

Course Syllabus*: POLS 2306, Texas Government

Spring 2018 (3 credit hours, Political Science Department)

Professor: Mike Yawn	Classroom: CHSS 252
Office: CHSS 477; Phone (936) 294-1456	Class Time: 10:00-10:50, MWF
Office Hours: MW: 9-10; M 11-12	Email: mike.yawn@shsu.edu

Please read thoroughly, so that you do not have to ask questions answered on the syllabus.

Texts: *Practicing Texas Politics* (2017-2018 Edition), Brown, Langenegger, etc; *Readings on Texas & Society*, POLS 2306 Spring 2018; *Go Down Together: The True, Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde*, by Jeff Guinn.

Note on Texts: The “Readings” text is available at Eagle Graphics (1304 Sam Houston Ave; 936-295-6343). Bring the Reader to class every day. When we cover *Bonnie & Clyde*, bring that text with you as well. The *Bonnie & Clyde* and the *Practicing Texas Politics* texts should be available at B&N and, for sure, *online*. I recommend that you look into the getting the loose-leaf version of the “Practicing” text to save money.

Course Overview: This course is designed to teach students about the basics of Texas and Texas government, covering the history, constitution, branches of government, the media, political parties, and elections.

Course Objectives: Students should expect to learn or gain the following from the class: (1) gain factual knowledge about the players and processes in Texas government; (2) apply politics to everyday scenarios and real-life situations; (3) analyze the origins and evolution of Texas’s political system; (4) learn the roles and responsibilities of governmental institutions in Texas; (5) develop critical thinking skills, awareness of social responsibility, and means of participating in state governance and politics; and (6) analyze and critically assess solutions public policy problems that face the State of Texas.

Attendance: You are strongly encouraged to attend every class session. You will not be penalized for merely being absent, but you will miss various quizzes, homework assignments, and extra credit opportunities that ***cannot be made up***. You are responsible for obtaining notes and handouts that you missed *from other students*. Tardiness isn’t tolerated. If you are late to a test, you may not be permitted to take exam.

Classroom Conduct: Students are expected to treat each other and the professor with respect and courtesy. Students should be attentive and engaged at all times. Cell phones and other electronic or distracting items should not be visible or audible (keep in pockets, purses, or bags). Laptops and tablets are not allowed. If I see or hear any of these devices, I take three points off of your quiz average. Tardiness isn’t tolerated.

Missed Work: Missed exams cannot be made up. However, because the final is comprehensive, it includes questions from material covered on each test and material covered subsequent to the last test. If you miss a test, I will simply grade separately the questions on the final that correspond to the missed test. The tests will be announced at least a week in advance, but it is your responsibility to accommodate the class schedule. By enrolling in the course, it is assumed that you will make all the classes. Missed daily quizzes cannot be made up. For the makeup policy on Reader Quizzes, see the Reader Quizzes section.

Grades: Your grade in this class will be determined by your performance on five tests, Major and Daily quizzes, participation, and other assignments that I deem appropriate. Use the grade breakdown below to calculate your grade (see note about calculations on blackboard):

Tests:	50% (10% each)
Reader Quizzes:	25% (10% each)
Daily Quizzes/HW/Participation:	25%

*I reserve the right to change the syllabus at any time for any reason.

Exams: The tests will be objective (multiple choice and matching). The final is comprehensive. For students who miss no exams *and* earn a cumulative average of an 80 or better on the Bonnie and Clyde quizzes, the final is optional.

Scantrons: For the daily quizzes, students must purchase 15-item scantrons, Form # 815-E. For the Reader Quizzes and Exams, students will need the standard 882-E form (50 questions on each side).

Daily Quizzes: Daily quizzes will be given to ensure that students read their daily assignments. You will have a quiz almost every day there is a reading assignment. To receive a grade for the quiz, you must stay the entire class period. Early departures will result in a zero on the quiz.

Reader Quizzes: You will have three major quizzes from your Reader. I will post most of the articles to be covered on the major quizzes a week in advance. Students who miss *one* Reader Quiz will be given a replacement assignment at the end of the semester, consisting of an essay and quiz.

Homework/ Extra Credit: Homework or Extra Credit *may* be assigned sporadically throughout the semester.

Participation: You are expected to participate in class. Your participation should be constructive and respectful, both to the instructor and other students. I keep a detailed record of who does and does not participate in class, who was and was not able to answer questions, and who indulged in distracting or otherwise negative behavior. You are expected to keep up with current political events. Students are expected to use the restroom before or after class, not during class. Students should not leave the class once it has started or arrive after it has begun.

