

Introduction to Politics
Political Science (POLS) 2310 – 020
CRN: 28447
The University of Texas at El Paso
Spring 2018
MW: 3:00pm - 4:20pm
College of Business Admin 301

Instructor: Dr. Gregory S. Schober
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Office Hours: TR, 9:30am-10:15am and 12:15pm-1:15pm
MW, 1:30pm-2:45pm (and by appointment)
Class Website: Blackboard through your MY UTEP PORTAL

Course Description

This course focuses on the study of politics. We will examine a variety of political concepts, including states, governments, political participation, political economies, and political violence. A special emphasis will be placed on identifying the relationship between key political concepts, as well as understanding the political process in democracies. We also will explore some challenges that politicians and members of the mass public often encounter, and the role of politics in producing these challenges.

Throughout the course, the practical applications of key concepts and themes will be discussed. Current events are not the central focus of the course, but they will be considered to help illustrate key points.

In line with the UTEP Edge initiative, the course aims to provide meaningful experiences that will help prepare you for leadership and lifelong success. For example, this course offers opportunities for students to have experiences related to community engagement and student leadership, and these experiences allow you to exercise valuable skills such as social responsibility, leadership, communication, and critical thinking.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Define and understand the scientific study of politics.
- Describe in detail key political concepts, including states, governments, political participation, political economies, and political violence
- Communicate the relationship between key political concepts.

- Understand the challenges posed by democracy, as well as opportunities for individuals to help overcome those challenges.
- Explain the immense influence that politics has on their lives.

Also, by the end of the semester, students should make improvements in the following skill areas related to the UTEP Edge initiative:

- Social responsibility
- Leadership
- Communication
- Critical thinking

Required Reading (available at the UTEP Bookstore or elsewhere):

- *Introduction to Political Science* (first and only edition)
 - Author: Parsons
 - 2016 or 2017 (depending on the version)

Course Requirements

- Exam 1: Exam 1 will consist of multiple choice questions, and it will cover material from the course readings, class lectures, and/or class discussions up until Exam 1 (30% of grade).
- Exam 2: Exam 2 will consist of multiple choice questions, and it will cover material from the course readings, class lectures, and/or class discussions between Exam 1 and Exam 2 (30% of grade).
- Civic Engagement Research Project: Students are required to write a research paper on local nonprofit or community organizations and political ideologies. Through this requirement (and in line with the UTEP Edge initiative), students will have opportunities to exercise the skills of social responsibility, communication, and critical thinking (25% of grade).
- Class Attendance and Participation: Students will be able to earn participation points each class session by attending and participating in class discussions. Points will be awarded based on the quantity and quality of participation. Through this requirement (and in line with the UTEP Edge initiative), students will have opportunities to exercise the skills of leadership, communication, and critical thinking (15% of grade).

University Policies

This instructor abides by university policies, such as excused absences and attendance, as stated in the UTEP undergraduate catalog: <http://catalog.utep.edu/undergrad/academic-regulations/curriculum-and-classroom-policies/>. It is the student's responsibility to understand their rights and university policies. In addition to university policies, I add the following policies below.

Attendance Policy

UTEP expects that students will not miss classes without valid excuses. Students will be asked to sign an attendance sheet for each class meeting. It is expected that you do not miss classes, which will result in a penalty to your grade. More specifically, after two unexcused absences, I will begin to deduct points from your attendance and participation grade for each subsequent unexcused absence. Note that the class participation portion of each student's grade is left solely to the discretion of the instructor.

Here are specific situations of absence and whether or not excuses will be accepted as valid or not:

- Valid university excuses include religious holy days, officially recognized university activities (with Dean of Students letter), and military leave. Students must follow the required documentation procedure for each valid university excuse.
- The instructor reserves the right to accept, or not, excuses related to medical issues. Naturally, it is not usually feasible to document in advance any time lost due to illness. The exception is planned surgeries and appointments (not normal check-ups). Any class time missed will not be excused without medical or other valid documentation. Documentation from Mexico is permissible. Students with severe medical problems that result in missing a majority of the semester may want to consider a complete withdrawal from the university for medical purposes.
- Absences due to conflicts with work, child care, etc. that make it impossible for you to regularly attend this class are not permitted. If you know you will have scheduling conflicts with this class, then you should make other arrangements or postpone this class until a future semester.
- According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, "When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor can drop the student from the class with a grade of W before the course drop deadline and with a grade of F after the course drop deadline."
- Missed exams due to family hardship or family medical problems may not be accepted by the instructor as valid excuses. For example, helping family members move, picking up at the airport, driving family members to medical appointments when you know they conflict with class, and other such activities, will not be permitted as valid excuses. Emergencies such as deaths in the family must be documented, unfortunately.
- Missing any course assessments and work due to vacations and pre-booked travel arrangements are not valid excuses.

Exams 1 and 2 Policies

The dates of Exams 1 and 2 are listed below in the Schedule of Classes. Students are required to bring their own scantrons and pencils. No make-up exam will occur without a student having provided to the instructor valid documentation explaining or excusing the absence. The instructor has the discretion to decide if a make-up exam is allowable outside the university excused absences. If you miss an exam due to an emergency or illness, you must notify me (and confirm with me that I have received your notification attempt) as soon as possible to arrange a make-up exam. A make-up exam may be of a different format than the original exam.

