

Political Science 2306: State and Local Politics

Semester: Summer B, 2020
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Class Times: Online

Course Description

Political Science 2306 (PLSC 2306): State and Local Politics is a required course for all those seeking a bachelor's degree from University of Texas-Permian Basin. It does not have any prerequisites, but intellectual curiosity will be greatly rewarded in the course. The University of Texas-Permian Basin's undergraduate catalog describes the course as,

“An examination of state and local political institutions and processes. Satisfies the state requirement in Texas government.”

Students should expect to spend roughly 6 hours a week in the course. This is just an estimate as some students may complete the work in less or more time; it depends on the student.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Course Materials

- Textbook
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2019. Governing States and Localities, 7th Edition. Pearson. ISBN: 9781144325422

Course Requirements

Students will be evaluated on the following assessments:

- 4 Objective Examinations (80% of the final course grade)
 - Unit 1 Exam (20% of the final course grade)
 - Unit 2 Exam (20% of the final course grade)
 - Unit 3 Exam (20% of the final course grade)

- Unit 4 Exam (20% of the final course grade)
- 4 Assignments (10% of the final course grade)
 - Unit 1 Assignment (2.5% of the final course grade)
 - Unit 2 Assignment (2.5% of the final course grade)
 - Unit 3 Assignment (2.5% of the final course grade)
 - Unit 4 Assignment (2.5% of the final course grade)
- 4 Discussion Topics (10% of the final course grade)
 - Unit 1 Discussion Topic (2.5% of the final course grade)
 - Unit 2 Discussion Topic (2.5% of the final course grade)
 - Unit 3 Discussion Topic (2.5% of the final course grade)
 - Unit 4 Discussion Topic (2.5% of the final course grade)
- Letter Grade Assignment
 - A: 89.5-100
 - B 79.5-89.4
 - C 69.5-79.4
 - D 59.5-69.4
 - F 59.4 or lower
- Student Authentication
 - Additionally, students must satisfy a secondary authentication method as required by University of Texas of the Permian Basin policy:
 - * The University of Texas of the Permian Basin (UTPB) maintains policies and procedures to ensure that each student who registers for a distance or correspondence course is the same student who participates in, completes, and receives credit for the course. UTPB's Distance Education Policy requires faculty members to authenticate student identity by employing at least two methods of verification. To access online courses students must login to the Canvas learning management system to establish their identity by using their unique personal identifying username login and a secure password. UTPB's Distance Education Policy allows faculty multiple options for satisfying the second method of validating student identity. This course satisfies the second method of student verification by requiring the following (non-graded but mandatory):
 - A clear image of yourself
 - * In color
 - * Well lit, and no shadows on your face or your ID that can obscure your image
 - * Must be taken on the day you submit the photo to reflect your current appearance

- * Taken in full-face view directly facing the camera
- * With a neutral facial expression and both eyes open
- Then a picture of your ID (can be a UTPB ID or government issued ID) with only your name and picture showing (Picture ID card in which the ID number has been covered (tape over any numbers)).
- Make sure to attach both image files in either JPEG or PNG format to the assignment BEFORE you submit it.

Course Objectives

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Includes creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis. Students will be able to analyze opposing views on a public policy issue.
- Communication Skills
 - Includes effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication. Students will be able to compose a clear and grammatically correct letter to the editor of the local newspaper dealing with a local community issue and explain why the student is taking a certain position.
- Personal Responsibility
 - Includes the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making. Students will be able to analyze different positions on a public issue and take a position on that issue, considering the ethical implications of their position.
- Social Responsibility
 - Includes inter-cultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities. Students will be able to write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper and articulate their positions on a particular issue to the larger community.

University Policies

- Students with Disabilities
 - Students with Disabilities: The University of Texas of the Permian Basin in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provides “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities. Any student with a disability who is requesting an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter from the ADA Officer for Students. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have

their request honored.

ADA Officer for Students: Mr. Paul Leverington

Address: Mesa Building 4243

Voice Telephone: 432-552-3702

Email: Leverington_P@utpb.edu

- Office of the Registrar (Course Incomplete/Withdrawal/Grade Appeal)
 - All students are required to complete the course within the semester they are turned up. Incomplete grades for the course are rarely given, will only be granted if the student provides a valid, documented excuse for not being able to complete the course on time, and has contacted the instructor prior to the scheduled last class to request an extension. The student signs a contract that includes the incomplete course activities and the new due dates.
 - Find information and dates regarding drops and withdrawals at
 - * <http://www.utpb.edu/services/academic-affairs/office-of-the-registrar/adds-drops>
 - For grade appeal process go to
 - * <http://www.utpb.edu/campus-life/dean-of-students/grievances>

Course and Instructor Policies

- Professionalism
 - Professionalism is required. This includes completing essays, exams, and discussions by the due date. If you do not a score of 0 will be given for the requirement.
- Etiquette Expectations
 - This course will require discourse between students and the instructor. As the course deals with multiple competing views of State and Local Politics, spirited disagreements may persist. These are naturally welcome and expected, however make sure to be civil and criticize the weaknesses in argument, not the other person.
- Technical Skills Required
 - I do not require many technical skills in the course. However, you must have a computer, connection to the internet, Adobe Reader. Additionally, I will post video announcements, so you must be able to view Youtube videos. .
- Writing Aids in the Course
 - Write well. This is not a suggestion, but a rule. If you are uncomfortable with your writing abilities, you have several options.

