POLS 2305 SYLLABUS

POLS 2305.14 – US Federal Government & Politics Syllabus Fall 2019
Class meetings: 3:30 pm - 4:45 pm      MW at Music, Science & Learning Ctr 2.131

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Office hours: 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm Mondays and Wednesdays/and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

UTRGV Catalog Description of POLS 2305 (ASSIST): “This course examines the origins and development of the U.S. federal system of government and politics, which includes the U.S. Constitution, policymaking processes, political action, power relations, and various political issues.” This course fulfills three of the six-hour legislative requirement in U.S. and Texas government and politics.

Learning Objectives/Outcomes for the Course:
The course is designed to develop and document content knowledge in 5 areas:
1. To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the separation of powers as described in the U.S. Constitution;
2. To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Congress, its institutions, and linkage institutions (e.g., the media, interest groups, political parties);
3. To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Presidency and the workings of federal agencies, and linkage institutions;
4. To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the federal judicial system, and linkage institutions; and,
5. To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the processes by which federal domestic policy are made and executed.

Learning Objectives for Core Curriculum Requirements:
This course fulfills a core area requirement in Government/Political Science:
(i) Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas.
(ii) Courses in this area involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.
(iii) The following four core objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.

The core objectives are defined as:
• Critical Thinking. Students will demonstrate comprehension of a variety of written texts and other information sources by analyzing and evaluating the logic, validity, and relevance of the information in them to solve challenging problems, to arrive at well-reasoned conclusions, and to develop and explore new questions.
• Communication Skills. Students will demonstrate the ability to adapt their communications to a particular context, audience, and purpose using language, genre conventions, and sources appropriate to a specific discipline and/or communication task.

• Personal Responsibility. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the range of human values and beliefs that they draw upon to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.
• Social Responsibility. Students will recognize and describe cultural diversity, the role of civic engagement in society, and the link between ethics and behavior.

**Note: University Assessment** – There will be a short exam in addition to the final exam that students are required to take. Because this is a University requirement students will not receive a grade for this course unless the short exam is completed at the end of the semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Program Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Major Course Requirement/Major Assignment/Examination</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLO 1: Research Methods</td>
<td>(1.1) Students will apply research methods appropriate for the social sciences.</td>
<td>Strong research question tied to scholarly interest. The literature is clearly identified, connected to the research question, and properly cited and formatted. Variables/topics are clearly identified and are used in accurate analysis of the research question. All references are properly cited and formatted.</td>
<td>4 Examination essays using course literature and structured in APA format.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLO 2: Critical Thinking</td>
<td>(2.1) Students will acquire analytical and critical thinking skills.</td>
<td>Question is critically evaluated and comprehensively understood in a broader context. Views of experts are questioned thoroughly. Limits of one's own position is acknowledged.</td>
<td>4 Examination essays using course literature and structured in APA format.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLO 3: Effective Writing</td>
<td>(3.1) Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively.</td>
<td>Grammar, punctuation usage and spelling enhance paper quality; well written.</td>
<td>4 Examination essays using course literature and structured in APA format.</td>
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**Academic Calendar for Fall 2019 Term (August 26 – December 12)**

Apr. 1 (Mon.) Registration Begins  
Aug. 21 (Wed.) Payment Due Last day to join a waitlist  
Aug. 23 (Fri.) Last day to withdraw (drop all classes) and receive a 100% refund  
Aug. 26 (Mon.) Fall classes begin  
Aug. 29 (Thurs.) Last day to add a class or register for Fall classes  
Aug. 30 (Fri.) Last day to withdraw (drop all classes) and receive an 80% refund  
Sep. 2 (Mon.) Labor Day Holiday. No classes.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Three Midterm Exams (25%)/Final Exam (25%) – 4 Exams Total – 100% for Course Grade

Students in POLS 2305 will take four exams during the course of the semester as indicated in this syllabus. Each exam will be worth 25% of the final grade. The final will not be comprehensive. Each exam will have a scoring ratio of 80% for multiple choice questions taken in-class and 20% for take home essays.

