

**POLS 226.01 (3)**  
**States and the Federal System**  
Syllabus  
Summer IV 2011  
M-R 8A-12Noon  
AD 219

NAME  
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EMAIL  
Hours: By appointment  
Abilene Christian University

“Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.” – John Adams (in defense of British soldiers in the Boston Massacre case)

“Then you will know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.” – Jesus (John 8.32)

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” – James (James 1.27)

### **Mission**

The mission of Abilene Christian University is to educate its students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. The mission of the Department of Political Science is to provide a program of study that will help students understand domestic and international politics and to prepare them for informed and active participation in the political arena and public service. This course aims to fulfill this mission by teaching the mechanics of state and local government and empowering students to be active in such for God’s glory.

### **Course Description**

POLS 226 examines the politics of the federal system with special emphasis upon Texas government and politics. This class is an introductory course appropriate for students of all majors interested in the study of state governments and their ever-changing role in the federal system. Specific areas of emphasis include analysis of the United States’ constitutional framework and the federal system as well as the structures and processes of the major institutions of Texas state and local government. This course serves as the requisite government course for all students seeking teacher certification in Texas.

### **Required Text and Readings**

Maxwell and Crain, Texas Politics Today (2011)

Other readings may be placed on reserve, handed out in class, or emailed.

### **Recommended Reading** (List is not exhaustive)

Dallas Morning News  
Washington Post  
New York Times  
Real Clear Politics

[www.dallasnews.com](http://www.dallasnews.com)  
[www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)  
[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)  
[www.realclearpolitics.com](http://www.realclearpolitics.com)

## **Class Procedure**

Lecture/Discussion. Lectures are designed as a springboard for discussion and interaction among class members. Students are encouraged to prepare and participate fully in class discussions. Adequate preparation means that each student diligently keeps pace with all reading assignments. Note that some of the readings on reserve are also found on the internet.

Faithful class attendance is expected, and irregular attendance can result in a lower grade or being dropped from the course. Attendance is checked every class meeting. Students who miss more than three classes with absences, regardless of cause, will be dropped with a grade of "F." Student papers and tests remaining in the professor's possession one month after the last day of the semester will be discarded.

It is also expected that all students will adhere to the University's honor and dress codes. Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating, as defined in ACU's Academic Integrity Policy, involve the intention to deceive or mislead or misrepresent, and therefore are a form of lying and represent actions contrary to the behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. Violations are addressed as described in the Policy. While the University enforces the Policy, the most powerful motive for integrity and truthfulness comes from one's desire to imitate God's nature in their life. Every member of the faculty, staff, and student body is responsible for protecting the integrity of learning, scholarship, and research. The full policy is available for review at the Provost's office web site ([www.acu.edu/campusoffices/provost](http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/provost)) and the following offices: Provost, college deans, dean of campus life, director of student judicial affairs, director of residential life, and academic departments.

Under no circumstances can class sessions be audio or video recorded in any manner without the express written consent of the instructor. Any violation of this policy may result in the student being dropped from the course with a grade of "F".

## **Domestic Missions**

Students are encouraged to find employment in state and local government and also join a church-planting team in the U.S. If you would like to know more about this, talk to your instructor and/or Dr. Kent Smith (Missions Coordinator for North America at ACU).

## **Tests**

There will be three tests. The privilege of making-up tests will be reserved for persons encountering such problems as illness, participation in official university activities, or death or serious illness in the family. As soon as you aware that you must miss a test, contact the instructor.

## **Paper**

A portion of this course is the preparation of a paper of interest for college students. We will begin the first day of class by researching two topics, the federal budget debate (and the connection to the requirements that state follow to balance their budgets), and the question of whether the Texas governor will run for president (what considerations exist). Students will over the course of the semester write a paper on a topic of their choosing and approved by the professor. At the end of our semester, students will make a 10 minute powerpoint or prezzi presentation on their paper. Papers should be 4-5 pages, with at least five references.

## **Extra Credit**

Tour the 12th Armored Division Museum at 289 North Second (cost is \$3, hours are Tues. to Sat. 10-5PM) and submit a two-page paper regarding what you learned at the museum and the role the U.S. (and any Texans or

military bases in Texas) played in winning World War II in the European Theater. Earn up to 20 extra credit points on the Third Exam score. All papers are due at the date indicated on the syllabus.

## Grades

Grades are based on the following: Exams—60%; Paper—30%; Class participation and attendance—10%. Grading guidelines:

- A 90-100 (Excellent)
- B 80-89 (Good)
- C 70-79 (Average)
- D 60-69 (Inferior but passing)
- F 59 and below (Failing)

## Course Outline\*

|          |                                                                        |                                                                                                    |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| July 18M | Research Questions                                                     |                                                                                                    |
|          | I. Introduction, Texas Culture, People, and Political History          | Maxwell, Ch. 1                                                                                     |
| July 19T | - continued -                                                          |                                                                                                    |
|          | II. Constitutions—the National Context                                 | Mayflower Compact,<br>U.S. Declaration of Independence,<br>and<br>U.S. Constitution and Amendments |
| July 20W | - continued -                                                          |                                                                                                    |
|          | <i>U.S. House of Representatives Vote on Balanced Budget Amendment</i> |                                                                                                    |
|          | <b>Paper topic due, 5P</b>                                             |                                                                                                    |
| July 21R | III. Constitutions—the States Compared, Texas Constitution             | Maxwell, Ch. 2                                                                                     |
|          | Test preparation                                                       |                                                                                                    |
|          | <b>Test 1, 11A</b>                                                     |                                                                                                    |
| July 25M | IV. Electoral Process and Voting                                       | Maxwell, Ch. 3                                                                                     |
|          | V. Political Parties and Interest Groups                               | Maxwell, Chs. 4-5                                                                                  |
| July 26T | VI. Texas Legislature and the Legislative Process                      | Maxwell, Chs. 6-7                                                                                  |
| July 27W | VII. Governor                                                          | Maxwell, Ch. 8                                                                                     |

|          |                                     |                                                   |                              |
|----------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| July 28R | <b>Test 2</b>                       |                                                   |                              |
|          | VIII.                               | Bureaucracy                                       | Maxwell, Ch. 9               |
| Aug 1M   | X.                                  | Law and Due Process, Civil Rights/Civil Liberties | Maxwell, Ch. 11              |
|          | XII.                                | Education                                         | Maxwell, Ch. 13 (pp. 369-81) |
| Aug. 2T  | XIII.                               | Health, Human Services, and Transportation        | Maxwell, Ch. 13 (pp. 382-92) |
| Aug. 3W  | XIV.                                | Local Government                                  | Maxwell, Ch. 14              |
|          | <b>Paper presentation, 10A</b>      |                                                   |                              |
|          | <b>Paper due, 5P</b>                |                                                   |                              |
|          | <b>Extra Credit Project due, 5P</b> |                                                   |                              |
| Aug. 4R  | <b>Test 3</b>                       |                                                   |                              |

\*All dates, including test dates, are tentative and subject to change at the instructor's discretion.