POL 2306-003 State and Local Government

Spring 2021, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi

Wednesday 7:00-9:30 PM, CI 113

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| Instructor: Dr. Laine P. Shay | Office Hours: Monday: 10-12PM;  Wednesday 10-12PM;  Friday: 10-11PM;  or by appointment. |
| Email: Laine.Shay@tamucc.edu |
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| Office: BH-351 Phone: 361-825-2870 |

**Course Description**

State and local politics tends to play a more prominent role in the everyday lives of most American citizens than that of the federal government. This course is designed as a broad survey in the study of state politics in which we will explore how states differ across varying institutions and what effect those differences have on governing and policy outcomes. A few of the topics covered in this course include the following: state legislatures, term limits, governors, state courts, policy diffusion, urban politics, and direct democracy.

**Required Textbook**

The following textbook is required:

Rottinghaus, Brandon. 2018. *Inside Texas Politics: Power, Policy, and Personality in the*

*Lone Star State*. 2nd Edition. Oxford University Press: New York.

Readings should be completed prior to class and students should be ready to discuss any material covered. In addition to the textbook, other readings will be assigned online.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

On completion of this course students will be able to:

* Recall basic facts related to the foundations of Texas government
* Describe key political concepts related to state institutions such as the legislature, the various executive actors, and the judiciary.
* Demonstrate their understanding of key concepts relating to political behavior such as voting, elections, political parties, interest groups and the media.
* Understanding of definitions, concepts, and theories of state government

**Supplies**

The following supplies are necessary for this course:

* Turning Technology subscription
* Laptop or cell phone
* Rottinghaus (2018) textbook

**Course Grading**

Your grade in this class will be assigned according to the following:

1. **Exams** (50% of final grade): Two exams will be given (worth 25% each) throughout the course. *The first exam is scheduled for March 19*. *The second exam is scheduled for May 7*. These exams will consist of multiple choice and True/False questions. Exams will cover material from both the course readings and lectures. The exams will be non-cumulative. Missed exams can be made up only in cases of university approved absences, such as travel related to university activities, or extreme circumstances (prolonged illness or death in the family). If you know you will miss an exam, please contact me no later than one week in advance of the exam so other arrangements can be made. All exams will be administered online and due at midnight.
2. **Quizzes** (20% of final grade): Throughout the course of the semester, ten quizzes will be given at the end of week related to assigned readings or material covered in previous class meetings. They will vary in length and question type. Additionally, they will be administered online and due at midnight on Friday of the assigned week. Make-up quizzes will not be allowed without a university approved excuse. If an absence is excused, make-ups will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. If you have any technical issues, you have a week to address the issue. You should not complete the quizzes through your phone.
3. **Current Events Essay** (10% of final grade): Each student is required to write an essay. The essay should be 2 pages in length. The essay will summarize a news article and discuss how that article relates to the assigned readings covered in class. The news article must relate to Texas politics. Papers should be typed, double spaced, and printed using 12-point Times New Roman font, and one-inch margins. Spelling, grammar, formatting, and punctuations will all be factored into the paper’s grade. The essay relates to at least 2 concepts in the Rottinghaus textbook. The concepts are bolded and followed by the page number in parenthesis. The news article citation is included in the article. The current events essay is due on May 8 and will be submitted via Blackboard
4. **Student Response System [Participation]** (20% of final grade): All students are expected to participate in class. We will be using the Turning Technologies response devices, otherwise known as “clickers,” for this class. All students are required to purchase a subscription through Turning Technologies. If you have already purchased a subscription and registered a device, then you do not need to purchase another subscription, nor do you need to register it again. The subscriptions can be purchased at the bookstore or online (student.turningtechnologies.com). You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using your cellphone, tablet, or laptop. Please use your Texas A&M-Corpus Christi official email account.

Students do not need to be physically present to use the student response system. Instead, they can answer the questions remotely. Further, if the students wish to answer all the questions remotely, then they can do so. If you are feeling ill, please stay home and answer the questions remotely.   
  
The student response system will allow me to poll the class and/or conduct quizzes. Your participation on these quizzes will be graded, and these grades will be sent to the Blackboard gradebook. All participation points will be posted by the end of the day. *You have a week to contact me on any technical issues.* Students who are not present for university-approved absences will be excused.   
  
Should you require assistance with Turning Technologies at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email (support@turningtechnologies.com), submit an online help request (www.turningtechnologies.com), or by calling 1-866-746-3015.

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| **Assignment** | **Percentage of Final Grade** |
| Examination I | 25% |
| Examination II | 25% |
| Quizzes | 20% |
| Student Response System | 20% |
| Current Events Essay | 10% |
| Total | 100% |

Course grades will be assigned as follows:

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

**Other Issues and Campus Policies**

*General Expectations and Professional Behavior.* Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

The following is necessary to succeed in this course: be respectful of others’ ideas, attend class consistently, keep up with the readings, ask questions, and turn in all assignments on time. Further, to learn, we must be open to the views of people different from ourselves. In the time we share together over the semester, please honor the uniqueness of your fellow classmates, and appreciate the opportunity we must learn from one another. Please respect each other’s opinions and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. Finally, remember to keep confidential all issues of a personal or professional nature that are discussed in class.

*Participation and Attendance*. Participation is a graded portion of this class via the student response system. If you are unable to participate in a class and you have a valid excuse, such as a note from a doctor, please inform me. As previously mentioned, students are not required to be in physical attendance. Students can attend all classes virtually.

*Emails*. To remain compliant with FERPA, the instructor will not respond to emails that are sent from non-University email accounts (i.e., Yahoo, Hotmail, etc) that concern the student’s grade. All grade-related emails must be sent through the student’s University email account. However, the instructor will meet with students in person to discuss grade-related issues.

*Technology*. Laptops, tablets, smart phones, and any other related technology will be used in this class. Please make sure these devices are silenced during our class. We will use Blackboard in this course.

*Late Assignments*. For the most part, no late assignments will be accepted.

*Valid Absence Excuses*. Texas A&M-Corpus has a policy on excused absences. Please review this policy: https://catalog.tamucc.edu/content.php?catoid=22&navoid=1014#Class\_Attendance. Some examples of excused absences are jury duty, military duty, religious observances, illness, illness of a dependent, and bereavement for an immediate family member. If you are a member of the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi varsity intercollegiate athletic team, you must provide me with you team schedule during the first week of class.

*Extra Credit*. There is no scheduled extra credit in this course.

*Scholastic Honesty and Plagiarism*. University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in the letter grade of an “F.”

*Diversity and Civility*. Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high-quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

*Statement of Academic Continuity*. In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

*S.A.I.L. System*. S.A.I.L. is a secure online student portal where you can access your student, academic, and financial aid records at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Students can find information related to registration, class schedules, course catalogs, tuition and fees, grades, etc. at http://sail.tamucc.edu/.

*Student Caregivers*. If you have caregiving responsibilities (e.g., parent of a child or care for elderly parents) and you anticipate scheduling difficulties, please discuss this at the beginning of the semester with the instructor to work out an appropriate strategy and keep in regular touch with the instructor during the semester.

*Part-time/Full-time Employed Students*. If you anticipate scheduling conflicts or workload difficulties, please discuss your questions, concerns, and potential solutions with the instructor at the beginning of the semester and keep in regular touch with the instructor during the semester.

*COVID-19 Campus Safety Measures*. To promote public safety and protect students, faculty, and staff during the coronavirus pandemic, Texas A&M University has adopted policies and practices for the Fall 2020 academic term to limit virus transmission. Students must observe the following practices while participating in face-to-face courses and course-related activities (office hours, help sessions, transitioning to and between classes, study spaces, academic services, etc.):

* Self-monitoring—Students should follow CDC recommendations for self-monitoring. **Students who have a fever or exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should participate in class remotely and should not participate in face-to-face instruction.**
* Face Coverings—[Face coverings](https://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/34.99.99.c0.02_use_of_face_coverings.pdf) (cloth face covering, surgical mask, etc.) must be properly worn in all non-private spaces including classrooms, teaching laboratories, common spaces such as lobbies and hallways, public study spaces, libraries, academic resource and support offices, and outdoor spaces where 6 feet of physical distancing is difficult to reliably maintain. Description of face coverings and additional guidance are provided in the [Face Covering policy](https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/) and [Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fprovost.tamu.edu%2FMenu%2FNews%2FTAMU-Face-Covering-FAQs&amp;data=02%7C01%7CKatelyn.Hoipkemier%40tamucc.edu%7C3f8be8b8ee1246f7f9f308d83565ed9e%7C34cbfaf167a64781a9ca514eb2550b66%7C0%7C0%7C637318059184493716&amp;sdata=hLZlE7G6h578TTPziN9PRB7MIm7BHUf3c6JKaAoQfew%3D&amp;reserved=0) available on the [Provost website](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fprovost.tamu.edu%2FMenu%2FNews%2FTAMU-Face-Covering-FAQs&amp;data=02%7C01%7CKatelyn.Hoipkemier%40tamucc.edu%7C3f8be8b8ee1246f7f9f308d83565ed9e%7C34cbfaf167a64781a9ca514eb2550b66%7C0%7C0%7C637318059184493716&amp;sdata=hLZlE7G6h578TTPziN9PRB7MIm7BHUf3c6JKaAoQfew%3D&amp;reserved=0).
* Physical Distancing—Physical distancing must be maintained between students, instructors, and others in course and course-related activities.
* Classroom Ingress/Egress—Students must follow marked pathways for entering and exiting classrooms and other teaching spaces. Leave classrooms promptly after course activities have concluded. Do not congregate in hallways and maintain 6-foot physical distancing when waiting to enter classrooms and other instructional spaces.
* To attend a face-to-face class, students must wear a face covering (or a face shield if they have an exemption letter). If a student refuses to wear a face covering, the instructor should ask the student to leave and join the class remotely. If the student does not leave the class, the faculty member should report that student to the [Student Conduct office](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fstudentlife.tamu.edu%2Fsco%2Fface-covering-violations%2F&amp;data=02%7C01%7CKatelyn.Hoipkemier%40tamucc.edu%7C3f8be8b8ee1246f7f9f308d83565ed9e%7C34cbfaf167a64781a9ca514eb2550b66%7C0%7C0%7C637318059184503708&amp;sdata=h7LZZ8IFrRGutXtHU6u3qTreY2%2BJsvnbgwYXSKYUWMc%3D&amp;reserved=0) for sanctions. Additionally, the faculty member may choose to teach that day’s class remotely for all students.

*Class Recordings*. Synchronous (live) sessions in this course will be recorded for students to refer to throughout the semester. Class recordings are reserved for use only by students in this class for educational purposes. The recordings should not be shared outside of class or outside of Blackboard. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the TAMU-CC Student Code of Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

*Office Hours*. All office hours will be held virtually through WebEx. Please email me in advance if you wish to visit me during my virtual office hours.

*Disability Accommodation*. 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 believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the

classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

*Student Grade Appeals*. As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at:

https://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules\_procedures/index.html.

*Academic Advising*. The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

*Dropping a Course*. I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 16, 2021 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

*Civil Rights Reporting*. Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is committed to fostering a culture of caring and respect that is free from discrimination, relationship violence and sexual misconduct, and ensuring that all affected students have access to services. For information on reporting Civil Rights complaints, options and support resources (including pregnancy support accommodations) or university policies and procedures, please contact the University Title IX Coordinator, Sam Ramirez at Samuel.ramirez@tamucc.edu or Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Rosie Ruiz at Rosie.Ruiz@tamucc.edu ext. 5826, or visit website at Title IX/Sexual Assault/Pregnancy.

*Limits to confidentiality*. Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, are not able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report alleged or suspected civil rights discrimination that is observed by or made known to an employee in the course and scope of their employment. As the instructor, I must report allegations of civil rights discrimination, including sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, or sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator if you share it with me. These reports will trigger contact with you from the Civil Rights/Title IX Compliance office who will inform you of your options and resources regarding the incident that you have shared. If you would like to talk about these incidents in a confidential setting, you are encouraged to make an appointment with counselors in the University Counseling Center.

*Campus Emergencies.* At TAMU-CC, your safety is a top concern. We actively prepare for natural disasters or human-caused incidents with the ultimate goal of maintaining a safe and secure campus.

* For any emergency, dial the University Police Department (UPD) at **361-825-4444** or dial 911. It’s a good idea to have the UPD emergency number (and non-emergency number 361-825-4242) saved in your cell phone.
* There are nearly 200 classroom telephones throughout campus. If you feel threatened or need help and don’t have a cell phone, dial 4444 (emergency) or 4242 (non-emergency) to be connected to UPD.
* If we hear a fire alarm, we will immediately evacuate the building and proceed to Hallway, across from CI-347.
  + Proceed to the nearest building exit or evacuation stairway. Do not use the elevator. Persons who need help navigating stairs should proceed to a marked Area of Rescue Assistance, if possible.
  + Persons with disabilities should speak with their faculty about how to best assist them in case of an emergency.
  + Review the evacuation route (see specific Building Emergency Plan).
* TAMU-CC employs the Code Blue Emergency Notification System, an alert system which connects the campus community during emergency situations.
  + The notifications include emails, text and pre-recorded messages, as appropriate.
  + Code Blue emergencies may include severe weather warnings, threats, school closures, delays, evacuations and other incidents which disrupt regular campus activities.
  + Students can update personal contact information anytime at https://emergency.tamucc.edu/contactform/
* Shelter in Place via Code Blue.
  + "Shelter-in-place" means to take immediate shelter where you are and may be implemented for severe weather, hazardous material spills, active shooters or other dangerous situations.
  + If there is a shelter in place for a **tornado warning**, our preferred location is the bottom floor of this building, away from windows and doors.
* Active Threat Protocol. There are three things you could do that make a difference if there is an active threat: Run, Hide, and/or Fight. For more information about the Run, Hide, Fight protocol, including what to do when law enforcement arrives, visit <http://safety.tamucc.edu/ems/activethreat.html>

For the *Quick Campus Guide to Campus Emergencies* (including a list of Areas of Rescue Assistance and additional protocols on assisting persons with physical disabilities, hurricanes, bomb threats, animal bites, crime reporting, elevator entrapment, etc.), visit https://safety.tamucc.edu/uploads/Site/finalbooklet.pdf

**Tentative Schedule** (subject to change)

**Week 1** (January 27): Introduction

Review Syllabus

Signup for Classroom Rotation and Assigned Seat (No Formal Session)

**Week 2** (February 3): The Struggle for Texas

Rottinghaus 2018: Chapter 1

**Week 3** (February 10): The Texas Constitution

Rottinghaus 2018: Chapter 2

Begin Student Response System (Subscription Required) on February 8

**Week 4** (February 17): Federalism

Rottinghaus 2018: Chapter 3

Quiz 1 due February 19

**Week 5** (February 24): Voting and Elections

Rottinghaus 2018: Chapter 4

Quiz 2 due February 26

**Week 6** (March 3): Political Parties

Rottinghaus 2018: Chapter 5

Quiz 3 due March 5

**Week 7** (March 10): Interest Groups

Rottinghaus 2018: Chapter 6

Quiz 4 due March 12

**Week 8** (March 17) Local Government and Examination I

Rottinghaus 2018: Chapter 12

Examination I due on March 19

Examination I will cover material from Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 12

**Week 9** (March 24): The Legislature

Rottinghaus 2018: Chapter 7

Quiz 5 due March 26

**Week 10** (March 31): Governors of Texas

Rottinghaus 2018: Chapter 8

Quiz 6 due April 2

**Week 11** (April 7): The Plural Executive and the Bureaucracy

Rottinghaus 2018: Chapter 9

Quiz 7 due April 9

**Week 12** (April 14): The Texas Judiciary

Rottinghaus 2018: Chapter 10

Quiz 8 due April 16

**Week 13** (April 21): Criminal Justice

Rottinghaus 2018: Chapter 11

Quiz 9 due April 23

**Week 14** (April 28): Budget. Finances, and Policy

Rottinghaus 2018: Chapter 13

Quiz 10 due April 30

**Week 15** (May 5): Public Policy in Texas and Examination II

Rottinghaus 2018: Chapter 14

Examination II due May 8

Examination II will cover material from Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 14

**Final Week** (May 8): Current Events Essay due on May 8

*Note*: This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course. Please note that I may modify it with reasonable notice to you. I may also modify the Course Schedule to accommodate the needs of our class. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard under Announcements.