Exam written assignments – take home essays - (4) – Students will write an essay as part of their overall grade after the multiple choice section of the exam that will be included as take home work. Students will submit a written essay to the instructor answering exam questions with all of the assigned course readings and lecture notes taken into consideration. The essay should be thorough and at least 600 words for each question posed in addition to the title page and references. Essays will be graded taking into account: (a) clarity and content; (b) critical remarks; and (c) originality of the exposition. Students will attach the essays to an email message to turn in for full credit to terence.garrett@utrgv.edu using Acrobat Reader (.pdf) or MS Word (.docx) files as indicated by this syllabus (generally due at the time of the next class meeting). Submissions will be checked and verified by “Safe Assign” in Blackboard. Late submissions will not count nor will be accepted.

Take home exam essays total – 20% of the exam portion of the grade for each of the four exams in POLS 2305.

Exam = Multiple Choice section (80%) + Take Home Exam Essay (20%) = 100%

The total grade for POLS 2305 will consist of Four (4) Exams (25% each) = 100%. There is no extra credit for this course, except as stated in the attendance and extra credit policy (see below).

Citation and Documentation of Sources:
For the exam essays, when referencing all sources used in your essays, you will use the American Psychological Association (APA) style standard for forms of citation and you must be consistent throughout the paper. (See APA style powerpoint in Blackboard for this course). Also, if you are using an updated version of Microsoft Word, you may set up the correct format by using the “References” feature by clicking on the “Citations” app and scrolling up on “Citation style” to “APA.”
Please note that you can miss deadlines for course exams only for medically certified incapacity or for the gravest adequately documented, or crisis in your immediate family. No make-ups will be scheduled for any other reason.

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

Students who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, 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. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (See UTRGV’s Rules and Regulations).

Academic Integrity:

I take academic integrity very seriously. All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students. Examples of such conduct include: plagiarism, undocumented citation, cheating, or other forms of dishonesty. Penalties may include a failing grade on the assignment or for the entire course. Please see the UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines (Link: https://www.utrgv.edu/studentlife/about/vaquero-honor-code/index.htm) to familiarize yourself with your obligations.

Attendance and Extra Credit Policy:

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV’s attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Please contact me in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations. Two unexcused absences are permitted without consequence. Points will be deducted for each absence beyond the second. For a third unexcused absence, your overall grade will drop by 3 points. For a fourth unexcused absence, your overall grade will drop by 6 point. For a fifth unexcused absence, your grade will drop by 9 points, and 3 points continually thereafter for any other unexcused absence, etc. Any student who has perfect attendance (zero unexecused absences) throughout the semester, will receive 5 additional grade points on the final course grade. Finally, later in the semester, there will be a short survey appearing on Blackboard that claims to measure the four concepts of critical thinking, communications skills, personal responsibility, and social responsibility (see above for further details). You may take this survey for 1 extra-credit point on your final grade.

Special note: On the second day of class (August 28 [Week 1] on the Course Schedule) you are expected to bring a name plate to class and place it on your desk so that your name is visible to me while I lecture. I will take attendance using your name plates. If you do not have a readable name plate in front of you when I take attendance, then you will be absent that day. If you leave before class ends, then you will be counted absent that day. If you arrive late or leave early, you will be counted absent. If you attend every class and are not late, leave early, etc., you will earn 5 points extra credit (as indicated in the above paragraph), which is 20% of a letter grade.
READING MATERIALS

The required readings listed below each class are essential to understand the course. There are recommended readings to provide supplementary materials for pursuing topics in greater depth. The online links represent additional sources of information.

Books can be ordered directly from the publishers, or from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, etc. There is a book order (for the required text) for this specific course at the UTRGV (Follett) bookstore.

REQUIRED TEXT:


ADDITIONAL READING MATERIAL:

In addition to the required and recommended texts, there are a number of articles available on-line. Further readings will be posted on Blackboard so be sure to check regularly.

