

# Texas Government

POLS 2306 –Fall 2024

Online

3 Credit Hours [No Prerequisites Required]

**Instructor:** Mrs. Jill “Nikki” Carter

**Email:** [jcarter@uttyler.edu](mailto:jcarter@uttyler.edu) [preferred contact]

- In your email, please note which class you are in (example POLS 2306.061)
- Expect a response within 24 hours M-F or 48 hours on the weekends
- I will only reply to email from an official UT-Tyler email account

**Office Location:** CAS 122

**Office Hours:** Monday 11am -Noon, Tuesday 1pm-2pm, and Friday 8:30am -9:30 am. Zoom links will be posted in the course for these times. Since this is an online class and everyone has a different schedule, I want to accommodate for that and appointments for meetings are available in person or zoom by request with advanced notice at least 24 hours. Email is the quickest way to communicate, and I will make every effort to get back to you quickly. I encourage you to reach out if you have questions, concerns, or need any help as office hours are better thought of as student hours to help you to be more successful or get one on one time with your professors.

*“I greet you as the shapers of American society.”* – Lyndon B. Johnson

*“You may all go to hell and I will go to Texas.”* - Davy Crockett said this angrily after losing his Tennessee bid for the U.S. Congress.

## **Canvas:**

This online class will be conducted through Canvas. If you experience any problems logging into Canvas or any technical problems with the system you should seek help from Campus Computing. They can be reached via email at [itsupport@patriots.uttyler.edu](mailto:itsupport@patriots.uttyler.edu). Please include your full name, student ID number and date of birth in any communications you send to them. If you experience any issues in Canvas, such as a locked module, you need to reach out to Canvas support and email me as well.

## **Course Description:**

This course is an examination of the Texas political system, including its intellectual foundations and the design of the Constitution. It includes study of the major institutional factors, the impact of interest groups and the media, and the processes of policy-making. It may be taken in fulfillment of statutory requirements for a baccalaureate degree.

## **Content Objectives:**

The primary goal is to successfully complete a required course with minimal pain and suffering while gathering useful information. To that end, after successfully completing this course, students should be able to demonstrate:

- To acquaint you with the study of political science, and
- To improve your understanding of the institutions and processes that govern Texas and other states, as well as the localities (such as cities and counties) within them.
- The student will become familiar with the historical antecedents which make up the political culture and regions of Texas.
- The student will learn to characterize the trends in Texas’ political history.
- The student will be able to trace the changing political partisan face of Texas from a one-party Democratic state to a state with a strong Republican party.

- The student will become cognizant of the changes facing Texas in ethnic diversity and population growth.

### **Important Note:**

I encourage you to meet or message with me regularly to discuss or clarify lectures videos, or reading—or to talk about government or history in general. Please keep this in mind throughout the semester.

Also, some semesters, life gets in the way; unfortunate and unexpected things happen. Should you have one of these semesters, I am more than happy to talk to you about what to do and provide you with resources to assist you as needed. But, if the trauma is too great, you may need to consider dropping one or all of your courses. Your education is vitally important, but there are things that outrank even education sometimes—and *you have to make that call when it is necessary*. I cannot grade you on how well or poorly you deal with your life at given moments. Your grades reflect your performance in this class—not how well you are dealing with other things. I wish all of us a semester in which these things aren't issues.

### **Course attendance policy:**

Regular attendance is one of the best ways to stay engaged and be successful in this course. I invite you to log onto Canvas each week, where you can work through the module content and complete the graded assignments. Logging in without engaging is not considered attendance, as it does not confer the same benefits to your learning. Each unit has a once per section due date for all its assignments to provide you with maximum flexibility within that period to complete work, but it is not intended to encourage you to wait until the last minute to complete everything. Regular (weekly) module engagement and assignment completion is key to being successful in this course. While there is no penalty for not doing weekly work, this will keep you on track, help you develop time management skills, and help reduce the stress of trying to cram an entire unit of work into a short period of time. However, if an emergency comes up, you travel, get sick, or for anything else that may happen then you have until the hard deadline to catch up; which offers you flexibility when needed. You may also work ahead in a unit if that is what works best for you. I invite you to submit late assignments after the "soft deadline," up until the "hard deadline," after which no late work is accepted for full credit.

