COURSE INFORMATION

*Meeting Time
Monday, Wednesday, & Friday from 10:00 AM to 10:50 AM.

*Required Texts:


Any additional materials, such as brief articles, videos, or primary documents, will be supplied by the instructor in class or through your university email.

*Course Description:

This course is an examination of the United States and Texas political systems with emphases on both formal and informal institutions and the roles they play in the creation and implementation of public policy. Topics considered include: the legislative, executive, and judicial branches; bureaucracies; and public policies. This course will also examine the historical, social, political, cultural, and international forces the effect our political systems in the United States and in Texas.

*Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain the political institutions and processes of the government of the United States.

2. Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain the political institutions and processes of the state of Texas.

3. Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain the theories of federal policy development and implementation.

4. Students will understand and employ significant theoretical and analytical approaches to explain the theories of Texas state policy development and implementation.
I. **Attendance and Participation**

Your attendance is strongly encouraged. Those who do not attend class regularly will not be able to participate in class discussions or benefit from the lecture material, which put them at a distinct disadvantage as compared to students who do attend regularly. As such, you cannot expect to be absent often and pass this class. Frequent unexcused absences will not be tolerated, and such absences will result in penalties according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>Penalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>No Deductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3% Deduction in Final Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5% Deduction in Final Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10% Deduction in Final Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7+</td>
<td>Automatic Failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are unable to attend a specific date please inform or follow up with me about the circumstances involved!

For the purposes of keeping attendance roll sheets, or a roll call, will be used to keep track of your attendance at each class. Make sure you sign in before you leave, or you will be counted absent.

Students will also be responsible for reading the assigned portions of the text, as this will assist in your understanding of concepts and prepare you to participate in the lecture and discussion of the material. Reading of materials will be considered in your attendance grade.

In order to fully participate in this class all students are encouraged to ask questions about the material or of issues they do not understand. It is also useful for class discussion and debate if you speak up and give your thoughts on the material and the events, people, and places discussed. Your contributions will develop the discussion in an invaluable way and improve the learning experience for all.

The Attendance and Participation portion of your grade is worth 10% and will be based upon the following grading rubric:

- **A** = Always present and prepared; speaks frequently
- **B** = Rarely absent; always prepared when present; speaks frequently
- **C** = Rarely absent; usually prepared; rarely speaks
- **D** = Often unprepared; several absences
- **F** = Usually unprepared; frequent absences

II. **Assessments**

1. **Exams**

   There will be three exams, which shall consist of two mid-terms and a final. Prior to each exam I will tell you what types of questions to expect, i.e. multiple choice, essay etc. If you have any questions regarding the exam format please ask them. Each exam is intended to ensure that you have grasped the concepts from the lectures, readings, and discussions. Students who will be absent on an exam date can make up the exam at a later date, but only at the end of the semester and only for one of the midterm exams.
2. Quizzes
From time to time, quizzes may be given to ensure that the class has read and understood the concepts mentioned in the assigned material. These quizzes may be announced or unannounced, and shall be given at the instructor’s discretion. Quizzes will not be subject to the Slacker Clause listed below, but will affect your grade if you do not complete them. Quiz grades may also come in the form of an assignment. The form of the assignment shall be at the instructor’s discretion.

3. Electoral Issues Group Presentation
Students will complete a group presentation that focuses on a specific national or state issue during the election. Groups will consist of two students. Each group will have a different issue, so make sure you find one and sign up before it is taken. All information used from your research must be factual, but some intelligent, researched conjecture will be allowed on the issues presented. Each issue should be broken down by history, how our leaders (past & present) weigh in on it, and what the opposing viewpoints are (if any). The only issues groups may select are those that take place in U.S. national politics, but may also include international political issues that involve the U.S. If you need help narrowing your topic please see me.

I encourage everyone to make use of the internet, the library, articles, books, etc. As with anything, be careful when researching because not all information is factual. Make sure that sources are from a reputable website, or author. If you are unsure of a source contact me about it. If you have any further questions about the assignment see me about them.

Everyone should take part in each portion of the presentation. Topic selection, research, writing, the assembling of visual aids, and verbal presentation of your research are the factors that contribute to your final grade. Though certain students will have strengths at one or more of these areas each student should participate in them all equally. Please be aware that students within your group will grade your performance on each part, which will affect your grade to some extent on the assignment. Each group will have seven (7) minutes to present.

III. Course Grading Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 @ 20% each</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The grading scale used for this course is as follows:

- 90-100% = A
- 80-89% = B
- 70-79% = C
- 65-69% = D
- 64% or less = F

**NOTE:**

*All assignments must be completed to pass this course!*

*There will be no Extra Credit Assignments!*
TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS, ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

*Microsoft Office Word:
You will need access to a computer equipped with Microsoft Office Word. If you do not have it readily available on a computer of your own, please make use of our library computer lab or purchase a copy of the program. You can find a copy of the program at discount rate here: http://www.microsoft.com/student/office/en-us/default.aspx.

*University Email:
Be sure that you can access the email account the university has on record for you. It is the primary means by which I will communicate with you.

