

**COURSE SYLLABUS: POLS-2305.003**  
**Introductory American Government**

**MEETING TIMES:** Tuesday/Thursday from 2:30pm until 3:50pm

**LOCATION:** Arts and Sciences Room 104

**TEXTBOOK:** Game of Politics: Conflict, Power, and Representation, by Kenneth Bryant, Jr., Eric Lopez, and Mark Owens. UT-Tyler Press, Tyler, Texas. First Edition. ISBN: 13:978-1-7333299-4-1.

NOTE: This textbook is provided as an open educational resource free of charge to all UT-Tyler students. Access to the digital version is provided in the Canvas classroom by the University. Students may contact the political science department office for details on purchasing a physical copy of the text.

**PROFESSOR: David McClendon**

**OFFICE:** Jenkins 141 at Tyler Junior College

**OFFICE PHONE:** 903-510-2276

**OFFICE E-MAIL:** dmccclendon@uttyler.edu

You may also try to reach me at my TJC email address (dmcc1@tjc.edu, that's a number one(1), not a lowercase letter L)

**OFFICE HOURS:** Monday and Wednesday: 9:00am - 1:00pm  
Tuesday, Thursday: 9:00am – 10:00am  
Friday: No Scheduled Office Hours. By Appointment Only.

**NOTE:** Since my fulltime job is at TJC, I will try to set up some conference times either right before or right after our class meeting times. These likely will be held either in the classroom itself, or in the political science department conference room. Announcements will be made in class and in Canvas on the availability once known. In addition, you always have the option to set up an in-person appointment at another time, or we can set up either a phone conference or zoom meeting if necessary.

**OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE**

Introductory survey of the discipline of political science focusing on the scope and methods of the field, and the substantive topics in the discipline including the theoretical foundations of politics, political interaction, political institutions and how political systems function.

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Identify and define terminology used to study political science and American Government
- Have basic knowledge of the historical evolution of American government and the political process
- Describe the constitutional, institutional, political, and legal processes and structures of the United States

### **ATTENDANCE FOR THIS COURSE**

Why are you here? The Texas Legislature (<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>) some time ago decided through its infinite wisdom that students in the state of Texas should have an "understanding of our representative democracy" as well as the "proper civic attitudes" to function as citizens. To this end, you are required to take this course in order to graduate from any college or university in Texas.

It is your responsibility to take care of your enrollment status with the class. I will not drop you if you stop coming to class. As such, if you simply stop attending or participating in the course then you will receive a failing grade in the course. If you feel it necessary to withdraw from this course, you are responsible for contacting the proper office on campus to complete the withdrawal process.

Please note that one component of your grade will be in-class assignments. These assignments are only done in class and you must be present in order to complete them. **Unexcused** absences from classroom assignments will result in a zero for that assignment. Examples of in-class assignments include pop reading quizzes, reflection writing assignments, small group exercises, etc. Participation in these learning exercises is designed to enhance the learning experience and encourage individual participation.

Absence from scheduled examinations will not be tolerated unless there is a substantial and prior excuse and the student has scheduled and taken the exam prior to the regularly scheduled exam dates. Make-up or alternate exams after the scheduled exam dates will be given at the discretion of the professor. If there is a last-minute emergency, please make contact with me by phone or email message so I have a record of you trying to reach me to take into consideration. If you work with me beforehand, I will work with you.

### **CLASSROOM CONDUCT AND PARTICIPATION**

The views of the instructor are not dogma and are always open to question. Please feel free to disagree, but also be prepared to back up your argument. The unthinking student that simply regurgitates information without critically analyzing how it affects them is missing out on an opportunity to think about information that will have an impact on them for the rest of their lives.

We are all adults and are thus expected to behave in a civilized and respectful manner. I expect all students to be on their best behavior as outlined in the Student Honor Code at all times. Unruly class behavior - including but not limited to: disrespectful language or gestures, shouting, insults, talking with other students during class, texting, tweeting, emailing, web browsing, or reading non-class materials - is improper and will be confronted and corrected when it happens. If you feel that there is an imminent personal emergency where you need to have your phone on, you **MUST** speak with me prior to the start of class and be prepared to share minimal details of that emergency with me so I may grant an exception.

**DO NOT PULL YOUR PHONE OUT DURING A TEST! USE OF ANY MESSAGING OR RECORDING DEVICE DURING A TEST WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE ASSUMED AS CHEATING AND A VIOLATION OF THE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY (see below).**

**DO NOT SLEEP IN CLASS.** I understand that there are things outside of the classroom that lead to sleep deprivation (work, kids, pets, parties, athletics, etc). If you are that tired, please go home

and get the rest that you need without being interrupted by me and your colleagues. If you are that bored, and you have read the material, and you believe that you have a more exciting way of introducing the material, please let me know. I am always open to suggestions on ways to improve the classroom experience. If you think I am that boring, then please drop the course and get into a class that suits your learning style. I am smart enough to know that I cannot reach 100% of the people all the time, even though I try. If you believe that your educational needs can best be achieved with someone else, let's get you there.

All homework assignments are due by the assigned due date and **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED LATE FOR ANY REASON**. If you must miss a class for any reason you are still responsible for getting the assignment in on time or it will not be counted and a "0" will be recorded.

Other items: Headphones, ear buds, etc., should not be worn while in the classroom. Do not wear brimmed hats, i.e. "ball caps," on test days. You will be asked to remove them. I do not mind if you eat or drink so long as it is done quietly and unobtrusively.