### **Course Make-up Policy:**

**I understand that things happen, that it why I give an extended period of time for each unit. It is also why module assignments and quizzes submitted lafter after the unit deadline receive a 50% reduction on points per day (a 0 after second day).** You have ample time allotted to complete each assignment, usually several weeks, and waiting until the last minute to do an assignment is not advised. Time management is one of the skills you will need for the future, and this schedule is to help you work on that skill. If you have a computer issue, internet issue, or any other issue on the date an assignment is due is not an excuse for not completing the assignment on time and no additional points will be granted for late work. If you do the work early and an issue presents itself, then there is time for us to work together and resolve it so that you can submit the work by the due date. Unfortunately, each semester I have students who put off everything until the due date and sometime comes up or they run out of time. This causes you stress and harms your grade, I strongly encourage you NOT to risk this, but if you do, then you have to accept those consequences.

**Also there are no make-up exams or alternative assignments given once a test has been missed. There are 5 exams given over the semester and one of them is dropped.** If you miss an exam, then that will be your dropped test grade. If you miss multiple exams that are open for an extended period of time because of an emergency situation then I encourage you to reach out to the CARE team on campus for that they can help you and determine the best course of action. No provisions are made in this course for missing more than one test in

a semester. If you are going to miss an exam because of a school activity, you must make arrangements to take the exam prior to the day the exam will be given, as they are open the entire time the unit is.

### **Required Reading and Materials:**

**Textbook:** The textbook is a free PDF – *Uncovering Texas Politics*. You will also be given book chapters and other materials that will be uploaded onto Canvas. They are a required part of the course and you are responsible for the information presented in them. There is no official textbook for you to purchase.

### **Course Structure:**

This course will be conducted in four units and there will be one exam over the material in each unit. There is also a comprehensive final exam. Each unit will be available for a limited period of time and late work is for full credit is not accepted once that deadline passed. Please see the attendance policy below for more details and check Canvas for due date for assignments.

To encourage your own success, I suggest you to log on each week and complete work in a current module. Waiting until the last minute to do the assignments is not advised, can cause additional stress, and have a negative impact on your grade and or course work. For example, having a computer issue, internet issue, Canvas issue, or any other issue on the end of the day that assignments due is not an excuse for not completing them on time and no additional time will be granted to earn full credit on those assignments. On the other hand, if you do the work early and an issue presents itself, then there is time for us to work together and resolve it so that you can submit the work by the due date. The university has computer labs for you to use and most places have wifi you can access. You can also use your cellphone as a hot spot in many cases (I recently had to do this to complete some of my work on time because of a storm).

Since all quizzes, assignments, and exams are available online for some period of time the late work policy is that any **Module assignments submitted late are reduced 50% of the grade per day and students who miss a semester test will not receive a make up or alternative assignment, one exam grade is dropped and if you miss a test, that will be your dropped grade.** Please see the exam policy for more info and remember to check Canvas for due dates.

### **Online Quizzes:**

There will be 12 quizzes, each consisting of 20 multiple-choice and true/false over the lectures, textbook, and other content for each chapter module. Each quiz is worth 20 points. Quizzes are designed to help familiarize you with at least some of the important material that will be on the exams and to make sure you are reading. These quizzes are open book and open note. Since things happen, one quiz grade is dropped (missed or lowest grade) for a total of 220 points. The syllabus quiz grade will not be dropped. **Module quizzes submitted late are reduced 50% of the grade per day.**

### **Online Assignments:**

There will be 15 article or video quizzes over the course of the semester and they will be worth 3 points each. There is one assignment that is worth 2 points. Total points available is 50. **Module assignments submitted late are reduced 50% of the grade per day.**

### **Writing Assignments:**

There is one writing assignment that is worth 20 points. This grade is NOT dropped. Total points available is 20. Late work is not accepted on this writing assignment, please allow yourself time to work on it as there is a research element to it. AI generated essays are not allowed and will receive a 0. See AI statement below

### **Online Exams:**

There will be four-unit tests and a final exam. Each exam will consist of a mixture multiple choice and true/false questions for a total of 100 points. There is a study guide posted for each exam. If you miss a test,

there are no make-up exams given for individual exams. At the end semester, students who missed an exam will take the final exam as a grade replacement. Students who did not miss one have the option to take the final to replace another test grade and try to improve their score. Basically, no matter how you make it work, there are 5 exams and 4 count towards your final grade. See schedule below for due dates. Test count for a total of 400 points.

**An important note - No lockdown browser or proctoring software is required for exams or quizzes this semester. However, Exams are NOT open book or open note and outside resources, like google, are not allowed. To ensure academic honesty, you must complete the quizzes for each module before taking the exam, or else you will be given a 0 on the test. The exams are timed and once you answer a question, you cannot go back to it and there is a time limit. These measures are taken because I do not require a lockdown browser or test monitoring software on exam since they generally make students have anxiety and score poorly.**

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage Statement:**

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

The written work submitted by students in this course will be generated by themselves. This includes all process work, drafts, brainstorming artifacts, editing, and final products. Any instance of the following constitutes a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code: a student has another person/entity do any portion of a graded assignment, which includes purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, using a previously submitted assignment and/or using AI tools (such as ChatGPT).

