State & Local Government, Learning Community L Fall 2019 (5/15/2019 version)
POLS 2306 Sections 480, 481, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 490, 491, 492, 493
TR 12:30-1:45, CI138

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Office Hours:  MW, 12:30-1:30 PM, TR 2-3:30, & by appointment

Introduction
Politics and government affect students in many ways. Things that are taken for granted such as drinking water, roads, and A&M-Corpus Christi are the result of politics and government. Many students are enrolled at A&M-Corpus Christi to prepare for employment after graduation. Politics and governmental policies affect job markets and the economy. Hence, students have much at stake in the political system of the United States. Thus, it is essential that students understand the political processes and political institutions of the U.S. national government because governmental decisions and policies affect students each day.

State and Local Government Course Description: The politics, government, and administration of American states, counties, cities, and special districts, with special emphasis on Texas. Meets the University core requirement and the Texas state statutory requirement for U.S. and Texas constitutions.

Triad L Learning Community: This political science course is linked with First-Year Seminar and Foundations of Communication to create the Triad L Learning Community.

Core 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:

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, and the policy making process.

Course Requirements
Please read and be familiar with the following course requirements. Please ask for clarification if there is a component of the requirements that are not understood. Students are expected to understand and be familiar with the course requirements.

- **Blackboard:** Students in this class will use Blackboard accounts. Blackboard is used for assignments, communication, announcements, class materials, and grade posting. (lol.tamucc.edu)
- **Announcements:** All class announcements are made via Blackboard.
- **Class Presentations and Discussions:** Regular and consistent class attendance is essential for students wishing to do well in the course.
- **Required Book/Materials:** Practicing Texas Politics, 2019-2020 Edition* (with Mindtap) by Lyle Brown, et al., is the required textbook and is available at the University Bookstore.
  - Mindtap is the online supplement for the book and is also required. Students have the option of purchasing a printed book with Mindtap, or an e-book that also has Mindtap.
  - *Dr. Huerta is a co-author of the textbook. Book royalties from the class are donated to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.
- **Exams:** There will be five exams, each worth 100 points, during the semester. The exams will typically consist of 25-40 multiple-choice questions. The exams are not comprehensive and will cover the material from class discussions, readings, and syllabus. Students can retake an exam (except the final exam) if their grade is less than a 65% (81 points). The maximum grade a student can earn on a re-take is 65% correct (81 points). Students will be allowed to take a re-take during the dates and times announced via Blackboard. The re-take exam grade will replace the original exam grade, even if it is lower.
- **Mindtap Assignments:** Mindtap is a textbook companion of online materials designed to support the class. Students will purchase access to the site (It comes bundled with the book if purchased at the University Bookstore) and complete assignments that are designed to relate to and support concepts and topics we discuss in class. Students will have 10 Mindtap Assignments, worth 30 points each, that count towards their grade for a total of 300 points. Students successfully completing the assignment, by the due date, receive the full 30 points. A total of 12 assignments, and 1 practice assignment, are assigned, meaning students have 2 extra opportunities. Specific due dates for assignments are listed in the Provisional Course Outline, and are accessed via Blackboard. All Mindtap Assignments are due by 8 AM on the due date. Students have a maximum of 3 attempts for MindTap assignments.
- **Integrative Experiences Assignment:** Students will have opportunities to earn up to 200 points from the Integrative Experiences Assignment. The assignment will count for credit in all the courses in your learning community. Specific criteria and due dates for the assignments are forthcoming. Please note that a student choosing to drop Seminar risks forfeiting the chance to earn these points.
- **Reaction Paper:** This assignment, worth 40 points, is an opportunity for students to respond to a prompt about critical thinking and social responsibility. Additional details, including the due date, will be posted on Blackboard.
- **Participation:** Students can earn a maximum of 10 participation points based on their participation grade from First Year Seminar. In FYS, students may earn a maximum of 100 participation points. To calculate participation points for Political Science, simply divide the total FYS participation points by 10. Furthermore, negative participation in the political science class (disruptive behavior) will lead to a loss of 1 participation point per citation.
- **Evaluation:** In this course, students have a significant amount of control over their grades. Students make the choice to be prepared, complete assignments on time, perform well on the exams, participate in seminar, and complete the Integrative Experiences Assignment. DO NOT ASK FOR ADDITIONAL POINTS FOR THE FINAL GRADE – THEY WILL NOT BE AWARDED.

- **Summary of Requirements:**
  - Exams 5 x 100 points 500
  - Integrative Experiences Assignment 200
  - Mindtap 10 x 30 points 300
  - Reaction Paper 40
  - Participation 10
  - Total 1050 points
Course Policies

Please read and be familiar with the following course policies and ask for clarification if there is a component of the policies that are not understood. Students are expected to understand and be familiar with the course policies.

- **Make-up Exams.** Make-up exams will be allowed for official university excused absences, or in the event of a medical or family emergency (preferable with advance notification). Make-up exams will be given on specific dates announced via Blackboard. If a student has a valid excuse for missing a make-up exam they will make-up their exam on the day of the final exam. Make-up exams will be different from the regular exam. Furthermore, in the interest of fairness to all of students, documented proof may be requested.

