# Syllabus - Political Science 2312

# Texas State and Local Government

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Office: Room 411 University Hall; Office Hours: thirty minutes before class or preferably by appointment.

**Important:** There will be no use of any electronic equipment during the class. This includes cell phones, I-Pads, Facebook, lap top computers or any similar devices. Students may be asked to leave class if there is any violation of this policy.

Texts: A free website developed by UT-Austin will be available. <http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu>

Course Description: The course will attempt to acquaint students with the larger issues that have affected Texas State and Local Government in recent years. These conversations will be brought to student attention within the larger context of the structure and functioning of American Government. The Texas State and Local Government course will illustrate the fundamental political architecture of the state and various municipal governments and comparisons and relationships to the various states.

There will also be comparisons made to other countries and their political systems.

Goals, Learning Outcomes/Objectives

Goals of Political Science undergraduate curriculum

<http://www.uta.edu/catalog/departments/liberalarts/political> science

To maximize students’ capacities to analyze and interpret political events and governmental processes. In addition to acquiring general knowledge about government and political behavior, students also learn the analytical skills relevant to particular political systems (their own and others’) and to problems of most immediate consequence and concern to them.

Four Major Objectives of the Department’s Curriculum are: <http://www.uta.edu/catalog/departments/liberalarts/political> science

To provide an orientation to national, state, and local government and to stimulate interest in participation in the public sector.

To illustrate the linkage between private or individual values and public policy

To provide descriptive generalizations as well as to stimulate critical evaluations of various political systems, ideologies, and policy processes; and

To develop in students a cosmopolitan perspective (with respect to both cross-cultural and comparative United States studies) of political phenomena.

Political Science 2312 Course Goals

Students will: 1. Demonstrate a well-rounded knowledge of the government and politics of the State of Texas 2. Demonstrate an understanding of how political scientists analyze and interpret the foundations, institutions, processes, and actors that constitute state government and politics. 3. Demonstrate critical thought about state government and politics, pivoting upon the State and Texas.

Political Science 2312 learning objectives and outcomes will correspond to Blooms: Knowledge, Application, and Analysis.

Attendance and Drop Policy: Students are required to attend all class sessions. Students may drop according to university policy and note that all exams may not be given until after official drop period. Students should take this into individual consideration.

Grade Calculation: There will be two academic exercises comprising the final course grade: (1) the first exam will be fifty questions and the format to the instructor discretion-this will, however, be an “objective” type scantron exam. Students should obtain General Purpose Scantron, number 4521 from the UTA bookstore. This exam will be announced at least two weeks prior and will be given near the end of the semester. (2) The second portion of the final grade calculation will be a series of essays to be distributed to students. This will count 18 points and be comprehensive in nature and scope.

The first exam will count 75% of the final grade-the essays will count 25%. The grades are allocated on a strict point basis. There is a total of 68 points. (50 points on first scantron exam,18 points on essay)=total of 68 points. Ninety percent of 68 points=A, 80%=B, 70%=C, 60%=D, and below 60% a failing grade. There is no academic exercise designated as a final exam. All scheduled exams and research papers will be distributed by the instructor and completed by students prior to final exam schedule and final review week. Class periods will continue through regularly scheduled last day of class.

Students can easily calculate their grades by adding up all their points on the two academic exercises and then their own percent of 68 points.

THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP EXAMS! Students requiring disability assistance should contact the Disabilities Office and register. The instructor will follow all legal regulations pertaining to students with disabilities and will work to assist in any way.

Extra Credit Work:

Students may volunteer at their own discretion with a non-profit charitable institution and must be reaching out to the broader community. This work must be completed within the confines of the designated semester the student will be enrolled in this class. Students doing this volunteer work must complete a minimum of 10 hours work for a maximum of five points which will be added to student point exam point.. This is five points only-not a percentage.

This work must be fully documented in legible style, signed by an agency administrator, e-mail, address, and phone number of volunteer agency, preferably on letter-head. The documentation must be handed in at least three days prior to the ending of the semester. There will be no exceptions to this and deadline will be adhered to strictly. Students should note this as to participation.

Students should also write at least two legible paragraphs describing in detail their volunteer activities. This to be handed in along with the documentation. There can be no money exchange in any way relative to this volunteer work.

No academic dishonesty will be tolerated.

Note: The instructor will engage students in a variety of topics pivoting upon political issues, events and ideas. Students, however, should never feel the need to agree with the instructor and may of course debate or question the instructor at appropriate moments. Agreement or disagreement with the instructor has absolutely no effect on grading. The instructor believes that interest in politics is fueled not only by a text and class lectures and discussion but also by engaging persons with ideas and policies of interest.

The instructor requires complete quiet and cordiality in class among students. There also may be guest presenters invited to class on topics of political interest.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.