Academic Dishonesty: The *easiest* way to fail this class is to cheat. Do not copy any work from another student, and do not plagiarize (defined as using someone else's work without proper documentation). At the minimum, I will fail you, but I may also seek to have you expelled from the University. Plagiarism in any of its manifestations will be penalized with the grade of a zero or referral to the dean. Plagiarism is any use of work that is not your own, which includes use of another's language or research without proper citation (see student handbook for more information on plagiarism). Anytime you quote something or refer to a non-obvious fact then you need a citation. If in doubt, don't. See the student handbook if you have additional questions about what constitutes plagiarism:
<https://netreg.shsu.edu/mirror/codeofconduct.html> & <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>

Classroom Rules of Conduct: The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link:
<https://netreg.shsu.edu/mirror/codeofconduct.html>

Q-Drops: A Q-drop is a drop made after the last date for tuition refunds (12th class day for fall/spring; 4th class day for summer) but before the date for which a drop would result in the grade of 'F' as published in the Academic Calendar. Students will be allowed no more than five Q-drops during their academic career at Sam Houston State University. Classes that are dropped prior to the Q-drop date will not count toward the limit. Students who have used their limit of five Q-drops will need to petition their respective dean to drop a class. If the dean refuses to grant permission to drop a class, a student will be required to remain in the class.

Instructor Evaluation: Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

Americans with Disabilities Act & Services for Disabled Students: Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. You can find more information: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/>

Religious Holy Days: For info about absences related to religious holy days, see:
<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001.pdf>

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM: Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

Course Schedule: POLS 2306*

Date	Topic	Reading/Activity
W, 1-17	Introduction	Introduction
F, 1-19	Politics Introduction	Discussion
M, 1-22	Political & TX Culture	TX Legislative Session & Syllabus (BB)
W, 1-24	Federalism	Pages 3-12; 42-48 (PTP)
F, 1-26	TX Constitution	Pages 55-67 (PTP)
M, 1-29	TX Constitution	
W, 1-31	Local Govt	Pages 80-93 (PTP)
F, 2-2	Reader Quiz 1	Reader Quiz 1
M, 2-5	Counties	Pages 101-108 (PTP)
W, 2-7	Local Government	
F, 2-9	Exam 1	Exam 1
M, 2-12	TX Legislature	Pages 273-283 (PTP)
W, 2-14	TX Legislature	Pages 283-294 (PTP)
F, 2-16	TX Legislature	
M, 2-19	TX Governor	Pages 315-339 (PTP)
W, 2-21	TX Governor	Pages 339-346 (PTP)
F, 2-23	TX Governor	
M, 2-26	Exam #1	Exam #1
W, 2-28	TX Judiciary	Pages 362-374 (PTP)
F, 3-2	TX Judiciary	Pages 374-388 (PTP)
M, 3-5	TX Judiciary	
W, 3-7	Exam #2	Exam #2
F, 3-9	Govt & Interest Groups	
3-10/3-18		
M, 3-19	Campaigns & Elections	
W, 3-21	Campaigns & Elections	BB
F, 3-23	Public Policy/Education	Pages 441-453 (PTP)
M, 3-26	Public Policy	Arts Reading BB
W, 3-28	Reader Quiz #3	Reader Quiz #3
F, 3-30	Good Friday Holiday	Good Friday Holiday
M, 4-2	Public Policy/Criminal Justice	Pages 476-495(PTP)
W, 4-4	10 th Court of Appeals	Meet in Kerper Courtroom
F, 4-6	Exam #3	Exam #3
M, 4-9	Public Policy	Officer Visit
W, 4-11	B&C	BC Preface, Chs 1-2
F, 4-13	Bonnie & Clyde	BC Chapters 3-6
M, 4-16	Bonnie & Clyde	BC Chapters 7-11
W, 4-18	Bonnie & Clyde	BC Chapters 12-16
F, 4-20	Bonnie & Clyde	BC Chapters 17-22
M, 4-23	Bonnie & Clyde	BC Chapters 23-27
W, 4-25	Bonnie & Clyde	BC Chapters 28-32
F, 4-27	Bonnie & Clyde	BC Chapters 33-38
M, 4-30	Bonnie & Clyde	BC Chapters 39-42
W, 5-2	Exam #4	Exam #4
F, 5-4	Media & Politics	
Final	Please consult "Final Exam Schedule" on SHSU's website	Please consult "Final Exam Schedule" on SHSU's website

***2-1-2018** is the last day to drop and receive a refund. **4-6** is the last day to drop, period.

Key: "BB" = Blackboard Reading; "Reader" refers to "Readings" text; "PTP" refers to Practicing Texas Politics Text; "BC" refers to "Go Down Together" Text

Quizzes may be called at any time. Bring your *Readings* text to class.