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PSCI 2306 03W: Principles of US and Texas Government

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2020

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Chad M. King

Office Location: SS-162

Office Hours: M 2-3 PM, T 1-3 PM, W 2-3, TH 1-2 (Held virtually)

University Email Address: chad.king@tamuc.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: E-mail

Communication Response Time: 24 hours (48 hours during weekends)

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Required Textbook: Governing Texas (Fourth Edition)

Author: Champagne, Harpham, and Casellas

Published Date: 2019

ISBN: 9780393680119

Publisher: Publisher: Norton

Course Description

“This course is a survey of the principles and practice of the political system in Texas. In addition to examining the state constitution and the institutions that it empowers, a wider

look is taken to consider local governments, the political system, and the actors in the political system.” (Quoted from the University Undergraduate Course Catalog)

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to analyze, evaluate, or solve problems when given a set of circumstances, data, texts, or art. Core Objective: Critical Thinking
2. In written, oral, and/or visual communication, A&M-Commerce students will communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion, with an evident message and organizational structure. Core Objective: Communication
3. Students will understand and practice academic honesty. Core Objective: Personal Responsibility
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of societal and/or civic issues. Core Objective: Social Responsibility
5. Students will 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.
 - Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.
 - 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 the state and local election process.
 - Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens
 - Analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students will need to be familiar with the University learning management system, (myLeo Online), know how to use a personal computer, navigate the World Wide Web/Internet, and use basic word processing software such as Microsoft Word and Power Point.

Instructional Methods

The following methods of instruction will be utilized for this course.

- Live audio/video lectures provided on myLeo Online.
- Weekly class simulations and assignments provided on myLeo Online
- Student self-directed readings

Student Responsibilities for the Course

All students are expected to comply with the following requirements.

- All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.
- Students are expected to regularly check the course site for announcements and updates.
- Students are expected to complete all course readings for each section of the course.
- Students are expected to review any supplementary materials that the instructor provides, such as web links, news stories, options assignments, etc.
- Students are expected to view the course lectures. While students are strongly encouraged to attend these virtual lectures live, they will all be recorded so that students who unable to attend will be able to watch them. A schedule of the lecture times is provided below.
- Students are expected to complete all assigned writing assignments, quizzes and exams.
- Students are expected to exhibit respect toward their fellow classmates and the instructor. This includes treating everyone with courtesy and esteem in any and all correspondence for the course. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.
- Texas A&M University-Commerce does not tolerate academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments or taking exams), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material. For this course, academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic work. In particular, passing off work as your own that was written by someone else, without proper citation or attribution, will be considered an act of plagiarism. This holds true whether material comes from the textbook, another publication, an Internet source, or another student. Any act of academic dishonesty on an exam or quiz will result in a score of 0 for the exam or quiz. Any act of academic dishonesty on a writing assignment will result in a 0 for the entire semester's writing assignment grade. Instances of academic dishonesty may also be referred to the appropriate offices on campus and may result in significant administrative penalties.
- Students will comply with all myLeo Online/D2L technical requirements in terms of training, computer access, & Internet access.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

- A = 90%-100%
- B = 80%-89%
- C = 70%-79%
- D = 60%-69%
- F = 59% or Below

Course grades are computed using the following weighted assignments.

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Weekly Quizzes | 11% |
| Class Activities | 9% |
| Exam One | 23% |
| Exam Two | 23% |
| Exam Three | 23% |
| Writing assignment | 11% |
| Final Grade | 100% |

Assessments

Quizzes

Students will take weekly quizzes over the assigned readings for the course. These quizzes will contain both multiple-choice and True/False questions. Students will have 10 minutes to complete each quiz. These quizzes cannot be made up, however, the instructor will automatically drop the lowest three quiz grades. The dates and times for these quizzes are listed below.

Class activities

Each week, students will complete an activity/assignment over the assigned readings. These assignments will vary in terms of format, however, they could include: brief simulations, responding to prompts, or quizzes over provided videos/news stories. Students will be given 45 minutes to complete these assignments. The dates and times for these assignments are provided below.

Exams

Students will take three exams. All exams will include material from the textbook and the scheduled dates for the exams are listed below. These exams will feature both

short answer and multiple-choice questions. Students have 50 minutes to complete each exam. The times and dates for the exams are listed at the end of the syllabus. Students will access the exams through myLeo Online.

Writing Assignment

Students will complete a writing assignment during the term that will require them to both effectively communicate their ideas and opinions as well as critically evaluate information, evidence, and data. Specifically this assignment will have students select a specific topic with the broad domain of Texas public policy. The assignment description, along with expectations and the grading rubric is provided on the course page in myLeo Online. This paper is due on 11/20/20 by 5 PM.

Extra Credit "Syllabus "Quiz"

Students can earn up to a three bonus points toward their final average by taking a syllabus quiz. This quiz is designed to ensure that students familiarize themselves with the requirements and expectations of the syllabus. The quiz will be available on D2L/myLeo online and it cannot be made up. The dates and times for these assignments are provided below.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

System Maintenance

D2L runs monthly updates during the last week of the month, usually on Wednesday. The system should remain up during this time unless otherwise specified in an announcement. You may experience minimal impacts to performance and/or look and feel of the environment.