Civic Engagement Research Project

Students are required to write a research paper (minimum 8 pages - maximum 12 pages) on current nonprofit organizations or community organizations in the local area and political ideologies. What are the names of three nonprofit organizations or community organizations in the local area, and what is the main goal of each of these organizations? Identify at least two ways that these organizations are similar and at least two ways that these organizations are different. Of the following three political ideologies that the government could follow to try to obtain economic growth (1: classical liberalism/modern conservatism, 2: modern liberalism/social democracy, or 3: socialism), which political ideology do you believe would be the most effective at allowing the selected local organizations to achieve their main goals, and why? Which of the three political ideologies do you believe would be the most effective at reducing poverty in the local area, and why? Overall, which of the three political ideologies do you support for the development of the local area, and why? In your paper, you should refer to, and cite, the required reading for the course as well as the official websites of the three selected local organizations (minimum of 4 scholarly and official website sources). Students will have an opportunity to share and discuss their project with other class members during a class session. To receive credit for completing the research paper, you must submit a printed copy of your research paper to the instructor by the start of class on the due date (the due date for the research paper is listed below in the Schedule of Classes). Further details and instructions will be provided in class.

Other Course Policies and Expectations

- Debate and discussion are important in the critical evaluation of politics. It is expected that students will treat the instructor and other students with respect, including refraining from disparaging remarks, personal insults, derogatory comments, and other unprofessional behavior, in person or electronically. Any problem related to rude conduct, or any threats to violence, etc., likely will result in the student being dropped from the course by the instructor.
- Outside work and other non-class related activities are not permitted in our classroom.
- If you engage in behaviors that distract others or create a disturbance, you will be asked to leave the class. If you refuse to leave class, university police will be contacted.
- Cell phone/smart phone/PDA usage is not permitted during exams or at other times when it might pose a class disturbance. Laptops, tablets, or other electronic devices used for note-taking are permissible, but students using such must not engage in any activities that disturb other students.

Email Protocol

When emailing me, please put the course and section number in the subject line. In the body of your email, clearly state your question. At the end of your email, be sure to put your first and last name. Please do not email me about information you can obtain from the syllabus. I generally do not answer substantive material from lectures or readings via email, as it is not an effective means of communicating. If there is class material you are confused about, please come see me during my office hours.

Academic Integrity and Dishonesty

As stated in the UTEP undergraduate catalog, “Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes, and 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, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the *Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP)*, and available in the Office of Student Life and on the homepage of the Office of Student Life at www.utep.edu/dos, can result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to a failing grade on the work in question, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or dismissal, among others.”

Students with Different Abilities

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. CASS’ staff are the only individuals who can validate, and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities. The student is responsible for presenting to the instructor any CASS accommodation letters and instructions before arrangements need to be made for exams or other needs.

Other Resources for Students

- UTEP Counseling and Psychological Services
 - Union West, Room 202
 - 915-747-5302
 - After Hours Crisis Line: 915-747-5302
 - <http://sa.utep.edu/counsel/>
- University Police Department
 - 915-747-5611
 - <https://www.utep.edu/police/>
- UTEP Student Health Center
 - 915-747-5624
 - <https://www.utep.edu/chs/shc/>
- Center Against Sexual and Family Violence
 - 580 Giles Road
 - 915-593-7300
 - 24/7 Crisis Hope Line: 1-800-727-0511
- UTEP Student Food Bank (Student Engagement and Leadership Center)

- Union West, Room 106
- 915-747-5670
- UTEP Student Support Services for Challenges with Finances (FHAR)
 - Academic Advising Center
 - 915-747-5290
- If you would like to access other resources, please contact me and I will do my best to help you search for additional resources.

Schedule of Classes

Wednesday	1/17	Introduction to Course
Monday	1/22	Introduction to Politics and Political Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parsons, Ch. 1 (full chapter)
Wednesday	1/24	Political Philosophy and Political Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parsons, Ch. 2 (first half)
Monday	1/29	Political Philosophy and Political Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parsons, Ch. 2 (second half)
Wednesday	1/31	Ideologies in Political Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parsons, Ch. 3 (first half)
Monday	2/5	Ideologies in Political Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parsons, Ch. 3 (second half)
Wednesday	2/7	States in Political Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parsons, Ch. 4 (first half)
Monday	2/12	Review Session
Wednesday	2/14	States in Political Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parsons, Ch. 4 (second half)
Monday	2/19	Exam 1
Wednesday	2/21	Governments in Political Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parsons, Ch. 5 (first half)
Monday	2/26	Governments in Political Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parsons, Ch. 5 (second half)
Wednesday	2/28	Individual Participation and Collective Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parsons, Ch. 6 (first half)
Monday	3/5	Individual Participation and Collective Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parsons, Ch. 6 (second half)
Wednesday	3/7	Inside Liberal Democracy I: Representation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parsons, Ch. 7 (first half)
Monday	3/12	No Class: Spring Break
Wednesday	3/14	No Class: Spring Break
Monday	3/19	Inside Liberal Democracy I: Representation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parsons, Ch. 7 (second half)
Wednesday	3/21	Inside Liberal Democracy II: Power and Policymaking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parsons, Ch. 8 (first half)
Monday	3/26	Review Session
Wednesday	3/28	Inside Liberal Democracy II: Power and Policymaking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parsons, Ch. 8 (first half)
Monday	4/2	Exam 2
Wednesday	4/4	Political Economies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parsons, Ch. 9 (full chapter)
Monday	4/9	Economic Development and Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parsons, Ch. 10 (first half)
Wednesday	4/11	Economic Development and Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parsons, Ch. 10 (second half)
Monday	4/16	No Class
Wednesday	4/18	Political Violence: War and Terrorism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parsons, Ch. 12 (first half)
Monday	4/23	Political Violence: War and Terrorism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parsons, Ch. 12 (second half)
Wednesday	4/25	Globalization and Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parsons, Ch. 13 (first half)
Monday	4/30	Civic Engagement Research Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic Engagement Research Paper Due (submit printed copy to the instructor at the start of class) • Reflection Session
Wednesday	5/2	Globalization and Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parsons, Ch. 13 (second half) • Final Lecture