

# POLS 2310: Introduction to Politics Syllabus

Fall 2021

Instructor: Dr. Marcos Menchaca

Class time: MW 12:00-1:20pm

Class meeting place: Undergraduate Learning Center 106

## Instructor Information

### Email

mmenchaca@utep.edu

### Office Location

Benedict Hall 308

### Office Hours

TR 3:20-5:00 & 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). The topics will include political theory, comparative politics, and international relations. In essence, you will learn the basics of how to think like a political scientist in their various subfields.

This class has a political economy flavor to it. These parts will be scattered throughout all of the class topics. You will learn such concepts such as collective action problems, Pareto efficiency, and other related topics. You may be surprised that political scientists use math to analyze the political world. However, I will always keep the formal theory topics I teach you very simple and easy to understand at an undergraduate level.

### 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.

### 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

### Quizzes

There will be 9 quizzes worth 5% each. They are meant to take some of the weight and pressure off of the midterms and final. Quizzes will need to be completed at 11:59pm on the day they are due.

### Midterms

There will be two midterms. The first midterm will cover material since the beginning of class up until then. The second midterm will cover the material since the first midterm until then. All material that is in the assigned book chapters and all lecture material is fair game for the exams. Midterms will need to be completed at 11:59pm on the day they are due.

### Final

The final is comprehensive. However, the material covered since the second midterm will be emphasized. The final will need to be completed at 11:59pm on the day it is due.

### Class Lectures

The class is taught in-person. However, the university is monitoring the COVID-19 situation, and we may need to switch to online learning at some point in time if the administration decides to do so. Then the lectures will be videos posted to Blackboard.

### Required Text

[TSOP] Colomer, Josep. (2010). *The Science of Politics: An Introduction*. Oxford University Press. Please note that some editions say the publication date is 2011. I do not know why this is, but it is the same book.

## Course Schedule

Day	Topic	Reading	Task Due
Aug 23	Introduction to Studying Politics	Syllabus	
Aug 25	The Scientific Study of Politics	TSOP Intro	
Aug 30	Classical Political Theory	Plato, The Republic, books 1-2	
Sep 1	Formal Political Theory I	TSOP 1	Quiz 1
Sep 3	Formal Political Theory II		
Sep 8	The State and Authority	TSOP 2-3	

Day	Topic	Reading	Task Due
Sep 13	Democracy	TSOP 8	Quiz 2
Sep 15	Freedom and Justice		
Sep 20	Political Ideology		Quiz 3
Sep 22	Political Institutions	TSOP 5	
Sep 27	<b>Midterm 1</b>		<b>Midterm 1</b>
Sep 29	Constitutions and Federalism	TSOP 6	
Oct 4	Legislatures	TSOP 14	Quiz 4
Oct 6	Executive Politics	TSOP 4	
Oct 11	Agenda Formation	TSOP 11	Quiz 5
Oct 13	Authoritarian Regimes	TSOP 7	
Oct 18	Public Opinion		Quiz 6
Oct 20	Political Parties	TSOP 16	
Oct 25	Party Systems	TSOP 12	
Oct 27	<b>Midterm 2</b>		<b>Midterm 2</b>
Nov 1	Elections and Voting	TSOP 10	
Nov 3	The Media		
Nov 8	Racial Attitudes and Group Behavior		Quiz 7
Nov 10	Interest Groups		
Nov 15	Global Politics		Quiz 8
Nov 17	Theories of International Relations		
Nov 22	Security		Quiz 9
Nov 24	International Organizations		
Nov 29	International Political Economy		
Dec 1	Human Rights and the Global Environment		
Dec 10	<b>Final Exam</b>		<b>1:00-3:45pm</b>

## Grading

Your final grade will be calculated with the following elements.

Quizzes	45%
Midterm 1	15%
Midterm 2	20%
Final	20%

Letter grades will be given according to your place in the distribution of the cumulative scores (the class will be 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

Student athletes are automatically given the ability to take exams on dates other than the ones stated on the syllabus if they provide documentation. Other than that, generally only documented medical excuses will be accepted as valid excuses for absences during exams. But if something does come up, you can ask me or your TA and we will instruct you on what to do.

### 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>

### Covid-19 Precautions

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to [covidaction@utep.edu](mailto:covidaction@utep.edu), so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID 19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit [epstrong.org](http://epstrong.org)

**Note**

I do not plan on making changes to the syllabus. But if I do, I will always inform you of any changes that I make.