

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

Meeting Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 11am-12.20pm

Location: University Hall 108

Professor: Daniel Sledge

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Office Hours: 1.30-2.30pm, Tuesday and Thursday

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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: This course has one required text: *Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation in Texas*, Second Edition, by Collier, Galatas, and Harrelson-Stephens (CQ Press). For excellent coverage of politics and government in Texas, students are encouraged to read the Texas Tribune, available online at www.texastribune.org.

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, which will take place during the allotted time in the final exam period, 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. *Exams will cover both material from the lectures and from the reading.* 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 or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Academic Integrity: I take cheating extremely seriously. Without exception, cases of cheating or academic dishonesty will be reported to the office of student conduct. 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. 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 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: The National Government, Federalism, and State Governments

Week 1 (Aug. 25): The American Founding and the National Constitution

Week 2 (Aug. 30, Sep. 1): National Governing Institutions (Congress, the Presidency, and the Courts)

Week 3 (Sep. 6, Sep. 8): Federalism; A Brief History of Texas *Lone Star Politics*, pg. 1-36

Week 4 (Sep. 13, Sep. 15): Texas’s State Constitution *Lone Star Politics*, pg. 39-59

Week 5 (Sep. 20, Sep. 22): Review, Exam 1

Part II: Institutions

Week 6 (Sep. 27, Sep. 29): The State Legislature *Lone Star Politics*, pg. 61-98

Week 7 (Oct. 4, Oct. 6): The Governor & The Executive Branch *Lone Star Politics*, pg. 101-129

Week 8 (Oct. 11, Oct. 13): The Courts *Lone Star Politics*, pg. 131-155

Week 9 (Oct. 18, Oct. 20): Local Government *Lone Star Politics*, pg. 157-186

Week 10 (Oct. 25, Oct. 27): Review, Exam 2

Part III: Politics

Week 11 (Nov. 1, Nov. 3): Texas Politics in Transition *Lone Star Politics*, pg. 189-199

Week 12 (Nov. 8, Nov. 10): Political Parties and Interest Groups *LSP*, pg. 227-256

Week 13 (Nov. 15, Nov. 17): Campaigns and Elections *Lone Star Politics*, pg. 200-215

Week 14 (Nov. 22, Nov. 24): Film, Thanksgiving (No Class)

Week 15 (Dec. 6, Dec. 8): Review of Important Concepts