- **MindTap & Other Work.** Late assignments without a valid reason (special circumstances with advance notification and documentation) will not be accepted.

- **Attendance/Tardiness.** There is not a formal attendance policy. Past analyses of grades and attendance indicates that grades and attendance are strongly related. Students who choose not to attend will still be responsible for material discussed in class. If you arrive after class begins, you are asked to discreetly enter from the 2nd floor rear entrance to CI 138.

- **Extra Credit Work.** Extra credit work will not be assigned nor allowed under any circumstances.

- **Assistance.** Please visit during office hours; make an appointment, call, or e-mail to visit about class. The Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA) will offer Supplemental Instruction for State and Local Politics. Details are forthcoming. Visit CASA's website at http://casa.tamucc.edu/ for additional services.

- **Incompletes.** Incompletes will only be given in the event of medical or family emergencies. In addition, incompletes will only be given if there is appropriate documentation.

- **Freedom of Expression.** Understand the exciting environments of learning and ideas. It is inevitable that at times, subjects are going to be discussed and ideas introduced that students are either unfamiliar with or perhaps disagree with. However, in the university environment it is important that different factual viewpoints are expressed. In this context, students need to feel free to factually express themselves in class with questions and comments and to do so without fear of reprisal. Class discussion (when it is relevant to the class) makes for a better class and students are encouraged to ask questions and express thoughtful informed opinions. Additionally, to allow all students an opportunity to participate in discussions, students will be limited to two comments per class.

- **iPhones, iPads, iCopies, Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage.** A learning environment free from distractions will be maintained always during this class. Silence your phones, put these devices away during class, and refrain from Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram and other social media. Laptops may be used for class notes or along the exterior aisle seats.

- **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.

- **Advisor for Academic Advising (for students with a major in the College of Liberal Arts):** 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.

- **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. November 8, 2019 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

- **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.C2.03_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.

- **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. In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a course grade of “F.” 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.

- **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.
Provisional Course Outline (corrections & updates to the syllabus will be posted on Blackboard)

Week 1
Aug. 27  Welcome and Introductions
Aug. 29  A Place at the Table

Week 2
Sept. 3  A Place at the Table
The Environment of Texas Politics, Ch. 1
MindTap Ch. 1 (sign in & practice -- attempt to complete this prior to class on 9/3/19)
Sept. 5  Federalism and the Texas Constitution, Ch. 2
MindTap Ch. 2 (due by 8 AM)

Week 3
Sept. 10 Federalism and the Texas Constitution, Ch. 2
Sept. 12 Class Begins at 1 PM so students can attend the Hispanic Heritage Month Kickoff Party
Local Governments, Ch. 3
MindTap Ch. 3 (due by 8 AM)

Week 4
Sept. 17 Local Governments, Ch. 3
Sept. 19  Exam 1, Chs. 1-3, & A Place at the Table

Week 5
Sept. 24  Political Parties, Ch. 4
MindTap Ch. 4 (due by 8 AM)
Sept. 26  Political Parties, Ch. 4

Week 6
Oct. 1  Campaigns and Elections, Ch. 5
MindTap Ch. 5 (due by 8 AM)
Oct. 3  Campaigns and Elections, Ch. 5

Week 7
Oct. 8  Media and Politics, Ch. 6
MindTap Ch. 6 (due by 8 AM)
Oct. 10  Exam 2 (chs. 4-6)

Week 8
Oct. 15  The Politics of Interest Groups, Ch. 7
MindTap Ch. 7 (due by 8 AM)
Oct. 17  The Legislative Branch, Ch. 8
MindTap Ch. 8 (due by 8 AM)

Week 9
Oct. 22  The Legislative Branch, Ch. 8
Oct. 24  The Executive Branch, Ch. 9
MindTap Ch. 9 (due by 8 AM)

Week 10
Oct. 29  The Executive Branch, Ch. 9
Oct. 31  Exam 3 (Chs. 7-9)

Week 11
Nov. 5  The Judicial Branch, Ch. 10
MindTap Ch. 10 (due by 8 AM)
Nov. 7  Finance and Fiscal Policy, Ch. 11
MindTap Ch. 11 (due by 8 AM)
Reacting Through Writing (due by 11:59 PM via Blackboard)
Nov. 8  Last day to drop a class

Week 12
Nov. 12  Finance and Fiscal Policy, Ch. 11
MindTap Ch. 11 (due by 8 AM)
Nov. 14  Exam 4 (Chs. 10 & 11)
Week 13  Nov. 19  Public Policy and Administration, Ch. 12
          MindTap Ch. 11 (due by 8 AM)
 Nov. 21  Public Policy and Administration, Ch. 12
Week 14  Nov. 26  The Criminal Justice System, Ch. 13
          MindTap Ch. 13 (due by 8 AM)
 Nov. 27  Reading Day – no classes
 Nov. 28-29  Thanksgiving Holiday
Week 15  Dec. 3  The Criminal Justice System, Ch. 13
**Finals Week**  **Final Exam 11 AM -1:30 PM (chs. 12 & 13)**
          Final Date for Make-Up and Re-Takes Exams.