### **Points Breakdown:**

Online Quizzes: 220 pts  
Online Assignments: 50pts  
Writing Assignments: 20pts  
Four exams – 400 pts  
690 points total

### **Final Grade Scale:**

More than 89.5% of total points available = A  
79.5% - 89.4% of pts = B  
69.5% – 79.4% of pts = C  
59.5% - 69.4% of pts = D  
Below 59.5% of total points available = F

**Course Schedule: Check Canvas for Due Dates**

**Due 9/6 and 9/11**

**Readings:**

- ! The Getting Started Module – Due 9/6
- ! Module 1: Texas Political Culture and Diversity
- ! Module 2: Texas in the Federal System and the Texas Constitution

**Assignments and Exam:** check Canvas for specific assignments for and due dates – 1<sup>st</sup> exam - Census date end of week 2

**UNIT 2**

**Due 10/4**

**Readings:**

- ! Module 3: Voting and Elections
- ! Module 4: Political Parties
- ! Module 5: Interest Groups

**Assignments and Exam:** check Canvas for specific assignments and due dates – 2<sup>nd</sup> exam

**UNIT 3**

**Due 11/6**

**Readings:**

- ! Module 7: The Legislature
- ! Module 8: The Executive
- ! Module 9: The Judiciary

**Assignments and Exam:** check Canvas for specific assignments and due dates - 3<sup>rd</sup> exam - *Last day to drop a class is 3/28*

**UNIT 4**

**Due 12/6**

**Readings:**

- ! Module 10: Law and Due Process
- ! Module 11: Local Government
- ! Module 12: Public Policy

**Assignments and Exam:** check Canvas for specific assignments and due dates – 4<sup>th</sup> exam

**Final exam – Required for students who missed another exam, optional for those who took all four Unit tests and want to try and replace another test. The final will not harm your grade! – Due 12/10**

**Online Classroom Conduct/Decorum:**

Practice decorum and decency in all discussion posts and communication with fellow students and the instructor. More than one offense will result in possible dismissal from the class. For further reading on Internet decorum, I recommend that you take a look at UT-Tyler's "[Netiquette](#)" [Guide](#).

**Syllabus Notice:**

The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus; however, students will be given ample warning to any possible changes.

**Email Policy:**

Per university request, I will only communicate with students via your Patriot email accounts. The university has had several problems reaching students with vital questions or information because they do not check their Patriot email, and they have asked faculty to require that students use their Patriot email accounts. All responses to student email will be sent only to your Patriot email account (even if you send the email from some other account). Email sent from any non-Patriot email account will not be answered.

**Student Resources:**

For a general overview of resources provided by The University of Texas at Tyler, please refer to this link: <http://lms-media.uttyler.edu/fileman/OID/Resource/>

**Academic Honesty:**

Please carefully read the course policies found in Canvas and the university policy for cheating and academic dishonesty at the following website:: <http://www.uttyler.edu/judicialaffairs/scholasticdishonesty.php>

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT MUST APPEAR IN EACH COURSE SYLLABUS****UT Tyler Honor Code**

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

**Students Rights and Responsibilities**

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link:

<http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

**Campus Carry**

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

**UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University**

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors.

Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products.

There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit [www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free](http://www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free).

#### Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

#### State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

#### Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

#### Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

#### Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

#### Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

#### Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

#### Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

- i. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:
  - copying from another student's test paper;
  - using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
  - failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
  - possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
  - using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
  - collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
  - discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
  - divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
  - substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
  - paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
  - falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
  - taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
  - misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.
- ii. "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit.
- iii. "Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.
- iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

#### UT Tyler Resources for Students



- [UT Tyler Writing Center](#) (903.565.5995), [writingcenter@uttyler.edu](mailto:writingcenter@uttyler.edu)
- [UT Tyler Tutoring Center](#) (903.565.5964), [tutoring@uttyler.edu](mailto:tutoring@uttyler.edu)
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- [UT Tyler Counseling Center](#) (903.566.7254)

Recording of Class Sessions:

Class sessions may be recorded by the instructor for use by students enrolled in this course. Recordings that contain personally identifiable information or other information subject to FERPA shall not be shared with individuals not enrolled in this course unless appropriate consent is obtained from all relevant students. Class recordings are reserved only for the use of students enrolled in the course and only for educational purposes. Course recordings should not be shared outside of the course in any form without express permission.