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Students should rely upon e-mail, virtual office hours, and course announcements as the primary means of communication with the instructor. I will use all of these to announce any changes to the course syllabus or other relevant information. Also, please note that the system will only send e-mail to your official University Email address, so you will need to check that account regularly. I will always try to e-mail you as soon as I can. From M-F you can expect a reply, at the latest, within 24 hours. On the weekends, I may take 48 hours to respond.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

- Make-up exams: If a student misses an exam, that student will receive a grade of 0 for the exam. Make-up exams will only be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Any request for a make-up exam must be made in writing and include documentation explaining why the absence was legitimate. Such a request must be received within 3 calendar days of the missed exam date, unless the student is physically unable to

submit such a request. Legitimate reasons may include illness severe enough to require professional treatment, death of an immediate family member, participation in University activities, and legal obligations. Technical problems with accessing the course are not a valid excuse for missing an exam unless it can be shown that the problem is the fault of the myLeo Online platform. Students who miss any exam because they forgot about the exam dates/times will not receive a make-up exam. Please note, these reasons do not guarantee that a make-up exam will be given. Make-up exams will be exclusively essay format.

- Incompletes will be granted completely at the discretion of the instructor and only be granted in the case of serious medical illness or other serious, unavoidable circumstances and only if the student has completed at least 70% of the course work. Incompletes must be finished within two weeks of the end of the semester.
- Students must complete the “Personal Responsibility Statement” quiz available on the course site. Students who fail to do so by the time the first exam is graded will be administratively dropped from the course.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette](#)

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

A&M-Commerce requires the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories. Exceptions may be made by faculty where warranted. Faculty have management over their classrooms. Students not using face-coverings can be required to leave class. Repetitive refusal to comply can be reported to the Office of Students’ Rights and Responsibilities as a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

Students should not attend class if they are ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support the student getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

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- Room 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Below are the readings assignments and an exam schedule. The numbers in the third column refer to the assigned chapter from the textbook. In addition to the readings from the textbook, students should also keep abreast of the news and current events.

| Date | Topic | Reading Assignment |
|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Week starting 8/24 | Texas Political Culture | 1 |
| Week starting 8/31 | Texas Constitution | 2 |
| Week starting 9/7 | Texas in the Federal System | 3 |
| Week starting 9/14 | Political Parties | 4 |
| Week starting 9/21 | Campaigns and Elections | 5 |
| Week starting 9/28 | Interest Groups and Lobbying | 6 |
| Week starting 10/5 | The Legislative Branch | 7 |

| | | |
|---------------------|--|-----|
| Week starting 10/12 | The Legislative Branch, The Executive Branch | 7,8 |
| Week starting 10/19 | The Executive Branch | 8 |
| Week starting 10/26 | The Texas Judiciary | 9 |
| Week starting 11/2 | Local Government | 10 |
| Week starting 11/9 | Public Finance | 11 |
| Week starting 11/16 | Public Policy | 12 |
| Week starting 11/23 | Crime, Corrections, Public Safety | 13 |
| Week starting 11/30 | Future of Texas Public Policy | 14 |
| Week starting 12/7 | Finals Week | |

Quiz schedule

Quizzes will be given every week (except the weeks of exams and Thanksgiving week.) Quizzes will open each Friday at 11:59 AM and close 60 hours later at 11:59 PM on Sunday.

Class activities

Class activities will be given every week. Class activities will open on Wednesdays at 11:59 AM and close 4 days later at 11:59 PM on Sundays.

Exam Schedule

Exams will be available on the course page and are scheduled on the dates listed below. Each exam begins at 11:59 AM (Noon) and closes 60 hours later at 11:59 PM on the assigned dates.

Exam 1: Opens on 10/2/20 @ 11:59 AM and closes at 11:59 PM on 10/4/20. Covers Chapters 1-6.

Exam 2: Opens on 11/6/20 @ 11:59 AM and closes at 11:59 PM on 11/8/20. Covers Chapters 7-10.

Exam 3: Opens on 12/7/20 @ 11:59 AM and closes at 11:59 PM on 12/9/20. Covers Chapters 11-14.

Writing Assignment Schedule

The assignment topic is due on 9/13/20 at 5 PM. The final assignment is due by 5 PM on 11/20/20. Students must upload their topics and final assignments to D2L. See the course page for an assignment description, grading rubric, and a listing of important dates, times, and important resources.

Extra Credit Syllabus Quiz Schedule

The quiz will open on 9/11/20 at 11:59 AM and close on 9/13/20 at 11:59 PM.

Live Lecture Schedule

The instructor will give lectures through the **YouSee-You Virtual Classroom** on the class page. Each one will last approximately 50 minutes and be held using the following days and times. The lectures will be recorded so students not able to attend can watch them later.

Mondays:

Wednesdays:

Fridays: