first student has completed and turned in their exam, you will not be able to take the exam that day.

**Required Materials for the Course:**

No book required! Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Please consider any readings assigned in Seminar to be mandatory for this course. I reserve the right to assess your understanding of the readings on the course exams.

**Course Policies:**

You are expected to come prepared for class and to make thoughtful contribution in class. If you do not understand something, ask. It is very important that we discuss issues related to government and their impact on the community. You should be
exposed to a variety of opinions that may differ from your own. Respect those opinions and use them to help you reflect on why people hold different views.

Class lectures provide the basis for the course. Concepts and information that I deem important will be presented in class. Regular and consistent attendance is essential if you want to do well in the course.

Class Attendance:
All students are expected to attend EVERY class. The major valid excuses for missing a class are illness and death. In order to maximize attendance, I will take random roll call using sign-in sheets throughout the semester. If you have an excused absence (university-related, illness with M.D. excuse), you must bring me documentation. I may issue extra credit points at random based on attendance at my discretion.

Makeup Exams:
Make-up exams will be allowed only for emergencies and with advanced approval. These exams will be different from the regular exams and may require documented proof of emergency.
- You need to contact me to determine if you can take a make-up exam.

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 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.

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. Drop Date for this Semester is November 8th.

**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 (can be in place of classroom/professional behavior)**
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.

**Academic Etiquette:**
There are certain rules that apply to my classes. It is difficult to learn in an environment that is not conducive to leaning. Such activities include: talking to neighbors during class, reading newspapers, walking in late and going up the central aisle, napping, walking out of class prior to being dismissed. It is disrespectful to me and to the class. If you do not abide by these rules, you will be asked to leave my class. Please silence your cell phones during my class.

**Incompletes:**
A grade of incomplete will be given only for extreme emergencies and will necessitate appropriate documentation. You must request a grade of “incomplete” and sign a form agreeing to the terms for a grade of I. However, you must have completed 75% of the coursework.

**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 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.

**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.

**Grade Appeals**
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](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](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 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**

Aug 26: **INTRODUCTION**

Aug 28: **POLITICS: WHO GETS WHAT, AND HOW?**
Aug 30: DEMOCRACY AND AMERICAN POLITICS

September 2nd, Labor Day, No Class

Sep 4: DEMOCRACY AND AMERICAN POLITICS
Sep 6: THE FOUNDING AND THE CONSTITUTION
Sep 9: THE FOUNDING AND THE CONSTITUTION
Sep 11: AMERICAN FEDERALISM
Sep 13: Reading – No Class
Sep 16: AMERICAN FEDERALISM
Sep 18: REVIEW

Exam #1 – September 20th

Sep 23: CONGRESS
Sep 25: CONGRESS
Sep 27: THE PRESIDENCY
Sep 30: THE PRESIDENCY
Oct 2: THE PRESIDENCY
Oct 4: Reading – No Class
Oct 7: THE JUDICIARY
Oct 9: THE JUDICIARY
Oct 11: REVIEW

Exam #2 – October 14th

Oct 16: THE BUREAUCRACY
Oct 18: THE BUREAUCRACY
Oct 21: CIVIL LIBERTIES
Oct 23: CIVIL LIBERTIES
Oct 25: Reading – No Class
Oct 28: CIVIL LIBERTIES
Oct 30: PUBLIC OPINION I
Nov 1: PUBLIC OPINION II
Nov 4: PUBLIC OPINION III
Nov 6: CIVIL RIGHTS
Nov 8: CIVIL RIGHTS
Nov 11: THE MEDIA
Nov 13: REVIEW

Exam #3 – November 15th

Nov 18: INTEREST GROUPS
Nov 20: INTEREST GROUPS
Nov 22: Reading – No Class
Nov 25: POLITICAL PARTIES

Nov 27-29, Thanksgiving, No Class

Dec 2: POLITICAL PARTIES
Dec 4: REVIEW

FINAL EXAM* – TBA. In our regular classroom.

*-Final Exam is cumulative. Roughly 50% of the material will come from the final block of instruction. The other half will be material from the first 3 blocks.
-The final exam is mandatory