

Pols 207-506
State and Local Government

Professor Harvey J. Tucker
Allen 2084
Office Hours TR 1:30-2:30 and by appointment

Spring 2008
Texas A&M University
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Texts

Gary M. Halter. **Government and Politics of Texas**, 6th edition, McGraw-Hill, 2007).

Norman R. Luttbeg. **Comparing the States and Communities**, 6th edition. (Eddie Bowers Publishing, 2004).

A booklet of lecture materials is available for purchase at the bookstore in the MSC.

Course Requirements

Students are responsible for material covered in assigned readings and in classroom lectures and discussions. There will be three tests during the semester and no final exam. The tests are scheduled for **Feb. 14, Mar. 25 and Apr. 22**. All tests will be during class time in the classroom. All tests will consist of multiple-choice questions; students must bring a gray Scantron form with the designation Texas A&M University Measurement and Research Services, a number 2 pencil, and a picture identification card. Students have 75 minutes to complete tests. Make-up tests will be given for students who miss scheduled tests because of absences excused by University policy. Make-ups for the first two tests will be administered on **Apr. 10** during class time and in the classroom. There will be a walk that day for students not taking make-up tests. Make-ups for the third test will be administered in the classroom at the time scheduled for a final exam for this class, **May 2 at 12:30 PM**. No tests will be administered before scheduled dates and times.

Each test will emphasize material covered since the previous one. The three tests will be averaged to determine final course grades. Semester averages of 89.50 and higher will receive grades of A; 79.50 to 89.49 grades of B; 69.50 to 79.49 grades of C; 59.50 to 69.49 grades of D; lower than 59.50 grades of F. Students who want to criticize or challenge test questions on a test must do so immediately after all students have completed the test. Individual test results will be available in the classroom at the class meeting following each test.

Students who take regularly scheduled tests are eligible to receive bonus points if they correctly bubble in their names and university ID numbers as listed on the official roster, if their names and ID numbers are scanned correctly by MARS, and if they follow printed test instructions. Students will forfeit bonus points if, at any time during or after the semester, they inquire about or request grades using criteria other than those listed above or inquire or ask about receiving grades other than would be assigned using the criteria listed above.

There are no options for grading other than those listed above. The professor must assign the same course grade to every student who has the same test scores. The professor does not have the authority to award grades on a basis other than described in this syllabus. The publication TAMU Student Rules lists university officials who are authorized to give students grades other than those awarded by course instructors.

Reporting of Test Grades

Test results excluding bonus points will be distributed in the class following each test. After that, test scores including bonus points will also be posted on the course web site linked to this page: <http://www-polisci.tamu.edu/faculty/tucker/>, by unique names assigned to each student. Your unique name will be available to you through TAMU Instructional Technology Services' internet interface (most recently called WebCT Vista) in the Gradebook area shortly before the first test. **TEST GRADES WILL NOT BE REPORTED ON WEBCT VISTA**. If you need assistance with WebCT Vista, contact TAMU Instructional Technology Services at 862-3977 or its@tamu.edu.

*Email

Email messages must have **Pols 207-506** in the message subject line and be sent from a TAMU email address or else they will be treated as spam and deleted unread. Email communications must meet the spelling, grammar and punctuation standards of formal business communications.

Reading Assignments

| Dates | Topics | Chapters in Luttbeg | Chapters in Halter |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Jan. 15-22 | Introduction | 1-2 | 1 |
| Jan. 24-31 | American Federalism | 3-4 | 2 |
| Feb. 5-12 | Participation in Politics | 6 | 3, 6 |
| Feb. 14 | TEST 1 | | |
| Feb. 19-26 | Parties and Interest Groups | 7 | 4-6 |
| Feb. 28-Mar. 6 | State Legislatures | 9 | 7 |
| Mar. 18-20 | State Executives | 10 | 8 |
| Mar. 25 | TEST 2 | | |
| Mar. 27-Apr. 1 | State Courts | 11 | 9 |
| Apr. 3-8 | State and Local Government Finance | 5, 13 | 10 |
| Apr. 10 | TESTS 1 AND 2 MAKEUPS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES ONLY | | |
| Apr. 15-17 | Local Government | 8 | 11 |
| No lectures but material on test | Policy Issues | 12-14 | |
| Apr. 22 | TEST 3 | | |
| Apr. 24 | Students may review individual Test 3 results | | |
| May 2 12:30 | TEST 3 MAKEUPS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES ONLY | | |

The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By "handouts," I mean all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, tests, lab problems, in-class materials review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to reproduce the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities in Room B116 of Cain Hall, or call 845-1637.

It is the mission of the Aggie Honor System Office to serve as a centralized system established to respond fairly to academic violations of the honor code at Texas A&M University. Prohibited academic misconduct is defined and discussed on their web site: <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/definitions.php>.