Week #1

Course Introduction – Monday August 26, Critical Thinking and Political Culture – Wednesday, August 28

- Course Policies Discussion, Syllabus and Blackboard Review
- Preface, Chapter 1 Patterson (Course textbook) (pp. xxi – 25)

Week #2

Constitutional Democracy: Promoting Liberty and Self-Government – (Labor Day, September 2, no class), The Colonial Period, Articles of Confederation, Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, September 4

- Chapter 2 Patterson, pp. 27 – 62.
- Declaration of Independence, Federalist #51, Marbury v. Madison (1803) (available in Blackboard “course materials”)

Week #3

(Week 2 continued/short week) Monday, September 9, Federalism – the Politics of Intergovernmental Relations, Wednesday, September 11

- Chapter 3 Patterson, pp. 63 – 94.
- Federalist #10, Gibbons v. Ogden (1824) (available in Blackboard “course materials”)

Week #4
Civil Liberties Monday, September 16 and Equal Rights, September 18

- Chapter 4 Patterson, pp. 96-131.
- Chapter 5 Patterson, pp. 132-163.

Week #5

First Midterm Exam, Monday, September 23 (in-class multiple choice), Essay exam (take home) due 4:45 p.m., Wednesday, September 25

- The essay exam will be due at 4:45 p.m., Wednesday, September 25 and sent as an email attachment in MS Word (.docx) or Acrobat Reader (.pdf) attachment to terence.garrett@utrgv.edu. Class will not meet on Wednesday as you will have that time to complete your essay exam portion. Late essays will not be accepted.

Week #6

Public Opinion & Political Socialization, Monday, September 30 and Political Participation, Wednesday, October 2

- Chapter 6 Patterson, pp. 164-194.
- Chapter 7 Patterson, pp. 195-219.

Week #7

Political Participation, Monday, October 7 (continued), and Political Parties, Candidates, and Campaigns, Wednesday, October 9

- Chapter 7 Patterson, pp. 195-219. (continued)
- Chapter 8 Patterson, pp. 220-254.

Week #8

Political Parties, Candidates, and Campaigns, Monday, October 14 (continued), Interest Groups, Wednesday, October 16

- Chapter 8 Patterson, pp. 220-254.
- Chapter 9 Patterson, pp. 255-286.

Week #9

The News Media and the Internet, Monday, October 21, Second Midterm Exam, Wednesday, October 23 (in-class multiple choice exam portion)

- Chapter 10 Patterson, pp. 287-317.
- The second essay exam will be due at 3:30 p.m., Monday, October 28 and sent as an email attachment in MS Word (.docx) or Acrobat Reader (.pdf) attachment to terence.garrett@utrgv.edu. Late essays will not be accepted.

Week #10
Congress (and its relation to the federal bureaucracy,) Monday, October 28 – Wednesday, October 30

• Chapter 11 Patterson, pp. 318-359.
• Chapter 13 Patterson, pp. 410-411; pp. 423-424.

Week #11

The Presidency (and its relation to the federal bureaucracy,) Monday, November 4 – Wednesday, November 6

• Chapter 12 Patterson, pp. 360-397.
• Chapter 13 Patterson, pp. 408-409; pp. 419-423.

Week #12

The Federal Judiciary (and its relation to the federal bureaucracy,) Monday, November 11 – Wednesday, November 13

• Chapter 14 Patterson, pp. 431-462.
• Chapter 13 Patterson, pp. 424-429.

Week #13

• Third Midterm Exam, Monday, November 18 (in-class multiple choice), Essay exam (take home) due 4:45 p.m., Wednesday, November 20 and sent as an email attachment in MS Word (.docx) or Acrobat Reader (.pdf) attachment to terence.garrett@utrgv.edu. Late essays will not be accepted.

Week #14

Economic and Environmental Policy, Monday, November 25– Wednesday, November 27

• Chapter 15 Patterson, pp.463-491

Thanksgiving Holiday – Thursday November 28 – Friday November 29

Week #15

Income, Welfare, and Education Policy, Monday, December 2

• Chapter 16 Patterson, pp. 492-521.

Final Exam – Multiple Choice portion – Wednesday, December 4; The Final Exam Essay is due as a .docx or .pdf attachment to terence.garrett@utrgv.edu on the date/time of the Final Exam Schedule per University policy (TBD). Late essays will not be accepted.

*** The professor reserves the right to make reasonable changes to this syllabus as needed ***