- * You may go see the University Writing Center. However, they normally hold an English background, which does not lend itself to technical and specific writing. But, if you are having fundamental writing problems, this is not a bad place to start.
- Communications Plan
 - Office Hours
 - * Normally, I keep regular office hours during any semester. However, COVID-19 restrictions largely prohibit students from coming to campus and access to Mesa Building is limited. As a result, I will not have posted physical office hours. That being said, I am available continuously during the day via Microsoft Teams. You can also ask for a meeting via email and I'll set up a video conferencing meeting.
 - Email
 - * Email is the best method for contacting me. My email is tmcmichael_t@utpb.edu and Mr. Wu is available at royce.wu@iconnect-na.com. We respond to all emails within 48 hours excepting weekends and university holidays.
 - Phone
 - * You may call my office. My office phone number is (432) 552 2340. I will get back to you as soon as possible.
- Academic Dishonesty
 - Academic Dishonesty is not permitted in this course. According to the Handbook of Student Conduct:
 - * “Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, 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, such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses (without the prior permission of the instructor) or the attempt to commit such acts.”
 - * All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. For complete information on UTPB student conduct and discipline procedures consult the university’s handbook at: <http://ss.utpb.edu/dean-of-students/scholastic-dishonesty/>
 - * Any student suspected of academic dishonesty will receive notification through secure communication either verbally or via email. The student may exercise the right to explain themselves or explain how the instructor made an error in judgment regarding the suspicion. If the student agrees with the assessment, I will not file a disposition of academic dishonesty with the Dean of Students and, if it is a first time offense, the course assignment will receive a score of 0. If the student disputes the allegation, I will file a disposition of academic dishonesty with the Dean of Students and the Dean of Students will continue the process.

- Pay special attention to misrepresenting facts. If you misrepresent any facts to gain an unfair advantage against other students (including lying to the instructor), you will be charged with academic/scholastic dishonesty. This includes false statements used to have exams reset.
- Extra Credit
 - There is no extra credit in this course for any reason.
 - * This is very important. If I grant extra credit to a student, I must extend that offer to all students. As a result, this requires substantial more work and effort on my part and cheapens the work done by other students who completed the assignment work at a high level.
- Late Work
 - I do not accept late work.
 - * I give a 8 hour grace period from the due date (normally 11:59 P.M. on the day a unit is due) to allow for slowness in internet connections or submission issues. If you are having trouble submitting an assignment, send me an email with the material so that I know the materials were completed on time.
 - * Additionally, I may allow an extension on a unit or assignment if you explain why you cannot complete the unit or assignment at least 24 prior to the due date.
- Submitting Essays
 - All written documents in the course may be submitted in two acceptable formats: word or pdf.
 - * Word documents may either come in .doc or .docx format.
 - * If you are technically inclined, you may use tex or any other derivative (L^AT_EX, PDFL^AT_EX, or XeL^AT_EX) to compile a pdf. I don't need your source, I just need your PDF.
- Feedback
 - I will provide individual feedback to students who submit materials that do not receive full credit.
- Evaluation
 - At the end of the semester, you will be given an opportunity to evaluate both myself and the course. Now the evaluation is not mandatory or required and I will not know what you write, but it will help make the course better in the future.
- Attendance and Class Participation
 - Regular and active participation is an essential, unmistakably important aspect of this online course. All students are expected to do the work assigned, notify the instructor when emergencies arise.

- Tracking
 - The learning management systems contains tracking features. Statistics are collected that quantifies how often and when students are active in the course and provides information if the student has accessed different pages of the course.
- Absenteeism
 - All the course activities have set dates to be completed and submitted. After the due dates the activities will not be available for the students. Not logging into an online course is considered absenteeism. Contact instructor immediately in case of emergency medical situation.

University Services

The university provides a number of services to students. Make sure you take advantage of these services:

- ADA Accommodation/Support: (432) 552 2630
- Advising UTPB E-Advisor
- Bookstore: (432) 552-0220
- Email, Outlook 365, my.utpb.edu Information Resources Service
- Financial Aid and Scholarship (432) 552-2620
- Library (432) 552-2370
- Registrar: (432) 552-2635
- Student Services
- Technical Support Canvas 1-866-437-0867
- Tutoring & Learning Resources If you are taking courses through UTPB the following links provide services Smarthinking Online Tutoring (provides tutoring services), SmarterMeasure (measures learner readiness for online course).

Technical Requirements

- Technical Requirements as stipulated by REACH:
 - <http://www.utpb.edu/online/reach/technical-requirements>
- Students can use cloud version of Word, PowerPoint and other Microsoft products through use of their UTPB Outlook 365 and UTPB email address. For more information refer to Student Services below or visit:

- <http://www.utpb.edu/services/ird/information-on-computer-accounts-e-mail/office-365>
- To obtain software licensing and media for selected Microsoft titles at very low cost through a software agreement visit:
 - <http://www.utpb.edu/services/ird/information-for-students/software-distribution/microsoft-select>

Preparation for Emergencies

- Computer Crash:
 - Not having a working computer or a crashed computer during the semester will NOT be considered as an acceptable reason for not completing course activities as scheduled time. NOTE: Identify a second computer before the semester begins that you can use when/if your personal computer crashes.
- Complete Loss of Contact:
 - If you lose contact with course connectivity completely (i.e. you cannot contact me via Canvas or email), you need to call instructor, and leave message regarding connectivity loss and contact information.
- Lost/Corrupt/Missing Files:
 - You must keep/save a copy of every project/assignment on an external drive, UTPB Outlook 365 OneDrive, or personal computer. In the event of any kind of failure (e.g. virus infection, student's own computer crashes, loss of files in cyberspace, etc) or any contradictions/problems, you may be required to resubmit the files.

End-of-Course Evaluation & Instructor Evaluation

- Every student is encouraged to complete an end-of-course evaluation/survey provided by UTPB. During the last few weeks of class, you will receive an announcement through email notifying you that the Course/Instructor Survey is available. You may follow the link in the email to complete the survey using the same credentials to access your courses here. When entering the emailed Survey link you will see a list of surveys for you to complete.
- The survey is anonymous and your responses are confidential. Your feedback is critical to us and to your instructor as we strive to improve our offerings, and our support of you, the students.

Important Academic Dates

- UTPB Academic Calendar: <http://www.utpb.edu/services/academic-affairs/office-of-the-registrar/academic-calendar>

Disclaimer & Rights

- Information contained in this syllabus was to the best knowledge of the instructor considered correct and complete when distributed for use in the beginning of the semester. However, the instructor reserves the right, acting within the policies and procedures of UTPB to make changes in the course content or instructional techniques without notice or obligation. The students will be informed about the changes, if any.

Sample Syllabus

Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1: June 29-July 5

- Lectures
 - Lecture 1: Introduction to State and Local Politics
 - Lecture 2: Federalism
 - Lecture 3: State Constitutions
- Readings
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. *Governing States and Localities*, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 1**
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. *Governing States and Localities*, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 2**
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. *Governing States and Localities*, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 3**

Week 2: July 6-12

- Lectures
 - Lecture 4: Political Participation
 - Lecture 5: Political Parties and Interest Groups
- Readings
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. *Governing States and Localities*, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 5**
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. *Governing States and Localities*, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 6**
- **Unit 1 Due Sunday, July 12th, 11:59 P.M.**

Week 3: July 13-19

- Lectures
 - Lecture 6: State Legislatures
 - Lecture 7: Governors
- Readings
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. *Governing States and Localities*, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 7**
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. *Governing States and Localities*, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 8**

Week 4: July 20-July 26

- Lectures
 - Lecture 8: State Bureaucracies
 - Lecture 9: State Courts
- Readings
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. *Governing States and Localities*, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 10**
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. *Governing States and Localities*, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 9**
- **Unit 2 Due by Sunday, July 26th, 11:59 P.M.**

Week 5: July 27- August 2

- Lectures
 - Lecture 10: Local Governments, Counties, Special Districts
 - Lecture 11: Municipalities
 - Lecture 12: Urbanization, Suburbanization
- Readings
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. *Governing States and Localities*, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 11**
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. *Governing States and Localities*, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 11**
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. *Governing States and Localities*, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 12**
- **Unit 3 Due by Sunday, August 2nd, 11:59 P.M.**

Week 6: August 5- August 9

- Lectures
 - Lecture 13: State Government Finances
 - Lecture 14: Public Policy: Education, Crime, and Punishment
- Readings
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. *Governing States and Localities*, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 4**
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. *Governing States and Localities*, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 13 & 14**

Week 7: August 10th-13th

- Lectures
 - Lecture 15: Public Policy: Health and Welfare
- Readings
 - Smith, Kevin, et. al. 2015. Governing States and Localities, 5th Edition. Pearson. **Chapter 15**
- **Unit 4 Due by Thursday August 13th, 11:59 P.M.**

Sample Syllabus