*Internet:
You will need access to the internet to review the United States Constitution, access email, and research certain topics.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Please stop by during my office hours should you need to speak with me. If I am out of the office please send me an email or leave a message at the Department of Political Science’s Main Office at SS 152. I am also happy to meet with any student who wishes to see me in person, but cannot make my office hours. Simply email or call and we will set up a time that is mutually acceptable for us to meet. My contact details are at the beginning of the syllabus.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

*Cell Phones and Electronic Devices
All cell phones, pagers, iPods, MP3 Players, or other electronic devices are to be turned off! Headphones, or similar products, cannot be worn during class. Please respect both your classmates and me, refrain from using an electronic devices that cause disturbances. If you use these devices the instructor reserves the right to dismiss you from the remainder of the class lecture. Remember, you are in class to learn.

*Laptops
Laptops are allowed for use in this course. However, you are expected to be taking notes, or looking up information pertinent to the discussion. If there are any complaints, or if I see that a student is using the laptop in an unproductive manner, such as using Facebook; Twitter; Myspace; etc., or that a student is generally disturbing any other member of the class, the instructor reserves the right to ban the use of laptops throughout the remainder of the course and dismiss anyone from the remainder of the class lecture for misuse.

*Slacker Clause
You will find, if you have not done so already, that taking university courses and making time for life within the context of work, family, and our other daily issues is difficult to manage. However, to that end a person must learn to effectively manage their time for leisure, work, and family while also making room for their class assignments. In an effort to reinforce that idea, and ensure that you receive a quality learning experience in this course, all assignments that you receive during the time of this course must be completed. If you fail to complete one or more assignments, you will automatically fail this course.

*Make-Up Policy
I understand that sometimes there are extenuating circumstances that prevent our being in class. However, the acceptance of late papers, or the allowance of make-up quizzes, shall be at the sole
discretion of the instructor. There will be an assigned day at the end of the semester where students may make-up one missed midterm exam. Though this date exists, only students who have a legitimate excuse can make up an exam and those students wishing to make up the exam must make their request to do so via email. A make-up exam will consist strictly of essay questions. Do not miss both exams as only one exam may be taken on this day. Electoral Issues Group Presentations cannot be made up; your attendance is required on the day your group goes.

*Instructor’s Rights
As instructor, I reserve the right to amend and/or modify this syllabus and the readings as necessary.

*Classroom Behavior & Student Conduct
All students are expected to observe basic tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive leaning environment (See Student’s Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct). Violation of the conduct policy will not be tolerated.

*Academic Dishonesty

-Definition-
In all courses, it is expected that all work that you do and turn in is your own. It is the policy of the University and me that no form of plagiarism, cheating, collusion or any other form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as deliberately taking the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as your own. Cheating is obtaining unauthorized assistance on any assignment. Collusion is the selling of academic products with the intention that they be submitted to satisfy an academic requirement. Students are expected to uphold and support the highest academic standards at all times.

-Punishment-
Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty will automatically fail the assignment in question, and the grade cannot be made up. The student’s academic advisor and/or academic major department head will also be notified of any such infraction. With regard to the severity of the infraction, the instructor reserves the right to fail from the course any student caught plagiarizing or cheating. Such students will also be subject to disciplinary action by the University (See Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3]). If you are still unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please ask me before committing this error in judgment.

*Writing Center
Students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources of the Writing Center for assistance with drafting their papers. The Writing Center is a resource that you pay for, so if you need assistance use it. They will not write your paper, but they will help you improve your writing skills. If you use the Writing Center, please plan ahead as they can only help you if you see them in advance and you have time to incorporate their suggestions into your final paper. More information can be found at http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/litlang/CSC/.

*ADA Statement
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 have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu
Student Disability Resources & Services
The following outline is a tentative schedule for our readings; all due dates and exam dates will remain intact, barring an occurrence beyond our control.

Introductions
August 27-31
Course Introduction
Lowi Chapter 1, 4-23
Collier Chapter 1, All

NO CLASS
September 3
Labor Day!

The Legislative Branch: United States Congress
September 5-12
United States Constitution (USC) Article I, All
Lowi Chapter 6, All

The Texas Legislature
September 14-17
Collier Chapter 3, All

The Executive Branch: United States Presidency and Bureaucracy
September 19-28
USC Article II, All
Lowi Chapter 7, All
Lowi Chapter 8, All

The Texas Governor and Bureaucracy
October 1-3
Collier Chapter 4, All

October 5 - Exam #1

U.S. Political Parties
October 8
Lowi Chapter 12, 510-519 and 528-532

Texas Local Government
October 10
Special Presentation on Local Governance

Library Research Days
October 12
Research Information and Finish Your Group Presentations

Electoral Issues Group Presentations
October 15-19
Present Your Research
The Judicial Branch: United States Federal Courts
October 22-24
USC Article III, All
Lowi Chapter 9, All

**NO CLASS**
October 26
Out for Conference

The Judicial Branch Continued
October 29-31
Lowi Chapter 9, All
Select Court Documents

The Texas Judicial System
November 2-5
Collier Chapter 5, All

U.S. Elections
November 7
Lowi Chapter 11, 443-467

**November 9 – Exam #2**

U.S. Economic Policy
November 12-14
Lowi Chapter 15, All

U.S. Social Policy
November 16-19
Lowi Chapter 16, All

NO CLASS
November 21-23
Happy Thanksgiving!

U.S. Foreign Policy
November 26-30
Lowi Chapter 17, All

Texas State Policymaking
December 3-5
Collier Chapter 9, All

**December 7 – EXAM MAKE-UP DAY**

**FINAL EXAM (#3)**
Monday, December 10, 10:30 AM – 12:30 AM