Political Science 2302

Charles Elliott, Professor

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Office Hours in Ferguson 147 from 9:00 to 9:30 Tuesdays and Thursdays

Text: Patterson and Halter, *The American Democracy, 10th ed.* that combines materials on United States and Texas politics and government.

**Learning Objectives:** The general purpose of this class is to expand the students’ understanding of how public policy is formulated and administered in the United States and Texas.

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.

The expectation is that, by the end of the course, students will be better prepared participants in the political process. It is also expected that students will gain an appreciation of the complexities of political issues and the absence of clear right and wrong answers to most contemporary issues and thus understand the importance of showing tolerance for points of view other than their own.

**Requirements:** Each student is expected to:

1. Complete the assigned readings, attend class, and come ready to engage in class discussion;
2. Keep up with current issues and activities in American and Texas government and integrate this information into class activities. A good newspaper in print or online will help you do this. Good broadcast sources are NPR, CNN, and MSNBC. An early morning show on MSNBC entitled Morning Joe is on from 5:00 am until 8:00 am central time and has excellent coverage of national politics.

3. Take two examinations during the semester and a comprehensive final exam at the end of the course; and

4. Submit written exercises as indicated in the list of daily assignments.

5. The grading scale for all exams will be:
   - A = 90-100
   - B = 80-89
   - C = 70-79
   - D = 60-69
   - F = 0-59

Student Responsibilities

1. Attend class regularly, be on time, and participate in class discussion.
2. Be present for all exams. There will be no makeups for missed exams, so the value of the comprehensive final exam will increase proportionately.
3. Do not leave the classroom during class except for emergencies and if you do leave, do not return that day.
4. Do not bring food to class. Water and soft drinks are acceptable.
5. Do not wear caps, hats, or other head coverings in class.
6. Do not carry on private conversations while class is in session.
7. Respect the opinions of your classmates.
8. Each of you will have two free absences. Beginning with the third absence, each absence will result in a one point deduction from your final grade.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. This guarantee requires that all students with disabilities be provided
a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation for their disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Resources and Services, Gee Library, room 132 or call 903-886-5150.

Conferences

My office is in SS-147 and I will be there by 9:00 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays if you need special help or you just want to visit. If you are unable to come during that time, see me after class and we will arrange another time for you.

Class Assignments

I. Introduction to the Course

Aug 28: Discussion of concepts basic to the understanding of American politics.

Aug 30: Write and turn in a short paper (one page) identifying what you believe to be the most important issues in this fall’s elections. We will spend the class period discussing some of these issues.

Sep 4 & 6: Read Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution and pp.308-316 in Patterson and Halter.

Sep 11&13: Read Article II in the Constitution and pp. 339-349 in P & H.

Sep 18: Read pp. 395-404 in P & H.

Sep 20: Bring to class to discuss and turn in a short (2pp. max) paper on the presidential campaign on the strategies of each candidate; what works and what does not work; and who seems to have the advantage at this time. These should be based on your own observations and are not intended to be research assignments.

II. National Policy Issues

Sep 25&27: Read P & H, Chapter 15 on the economy and environment.

Oct 2: Catch up.

Oct 4: Exam 1 – bring a bluebook and a pen.

Oct 9& 11: P & H, Chapter 16 dealing with welfare and education.

Oct 23: Continue previous topic.

III. Public Policy in Texas (Is there any?)


Nov 1: Continue

Nov 6: Exam 2 – bring a bluebook and a pen.

IV. Tracking the Elections

Nov 8: Selection and Assignments for Tracking Teams

Nov 13: Initial reports from teams.

Nov 15: TBA

Nov 20: Class dismissed

Nov 22: TBA

Nov 27: TBA

Nov 29: Teams’ final reports on the election are due today. Turn in one copy of your report and provide one copy for each student on your team. I will provide copies for the members of the other teams.

Dec 4&6: Review for final exam.

Final Exam: