

# POLS 2310: Introduction to Politics Syllabus

Dr. Marcos Menchaca

TTH 3:00-4:20, Education Building 313

Fall 2019

## Instructor Information

### Email

mmenchaca@utep.edu

### Office Location

Benedict Hall 308

### Office Hours

T & TH 1:30-2:30 and by  
appointment

## General Information

### Description

This class will introduce you to the discipline of political science. You will learn some of the basic methods of the social sciences (this includes a review of basic statistics). Then topics will include political theory, comparative politics (including elements of American politics), and international relations. In essence, you will learn the basics of how to think like a political scientist in their various subfields.

A large chunk of the class is devoted to public opinion, voting, and the media. This is not only because these are my research areas, but also because these are areas in which you yourself partake. You hold political opinions. You are the recipient of media. And you vote in elections. Thus, it is important for you to understand why you hold certain opinions, how you get those opinions, and how those opinions influence your voting behavior. Thus, at the end of the class, you should be a more knowledgeable and skillful citizen of whatever country you maintain loyalty to.

### Course Goals

After the completion of this course, students should have the following skills or knowledge:

- Have a basic understanding of social scientific principles.
- Have a comprehension of major concepts and principles of political science.
- Have some foundation to analyze politics in an objective manner.
- Have a basic understanding of how the media and political elites shape political dialogue.

### UTEP EDGE

Students will be able to:

- Communicate information clearly and effectively using a variety of tools, media and genres (oral, written, iconographic) in varied contexts for a variety of purposes.
- Demonstrate strategic and adaptable thinking patterns in learning and working conditions.
- Apply analysis, synthesis, and evaluative processes that enable productive problem solving and decision-making to strengthen performance in university and workforce setting.
- Reflect and assess their interests, abilities, responsibilities, cultural understanding, and ethics in order to more effectively pursue their academic, career and life goals.

- Use real world digital tools, research, and resources to access, evaluate, and apply information appropriate for authentic tasks.

## Course Details

### Examinations

The midterm exam will cover material since the beginning of class. The final will only cover material after the midterm (it is not cumulative). All material that is in the assigned book chapters and all lecture material is fair game for the exams.

### Quizzes

The quizzes will consist of material that you have just recently learned. They are designed to give you a sense of how well you are understanding the material. They also take some of the weight and pressure off of the midterm and final exams.

### Extra Credit

I plan on offering some extra credit opportunities during the semester. I will give further details later on.

### Required Text

[GFL] Garner, Fernando, and Lawson. (2016). Introduction to Politics. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

## Course Schedule

| Day    | Topic                             | Reading   | Exercises |
|--------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Aug 27 | Class Introduction                | Syllabus  |           |
| Aug 28 | APSA no class                     |           |           |
| Sep 3  | Introduction to Political Science | GFL Intro |           |
| Sep 5  | Scientific Analysis of Politics   |           |           |
| Sep 10 | The State                         | GFL 1     |           |
| Sep 12 | Political Authority               | GFL 2     |           |
| Sep 17 | Democracy                         | GFL 3     | Quiz 1    |
| Sep 19 | Freedom and Justice               | GFL 4     |           |
| Sep 24 | Political Ideology                | GFL 5     |           |
| Sep 26 | Political Institutions            | GFL 7     |           |
| Oct 1  | Constitutions and Federalism      | GFL 8     | Quiz 2    |
| Oct 3  | Legislatures                      | GFL 9     |           |

| Day    | Topic                                     | Reading  | Exercises   |
|--------|---|--|-------------|
| Oct 8  | Executive Politics                        | GFL 11<br>Cost, Trump and<br>the Imperial<br>Presidency              |             |
| Oct 10 | Review                                    |  |             |
| Oct 15 | Midterm                                   |  |             |
| Oct 17 | Democratic and<br>Authoritarian Regimes   | GFL 13   |             |
| Oct 22 | Public Opinion I                          | Lecture Notes  |             |
| Oct 24 | Public Opinion II                         | Resnick, Trump is<br>a real-world<br>political science<br>experiment |             |
| Oct 29 | Elections I                               | Voting Behavior<br>Handout   | Quiz 3      |
| Oct 31 | Elections II                              |  |             |
| Nov 5  | Political Parties II                      | GFL 10   |             |
| Nov 7  | Political Parties II                      |  |             |
| Nov 12 | The Media                                 |  | Quiz 4      |
| Nov 14 | Interest Groups                           | GFL 12   |             |
| Nov 19 | Global Politics                           | GFL 14   |             |
| Nov 21 | Theories of International<br>Relations    | GFL 15   |             |
| Nov 26 | Security & International<br>Organizations | GFL 17 & 19  |             |
| Nov 28 | Thanksgiving                              |  |             |
| Dec 3  | International Political<br>Economy        | GFL 20   | Quiz 5      |
| Dec 5  | Review                                    |  |             |
| Dec 12 | Final Exam                                |  | 4:00-6:45pm |

## Grading

Your final grade will be calculated with the following elements. The quizzes are counted equally (meaning each quiz is worth 5% each). The weight of the extra credit activity will be determined as I give out the assignments.

|         |     |
|---------|-----|
| Quizzes | 25% |
| Midterm | 35% |
| Final   | 40% |

Letter grades will be given according to your place in the distribution of the cumulative scores (exams are curved).

## Additional Information and Resources

### Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, or otherwise seek additional information, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or visit their office located in Union East, Room 106. CASS' staff are the only individuals who can 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, quizzes, or other needs.

### Absences During Exams

You are expected to be at and take every exam and quiz. If you are not present at the exam, you must have a valid excuse (such as an official athletic activity or a hospitalization). If you are a student athlete and will be absent from an exam, please bring me the documentation as soon as possible. If you had a medical emergency, please bring me the documentation as soon as you are well and are able to communicate with me through email.

### Academic Integrity

You are expected to abide by the strictest standards of academic integrity. If you are unsure of what this means, please read more about it at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>

### Classroom Policy

During class, your full attention should be on my lecture. Any classroom disruption will be met with disciplinary action.

### Note

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus. I will always inform you of any changes that I make.