



TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY
CENTRAL TEXAS

POLI 5305: American Politics

Section 110 (Fall 2017)

Thurs 6-9 PM

Founder's Hall 311



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Office Hours: 4:45 PM – 5:45 PM Mon-Thurs
or by appointment

Catalog Description

This core graduate seminar examines basic approaches to the study of American Politics, including major works and recent research on this topic.

Course Objectives and Outcomes

This course aims to train students in the study of American politics. Its focus is largely behavioral – that is, about how decisions are actually made rather than the formal rules of governance (which are adequately covered in any undergraduate American Government course). It should prepare students to answer the following questions about American politics:

1. Representation: To what extent do political attitudes of citizens and interest groups affect government policy and performance?
2. Governance: How do the executive, legislative, judicial, and administrative (bureaucratic) powers actually operate? That is, what leads to decisions in these arenas and to compliance with those decisions?
3. Preferences: To what extent is political polarization growing in the United States, and what are its causes, consequences, and solutions?
4. Citizen Response: What determines the political behavior – including electoral behavior – of Americans?

The learning outcomes of the course (Outcomes A, B, C, and D, respectively) are that students will be able to craft a scholarly answer to each of the above questions, whether asked in whole or in part. The primary tools designed to produce these outcomes are reading, in-depth discussion of the readings – facilitated by weekly essays addressing their strengths and weaknesses -- and studying for a final exam that poses some combination of two of these questions. This course meets face-to-face, with supplemental materials made available online through the A&M-Central Texas Canvas Learning Management System [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>].

Required Readings

The following books are required for this course. The other required readings are available on Canvas.

Christopher H. Achen and Larry Bartels. 2016. Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0691169446

John Aldrich. 2011. Why Parties? A Second Look. Chicago, IL: University Of Chicago Press. ISBN-13: 978-0226012742

Brandice Canes-Wrone. 2005. Who Leads Whom? Presidents, Policy, and the Public. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. ISBN-13: 978-0226092829

Charles Mills. 1999. The Racial Contract. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0801484636

Technology Requirements and Support

This course will use the Texas A&M-Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system for course readings, the Academic Integrity Exercise, and PowerPoint slides. Logon to Texas A&M-Central Texas Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>].

Username: Your MyCT username (xx123 or everything before the "@" in your MyCT email address)

Password: Your MyCT password

Technology Support:

For log-in problems, students should contact Help Desk Central.

24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu

Phone: (254) 519-5466

[Web Chat](http://hdc.tamu.edu): [<http://hdc.tamu.edu>]

Please let the support technician know you are an A&M-Central Texas student.

For issues with **Canvas**, select "chat with Canvas support," submit a support request to Canvas Tier 1, or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953, links to all are found inside of Canvas using the "Help" link.

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

Grading (90/80/70/60, rounded to the nearest percentage)

POLI 5305 Course Rubric

Item	Points	Percent
Academic Integrity Exercise	0 (but required to pass)	0% *
Weekly Essays (13)	100 each – 1300 total	32.5%
Participation	100 per session – 1300 total	32.5%
Final Exam	1400 (700 per question)	35%
TOTAL POSSIBLE	4000	100%
3580+=A 3180-3579=B 2780-3179=C 2380-2779=D 2389 or lower=F		

- Academic Integrity Exercise: This consists of watching a brief lecture, taking a quiz, seeing where any mistakes on the quiz came from, and signing a statement. Once you successfully complete this exercise, you will no longer need to do so in future political science courses. If you have previously completed this exercise for me, you need not do so for this course.

*****Having completed the Academic Integrity Exercise is a prerequisite to passing this course. It must be completed before you hand in any homework or **September 7**, whichever comes first.*****

- **Rubric: You will automatically fail the course if you have not completed the Academic Integrity exercise on or before September 7.**
- Memos (About 33%). At the beginning of each class, you should submit a typed, 1-2 page (about 400-600 words) essay on the day's readings. The first half should summarize the relevant material from each reading. The second half of the memo should focus on one reading and either (a) identify a weakness in the reading and suggest how it might be addressed by scholars or (b) identify an unanswered question in the reading and suggest a research project to answer it. These shouldn't require outside research but if you do some, be sure to cite it properly using the APSA system (see Blackboard for examples). If you only cite from the assigned readings, you don't need a works cited page; otherwise, you do.
 - Before writing, be sure that you understand each author's dependent variable (e.g. policy, autonomy, attitudes, decisions, election outcomes, etc) – that is, what they are trying to describe, predict, or evaluate. All of our authors – even the ones that merely review the state of the field in some area -- have arguments to make.
 - What is each author's explanation(s) (independent variables) for changes in the value assumed by his or her dependent variable?
 - What evidence/arguments does the author produce in favor of the explanation? Look for weaknesses, especially if they are common to all of the authors.
 - Rubric:
 - Each half of the memo is worth half of the credit.
 - The first half is graded for clarity and descriptive accuracy. It should show that you read and understood the material.
 - The second half is graded as a miniature research design. This requires an idea, a testable hypothesis following from that idea, identification of relevant independent variables, a statement about what data would be needed, and a statement about what results would falsify the hypothesis. In principle, this can be accomplished in five sentences, but more detail is desirable, up to the 600-word limit.
 - Spelling/grammar count for up to 20% of the credit (1% deduction per error). Check the link on Blackboard to at least address my personal pet peeves.
- Participation (About 33%). This will be graded on a simple system. A student who attends and does little else will receive 40 points. A student who constructively participates in about half of the class will receive 70 points. A student who constructively participates throughout class will receive the full 100 points.

- Constructive participation means making comments or asking questions that demonstrate familiarity with the assigned readings for the week. It also means actively engaging in any in-class exercises.
- As the amount of class time devoted to lecture increases, the amount of participation expected from students decreases proportionally. A good rule of thumb is to be sure to contribute something relevant (even just a question that shows engagement with the course material) at least twice an hour if there is no lecture or in-class exercise.
- Final Exam (About 33%). There will be a comprehensive final exam. The exam will consist of two essay questions drawn, in whole or in part, from the questions listed on the first page of the syllabus. The questions may be reworded to make them more precise or in order to take into account material we have discussed in class. General advice:
 - It is generally best to write an outline first, then write your answer. For each major point on your outline, you should have support (a finding or example from the course materials).
 - You can write an outline for each question as we encounter it in the course, saving yourself considerable time and effort reviewing for the final exam.
 - The exam is both open-notes and open-book. You are free to use class handouts, your notes, and all of the assigned readings. You are **not** permitted to use other resources (such as online material) during the exam.
 - Exam grading rubric. Grading is primarily based upon your demonstrated knowledge of the material, rather than spelling/grammar issues. Having said this, atrocious grammar can make it impossible for the reader to understand your argument.

POLI 5305 Final Exam Grading Rubric

Grade	Thesis (20%)	Argument Structure (15%)	Evidence (50%)	Counter-Evidence (15%)
A	Answers the question and drives the rest of the essay	The thesis is built up from arguments about each element of the question, each with its own support	Each element of the argument is supported by evidence from the course. In general, consistent statistical findings are better evidence than isolated examples, where such evidence is available. No major source of evidence is ignored.	Addressed, with flaws spotlighted.
B	Answers the question, but most of the paper ignores it	Some elements of the thesis do not correspond to sections of the answer, or vice versa	Each element of the argument is supported by evidence from the course, but major sources of evidence are ignored. OR The evidence used is insufficient to support one or more of the claims in the paper. OR Much of the support consists of direct quotes or naked claims, unsupported by research.	Addressed, with mixed results.

Grade	Thesis (20%)	Argument Structure (15%)	Evidence (50%)	Counter-Evidence (15%)
C	Does not match up with every element of the question	The essay is a set of arguments that proceed without logical order	The evidence, when taken as a whole, fails to support the paper's thesis, with necessary steps in the argument being assumed instead of demonstrated. Much relevant evidence is omitted and irrelevant evidence may be present. References to evidence from the course lack specificity.	Some addressed, with mixed results.
D	Does not match up with most elements of the question	Most of the essay is devoid of actual argument, instead following a stream-of-consciousness or "data dump" strategy	At least one major element of the essay's argument has substantial evidence from the course that supports it. However, other references are generally vague or irrelevant.	Most unmentioned; remainder are dismissed with vague statements or similar avoidance strategies
F	None	The essay is devoid of structure	Little if any evidence from the course is used in the answer. It fails to demonstrate a grasp of what the authors found.	Not addressed

Attendance, Make-Up Work, and Late Work

- Attendance is required. Students must inform the instructor *prior to an absence*. Send me an email stating the dates(s) you will be missing and the reason(s). (Protect yourself! Don't rely on my memory – send me something written that I can keep in my files).
 - If all else fails, you or a friend may call my office and speak to me or my voicemail. There are very few situations in life that preclude making a phone call or having a friend do so; failure to contact the instructor *prior to class* will normally rule out any sort of make-up.
 - If you have to leave early, please remember to get the assignment first.
- Late memos are only accepted in the case of excused absences. *If you must email me a memo to prove you have it done on time, then you need to bring a hard copy for me to grade the next class session.*
- Make-up work is required for any excused absence after the first. It makes up for the inability of the student to participate in the class. I will generally have you write an additional 400-600 word "participation exercise" on some topic(s) or question(s) we discussed in class. *Note that this is in addition to completing the memo for the missed week – the two are graded separately.* **When you return from a second or subsequent excused absence, be sure to request the make-up work. It is your duty to ask, not the instructor's duty to remind you.** Make-up work is due one week after it is assigned.
- Grades of incomplete are not to be used when students simply fall behind. Instead, they are used when some event such as a hospitalization or deployment effectively takes the student out of the class after the drop deadline. By university policy, incompletes must be finished in the subsequent semester.

Regrade Policy

It is possible for me to make a mistake when grading. So if you think that I graded part or all of an assignment incorrectly, you have one week to return it to me for regrading against the rubric. You may request that all or only part of the assignment be regraded. I take no offense at this. The same policy applies to the final exam; you have one week from when grades are posted to request a regrade of one or both questions. As for participation, I make the daily participation grades available both during the class break and after class, so if you need to remind me of something you said that didn't receive credit, do so that night as I probably won't remember who said what the next week.

Academic Integrity

University Code of Academic Honesty: Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

Specific guidelines for this course, which supplement and do not replace University policy:

- *Violations:* There are plenty of ways to cheat listed by the Student Handbook. Some common violations of academic integrity that I have observed while teaching similar classes at TAMUCT are
 - Copying another student's homework. I encourage study groups, but copying must be avoided. Discuss the readings as long as you wish, but don't "share" the contents of your memos before they are due. You may not "jointly" complete any of the homework exercises in this course unless otherwise indicated on the assignment; these are to be completed by yourself alone. If you provide another student with a copy of your homework and they copy it, both you and the copier will be deemed to have violated the policy.
 - Using direct quotes without quotation marks. Even if you are just using three- or four-word phrases, you need to surround them with quotation marks if you didn't create them yourself. This is true even if you cite the source! Remember that changing a few words in a sentence does not transform a direct quote into a paraphrase; instead, it transforms one long direct quote into several shorter direct quotes with a word of your own between each. A true paraphrase is the expression of the cited source's ideas in your own words.
 - Paraphrasing another person's words without citing the source

- *Penalties:*
 - The normal penalty for a violation of academic integrity (whether or not it is specifically listed above) in any of my classes is a grade of zero for the work or a deduction of 20% (two letter grades) from your course grade, whichever is **greater**. The infraction will be reported to the TAMUCT administration, with a recommendation for probation in the case of deliberate violation or no further action in the case of clearly inadvertent violation.
 - The (a) outright purchase, download, or completion by others of an exam, or (b) second or subsequent violation of academic integrity (in this course or other courses) display such serious disregard for academic integrity that either one of them will result in course failure **and** recommendation for expulsion to the TAMUCT administration.

Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a Drop Request Form, found through the [Registrar's web page](#):

<https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/business-office/droppolicy.php>

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the University Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

Student Resources

- **911 Cellular:** Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University – Central Texas
 - 911Cellular is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in 911 Cellular through their myCT email account.
 - Connect at 911Cellular [<https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management>] to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in 911Cellular, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.
- **Library Services:** The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at TAMUCT are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.
 - Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how

to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

- Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the TAMUCT main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our homepage: <https://tamuct.libguides.com/>
- **Academic Accommodations:** At Texas A&M-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.
 - For more information please visit our Access & Inclusion webpage: <https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/access-inclusion/>
 - TAMUCT supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. For more information, please visit <https://www.tamuct.departments/index.php> Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these requirements and guidelines, please visit: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf>
- **Tutoring:** Tutoring is available to all TAMUCT students, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111.
 - If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Kim Wood at k.wood@tamuct.edu
 - Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables TAMUCT students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over forty subject areas. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.
- **University Writing Center:** Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University – Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10am-4pm Monday-Thursday during the Summer semester (June 5, 2017 to July 27, 2017). Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available). Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the

writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is here to help! If you have any questions about the University Writing Center, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu

Amendments

Not all exigencies can be foreseen. I reserve the right to amend the syllabus at any time. Any such amendment will be provided to the students in writing.

Course Schedule

Dates	Topic	Readings
Aug 31	Representation in American Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Sept 7	Two Critiques of Representation in the US	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gilens and Page, “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens” • Mills, <u>The Racial Contract</u> (ALL)
Sept 14	Why Parties?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aldrich, <u>Why Parties? A Second Look</u>, Chapters 1-2
Sept 21	Founding and Evolution of American Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aldrich, <u>Why Parties? A Second Look</u>, Chapters 3-9
Sept 28	Legislative Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepsle and Weingast, “Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions” • Krehbiel, “Where’s the Party?” • Binder, “The Dysfunctional Congress”
Oct 5	The President and the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canes-Wrone, <u>Who Leads Whom?</u> (ALL)
Oct 12	The Bureaucracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast, “Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control” • Gordon and Hafer, “Flexing Muscle: Corporate Political Expenditures as Signals to the Bureaucracy” • Clinton, Bertelli, Grose, Lewis, and Nixon, “Separated Powers in the United States: The Ideology of Agencies, Presidents, and Congress”
Oct 19	The Judiciary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segal and Spaeth, <u>The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model Revisited</u>, Excerpts • Epstein and Knight, “Toward a Strategic Revolution in Judicial Politics: A Look Back, A Look Ahead” • Epstein and Knight, “Reconsidering Judicial Preferences”
Oct 26	Campaigns and Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gelman et al, <u>Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State</u>, Excerpts • Jacobson, “How Do Campaigns Matter?” • Nyhan et al, “Taking Corrections Literally but Not Seriously? The Effects of Information on Factual Beliefs and Candidate Favorability” • Gelman and Azari, “19 Things We Learned from the 2016 Election”
Nov 2	Polarization in the United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, <u>Polarized America</u>, Excerpt • Kinder and Kalmoe, <u>Neither Liberal Nor Conservative</u>, Excerpts • Achen and Bartels, <u>Democracy for Realists</u>, Chapters 1-2
Nov 9	Explaining American Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achen and Bartels, <u>Democracy for Realists</u>, Chapters 3-11

Dates	Topic	Readings
Nov 16	State Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lax and Phillips, “The Democratic Deficit in the States” • Lewis, “Bypassing the Representational Filter? Minority Rights Policies under Direct Democracy Institutions in the U.S. States” • Rocha et al, “Race and Turnout: Does Descriptive Representation in State Legislatures Increase Minority Voting?” • Hall, “State Supreme Courts in American Democracy: Probing the Myths of Judicial Reform” • Huber and Gordon, “Accountability and Coercion: Is Justice Blind When It Runs for Office?”
Nov 23	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Nov 30	Southern Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key, <u>Southern Politics in State and Nation</u>, Excerpts • Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen, “The Political Legacy of American Slavery” • Harada, “The Voting Rights Act of 1965 and Strategic Policymaking in the South” • Knuckey, “Explaining Recent Changes in the Partisan Identification of Southern Whites”
Dec 7	Genopolitics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alford, Funk, and Hibbing: “Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?” • Fowler and Dawes, “Two Genes Predict Voter Turnout” • Charney and English, “Candidate Genes and Political Behavior” • Fowler and Dawes, “In Defense of Genopolitics” • Charney and English, “Genopolitics and the Science of Genetics” • Weinschenk and Dawes, “The Relationship between Genes, Personality Traits, and Political Interest”
Dec 14	Final Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None