### **REQUIRED COURSE WORK**

**Grades for the course** will be determined by the successful completion of the following assignments and examinations:

- Chapter Quizzes Grade worth 100 points. (15% of semester grade)
- Classroom Assignment Grades worth 100 points. (15% of semester grade)
- TEST 1 worth 100 points. (15% of semester grade)
- TEST 2 worth 100 points. (15% of semester grade)
- TEST 3 worth 100 points. (15% of semester grade)
- TEST 4. There is no opportunity for extra credit in this class. But, I will drop the lowest of your 4 test grades.
- **COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAM** worth 200 points. (25% of semester grade)

For a total of **700 points possible** in the course, but the grades will be weighted according to the above scale.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY AND AI USE 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.

For this course, I encourage all students to consult with your classmates and friends outside of class to engage in discussions and talk about the material discussed. I also expect all assignments submitted to be your own work and not that of any other person or entity (this includes Artificial Intelligence software like spinbots, chatbots, or essay generators like ChatGPT or CoPilot). Suspicious similarities in assignments, or submissions that are beyond the capability of other works you have submitted, are an indication of cheating and laziness and grounds for investigating violations of UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy. **I WILL NOT TOLERATE VIOLATIONS OF THE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY IN ANY FORM. IF YOU ARE CAUGHT ENGAGING IN THIS FORM OF UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR, YOU WILL RECEIVE AN AUTOMATIC FAILING GRADE ON THE ASSIGNMENT AND YOUR NAME WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE DEAN FOR ANY FURTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTION THE UNIVERSITY DEEMS NECESSARY. REPEATED VIOLATIONS WILL**

ENSURE MULTIPLE FAILED ASSIGNMENT GRADES WHICH CAN LEAD TO FAILING THE COURSE OUTRIGHT.

**FINAL DISCLAIMER:** As the professor, I reserve the right to amend this syllabus as the need dictates. As such, all test dates should be considered approximate and not set in stone. This is especially true this semester as it is my first term using the resources supplied by the department and I will be building the course as we go along. Any and all changes will be announced in sufficient time to allow for your personal adjustment. Now, let's go have fun!

## **ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE FOR FALL 2024**

### **UNIT I - POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS AND FRAMEWORK**

#### **Week One**

##### **August 27**

Topic: Orientation and Introduction to Course, Understanding Political Ideas

Read: Syllabus, Online Orientation Modules

##### **August 29**

Topic: American Political Values

Read: Online Module

#### **Week Two**

##### **September 3**

Topic: Constitutionalism, part 1.

Read: Chapter 1: The United States Constitution

##### **September 5**

Topic: Constitutionalism, part 2

Read: Chapter 1: The United States Constitution

#### **Week Three**

##### **September 10**

Topic: Constitutionalism, part 3

Read: Chapter 1: The United States Constitution

## **September 12**

Topic: Public Opinion

Read: Chapter 2: Public Opinion

## **Week Four**

**September 17: UNIT TEST 1 on or about Tuesday, September 17th**

## **UNIT II – INSTITUTIONS OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

### **September 19**

Topic: The Legislative Branch, part 1

Read: Chapter 3: Congress

### **Week Five**

#### **September 24**

Topic: The Legislative Branch, part 2

Read: Chapter 3: Congress

#### **September 26**

Topic: The Executive Branch, part 1

Read: Chapter 4: The Presidency

### **Week Six**

#### **October 1**

Topic: The Executive Branch, part 2

Read: Chapter 4: The Presidency

#### **October 3**

Topic: The Federal Bureaucracy, part 1

Read: Chapter 5: The History of Bureaucratic Principals

### **Week Seven**

#### **October 8**

Topic: The Federal Bureaucracy, part 1

Read: Chapter 5: The History of Bureaucratic Principals

**October 10: UNIT TEST 2 on or about Thursday, October 10th**

## **UNIT III – LINKAGE INSTITUTIONS**

### **Week Eight**

#### **October 15**

Topic: Interest Groups

Read: Chapter 7: Interest Groups

#### **October 17**

Topic: Political Parties, part 1

Read: Chapter 10: Political Parties in America

### **Week Nine**

#### **October 22**

Topic: Political Parties, part 2

Read: Chapter 10: Political Parties in America

#### **October 24**

Topic: Campaigns, Elections, Voting, part 1

Read: Chapter 11: Campaigns and Elections in America

### **Week Ten**

#### **October 29**

Topic: Campaigns, Elections, Voting, part 2

Read: Chapter 11: Campaigns and Elections in America

**October 31: UNIT TEST 3 on or about Thursday, October 31st**

## **UNIT IV – Gallimaufry**

**Week Eleven – note: last day to drop is November 4<sup>th</sup>**

#### **November 5:**

Topic: The Judicial Branch, part 1

Read: Chapter 6: The Federal Judiciary

#### **November 7**

Topic: The Judicial Branch, part 2



Read: Chapter 6: The Federal Judiciary

**Week Twelve**

**November 12**

Topic: Public Policy, part 1

Read: Chapter 8: What is Public Policy?

**November 14**

Topic: Public Policy, part 2

Read: Chapter 8: What is Public Policy?

**Week Thirteen**

**November 19**

Topic: The Media, part 1

Read: Chapter 9: The Media

**November 19**

Topic: The Media, part 2

Read: Chapter 9: The Media

**PLEASE NOTE THERE ARE NO CLASSES HELD AND NO ASSIGNMENTS DUE DURING THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAYS BETWEEN NOVEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup> AND NOVEMBER 29<sup>TH</sup>**

**Week Fourteen**

**December 3: UNIT TEST 3 on or about Tuesday, December 3rd**

**December 5**

Topic: Review for Final Exam

Read: All your notes and anything else that will help you pass this course.

**Week Fifteen: December 9-13**

**COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAM on THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12TH from 3:30pm – 5:30pm.**

---

**Once you have finished reading this syllabus, you must send me a message in Canvas telling me that you have read the syllabus, you agree to its provisions, and you are ready to start the course.**