

**State and Local Government  
POLS 2312  
The University of Texas at Arlington  
Department of Political Science  
Spring 2011**

**Meeting Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 11.00am-12.20pm**

**Location: University Hall 121**

**Professor: Daniel Sledge**

**Email: [dsledge@uta.edu](mailto:dsledge@uta.edu)**

**Office Hours: Wednesday, 3pm-4.45pm and by appointment, University Hall 408**

**Description of Course Content:** This course provides an introduction to the workings of state and local government in the state of Texas and places Texas within a comparative framework.

**Political Science 2312 learning objectives/outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to be able to:

- 1). Define fundamental concepts associated with state politics through appropriate responses on exams.
- 2). Explain the theoretical and historical underpinnings of state constitutions; achieve basic understanding of the Texas constitution's content.
- 3). Describe the structure, function, powers of the differing branches of state governments and their influence on public policy.
- 4). Describe the evolving history of elections, eligibility, and impact of participation on democracy.

**Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials:** Halter, *Government and Politics of Texas*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. ; Harrigan and Nice, *Politics and Policy in States and Communities*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed.

**Descriptions of major assignments and examinations with due dates:** Your grade for this course will be determined based on your performance on three multiple-choice exams. Each exam will be worth 1/3 of your grade. The final exam will be cumulative.

**Grading Policy:**

F: Below 60%

D: 60-70

C-: 70-72, C: 73-76, C+: 77-79

B-: 80-82, B: 83-86, B+: 87-89

A-: 90-92, A: 93-98, A+: 99-100%

**Attendance Policy:** You are expected to attend every meeting of the course. Occasional extra credit will be given based on attendance.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be

required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. Contact the Financial Aid Office for more information.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Academic Integrity: I take cheating extremely seriously. Cheating will result, without exception, in an automatic "F" in the course.** It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. According to the UT System Regents' Rule 50101, §2.2, "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts."

**Student Support Services Available:** The University of Texas at Arlington has established a variety of programs to help students meet the challenges of college life. Support to students includes advising, counseling, mentoring, tutoring, supplemental instruction, and writing assistance. For a complete list of academic support services, visit the Academic Assistance resource page of the Office of Student Success Programs, [www.uta.edu/uac/studentsuccess/academic-assistance](http://www.uta.edu/uac/studentsuccess/academic-assistance). To help students address personal, academic and career concerns, individual counseling is also available. For more information, students are encouraged to contact Counseling Services [www.counseling.uta.edu](http://www.counseling.uta.edu) at (817) 272-3671 or visit a counselor in 216 Davis Hall.

**Electronic Communication Policy:** The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University "MavMail" address as the sole official means of communication with students. MavMail is used to remind students of important deadlines, advertise events and activities, and permit the University to conduct official transactions exclusively by electronic means. For example, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation are now sent to students through the MavMail system. All students are assigned a MavMail account. ***Students are responsible for checking their MavMail regularly.*** Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/email/>. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, and it remains active even after they graduate from UT Arlington.

## **Part I: Underpinnings of State Government**

### **Week 1 (January 18th and 20th): Federalism and State Government**

Halter, p. 33-41

### **Week 2 (January 25th and 27<sup>th</sup>): Political Culture**

Halter, p. 1-12

### **Week 3 (Feb. 1, Feb. 3): Political Economy**

Halter, p. 12-15, Harrigan and Nice, p. 456-470

**Week 4 (Feb. 8, Feb. 10): Texas's State Constitution**

Halter, p. 17-33, Harrigan and Nice, p. 17-25

**Week 5 (Feb. 15, Feb 17): Review, Exam 1**

**Part II: Institutions**

**Week 6 (Feb. 22, Feb. 25): The Executive Branch**

Halter, p. 158-190, Harrigan and Nice, 215-225

**Week 7 (Mar. 1, Mar. 3): The State Legislature**

Halter, p. 132- 155, Harrigan and Nice, p. 187-200

**Week 8 (Mar. 8, Mar. 10): Texas Politics in Transition**

Halter, p. 123-128

**Week 9 (Mar. 15, Mar. 17): SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS**

**Week 10 (Mar. 22, Mar. 24): The Courts**

Halter, p. 193-216, Harrigan and Nice, p. 269-279

**Week 11 (Mar. 29, Mar. 31) Review, Exam 2**

**Part 3: Politics**

**Week 12 (April 5, April 7): Political Parties**

Halter, p. 73-96

**Week 13 (April 12, April 14): Interest Groups**

Halter, p. 54-71, Harrigan and Nice, p. 80-89

**Week 14 (April 19, April 21): Participation**

Halter, p. 42-52, p. Harrigan and Nice, 66-78

**Week 15 (April 26, April 28): Campaigns and Elections**

Halter, p. 100-114, Harrigan and Nice, p. 97-114

**Week 16 (May 3, May 6): Review of Important Concepts**

**FINAL EXAM during exam week**