Introductory Texas Politics
POLS 2306 – Fall 2024
Syllabus

Course Description:
This course offers a survey of contemporary government and politics in the State of Texas. It will examine political development in Texas with special attention to its context, institutions, and the electoral process. Furthermore, this course will emphasize the theoretical and practical understanding of how and why the Texas political system produces the kind of policies it does, and how the system itself is structured.

Learning Outcomes:

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

- Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.
- Describe state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.
- Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.
- Analyze state and local election processes.
- Analyze issues, policies, and the political culture of Texas.

Office Hours:

Online by appointment

Communication Policy:

E-mails will be answered within 24 hours during the school week and 48 hours on weekends.

Class Meetings:

Class will meet online.

Required Reading and Materials:
Textbook:
The textbook is a free PDF (*Uncovering Texas Politics)* in Canvas. There is no official textbook for you to purchase.

Course Structure:
This course will be conducted in three units and there will be one exam and three quizzes on the material in each unit. All units will be available for a limited period, and you may work through them at your own pace as long as you complete all required quizzes for each unit before the exam for that unit takes place. The units will close (i.e. no longer be available) at the end of the unit exam. Check Canvas for due dates.

You are expected to log on each week and complete the work and take the quiz in the current module. Waiting until the last minute to do the assignments is not advised. Having a computer issue, internet issue, Canvas issue, or any other issue at the end of the day that assignments are due is not an excuse for not completing them, and no additional time will be granted. 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.

Online Reading Quizzes: Each reading quiz will consist of 10 multiple choice/true-false questions derived from the text. This will assess how well you are reading the chapters and digesting the information. Reading quizzes will be worth 10 points per quiz and cannot be made up unless there are extenuating circumstances. You will have 30 minutes to complete a quiz, and the quizzes will open Mondays at 12:01 am and close Fridays at 11:59 pm the week they are due.

Online Writing Assignment: You will have to write one essay this semester related to a question posted in Canvas. The essay is worth 20 points, and no-makeup is offered. The assignment details are in Canvas and the essay is due November 22, 2024.

Online Exams:
There will be three-unit exams and an optional final. Each exam will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions for a total of 100 points. You will have 90 minutes to complete a unit exam, and the exam will open Mondays at 12:01 am and close Fridays at 11:59 pm the week it is due.

The optional final will be cumulative and only include multiple choice questions. The optional final can be used to make up for a unit exam you missed or a grade you did not like.

All exams are taken online in Canvas and no lockdown browser or proctoring software is required.

Points Breakdown:
Online Quizzes: 80 pts
Online Writing Assignment: 20pts
Exam I: 100 pts
Exam II: 100 pts
Exam III: 100 pts
(Optional Final Exam: 100 pts)
400 points total

Grading Policy:
A=400-360 points

B=359-320 points
C=319-280 points
D=279-260 points
F=259 or fewer points

Required Artificial Intelligence Syllabus Language:

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.

AI is not permitted in this course at all. I expect all the work students submit for this course to be their own. I have carefully designed all assignments and class activities to support your learning. Doing your own work, without human or artificial intelligence assistance, is best for your efforts in mastering course learning objectives. For this course, I expressly forbid using ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for any stages of the work process, including brainstorming. Deviations from these guidelines will be considered a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code and academic honesty values.

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. Please include your full name, student ID number and date of birth in any communications you send to them.

Tentative Course Outline:

UNIT 1
- UT Tyler Syllabus Module
- The Getting Started Module

Module/Readings:
- Module/Chapter 1: Texas Political Culture and Diversity
- Module/Chapter 2: Texas in the Federal System and the Texas Constitution
- Module/Chapter 3: Voting and Elections

Assignments and Unit Exam:

Quiz 1-September 6 (due by midnight).

Quiz 2-September 13 (due by midnight).

Quiz 3-September 20 (due by midnight).

Unit Exam I-September 27 (due by midnight).

UNIT 2

Module/Readings:
- Module 4: Political Parties

- Module 5: Interest Groups

- Module 6: The Legislature

Quiz 4-October 4 (due by midnight).

Quiz 5-October 11 (due by midnight).

Quiz 6-October 18 (due by midnight).

Unit Exam II-October 25 (due by midnight).

UNIT 3

Module/Readings:
- Module 7: The Executive

- Module 8: The Judiciary

Quiz 7-November 1 (due by midnight).

Quiz 8-November 8 (due by midnight).

Online Writing Assignment-November 22 (due by midnight).

Unit Exam III-November 29 (due by midnight).

Optional Final Exam-December 11 (due by midnight).