Angelo State University
Department of Political Science and Philosophy

Summer II 2018
POLS 2306 Texas Government

Section # 010 MTWRF, 8am-9:45am; RAS112
Section # 030 MTWRF, 12pm-1:45pm; RAS112

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Location: RAS 220

Course Synopsis
Political Science 2306 is the second half of a two-sequence course, with Political Science 2305 being the first course. Combined, these 2 courses will satisfy the 6 SCH Angelo State University Core Curriculum requirements in Political Science. Political Science 2306 is designed to introduce you to Texas government and politics. It is an introductory survey course that covers the origin and development of the Texas constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and inter-governmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas.

Required Text
The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy, 3e, Mora and Ruger
**McGraw Hill e-Book**
To purchase, go to our course Blackboard (BB) and register with Connect.
If needed, instructions for how to register will be available on BB.

*Additional Readings may be assigned periodically, and will be made available on BB.

Course Goals
We will be working on 4 Core Objectives: Critical Thinking (CT), Communication Skills (CS), Social Responsibility (SR), and Personal Responsibility (PR). Each of these Core Objectives contains its own Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), with 8 in total (listed on back page). We are going to pursue all of these objectives as we proceed through the course.

Course Format and Expectations
We are going to typically work through 2 chapters from The State of Texas per week. There are 3 exams, 4 Learn Smart Modules, and 2 discussion boards.
Class Discussion. Some sections of class time will be devoted to lecture, while others will involve in-class writing and/or focused discussion. Everyone in the class is expected to come prepared to class ready to listen, to think, to write, and to participate in class discussion.

Learn Smart Reading Assignments. You will be assigned 4 Learn Smart Modules. These online assignments exercise your reading comprehension of individual chapters, and will be accessible via BB. Each Learn Smart Module should take between 45 minutes and 1 hour to complete. You are allowed to keep doing the assignment until you achieve full credit, as long as you finish prior to the assignment deadline.

Exams. There will be 3 exams, each testing your knowledge from the assigned readings, class lecture and discussion. The final exam is cumulative.

Writing. Some weeks there will be an in-class writing exercise. You will be responsible for keeping a notebook or electronic file in which you keep all of your writing from these exercises. Most importantly, you will be required to post your writing from your notebook to the BB discussion board. You will typically be expected to post at least 2 paragraphs per discussion board posting. Doing this and following any accompanying instructions gets you full credit for your discussion board requirement. If you decline to follow instructions, then credit will be reduced.

You may be required to include citations from the textbook or other scholarly sources in your posting to support your thought or argument. All postings will develop your critical thinking (CT) and communication skills (CS). Some will aim to develop social and personal responsibility (SR and PR).

**EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY**: By responding to your classmates on the discussion boards, you may earn extra credit points. Your response must be serious and substantive, or will not count. You can earn 1 extra credit point per board onto your final grade point average.

Why am I having you do this? First, this is meant to offer you an opportunity to work through your thoughts on various questions and problems raised by our investigation into Texas Government. It is always better to actively think, by writing and discussing, than to passively think, by listening quietly and reading quickly. Second, the revisiting of your writing from class when you later post it to BB, and the public exposure that results, will cause many of you to think about what you have written deeper and more carefully.

Attendance Policy—Please Read Carefully

I ask that you please be present and on time as much as possible. Attendance is mandatory and a sign-in sheet will be passed around each class. You are allowed 4 absences—these are for any reason—after which I will subtract two points per absence from your final grade point total. There are not “excused” or “unexcused” types of absences in this course, except in very serious and/or emergency circumstances.
Assignments and Grading

Grade Distribution – Exams 60%, Homework 40%

- Exam #1: 10%
- Exam #2: 15%
- Final Exam: 35%
- Learn Smart Modules: 25%
- Discussion Boards: 15%

Grading Scale
A 100-90
B 89-80
C 79-70
D 69-60
F 59-

Academic Honesty
This class strictly adheres to the university’s policy on academic honesty. Please consult the following website for guidelines on the proper citation of sources and for avoiding plagiarism: http://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/code-of-student-conduct/misconduct.php. Sanctions for a violation of Academic Policy can include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and a notation on the academic record, and suspension from the university.

Religious Observances
Every effort will be made to accommodate all forms of religious observance in compliance with ASU OP 10.19. Students who require additional arrangements to be made should make these known in good time in order that arrangements can be made.

Make-up Policy
Make-ups for missed exams are only allowed on a case-by-case basis. Whenever possible advance notice must be given, excuses must be documented, and grade penalties are at the discretion of the instructor.

Students with Disabilities
Students that feel that they may need special assistance for any reason should contact the Student Life Office, Rm 112 University Center.
**Reading Assignments and Due Dates**

Week 1 – Chapters 1 & 2 – Overview of Texas & the TX Constitution
LS ch2 due Thursday
Discussion Board 1 due Saturday

Week 2 – Chapters 3 & 4 – TX Legislature & Executive Department
LS ch4 due Thursday
Online Exam 1 Friday on Chapters 1-3 (no class meeting)

Week 3 – Chapters 5 & 6 – TX Court System and Local Government
LS ch6 due Thursday
Discussion Board 2 due Saturday

Week 4 – Chapters 7 & 8 – TX Voting, Elections, and Campaigns
Online Exam 2 Monday on Chapters 4-6 (no class meeting)
LS ch8 due Thursday

Week 5 – Movie, Exam Review, Final Exam
Online Final Exam Wednesday on Chapters 1-8 (no class meeting), August 8th
ASU Student Learning Objectives

Critical Thinking Skills (CT)

CT1. Gather, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information relevant to a question or issue.

CT2. Develop and demonstrate a logical position (i.e. perspective, thesis, hypothesis) that acknowledges ambiguities or contradictions.

Communication Skills (CS)

CS1. Develop, interpret, and express ideas through effective written communication.

CS2. Develop, interpret, and express ideas through effective oral communication.

Social Responsibility (SR)

SR1. Demonstrate intercultural competence.

SR2. Demonstrate knowledge of civic responsibility.

SR3. Demonstrate the ability to engage effectively in the campus, regional, national or global communities.

Personal Responsibility (PR)

PR1. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate choices, actions and consequences as related to ethical decision-making.