

**PSC 285: Environmental Politics**  
**Spring 2021 / Remote**

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Course Website: <http://ut.blackboard.com>

Meetings:

Weekly Whole Group Faculty-Led Discussion:

- Thursday (10-11:50am) accessed via “Class Discussion” link from our course Bb page.

Drop-in Student-Led Review:

- Tuesday (10-11am) accessed via the “Drop-in Hours” tab on our course Bb page. Drop-in hours are exclusively for your class, optional, and student directed. No need to schedule an appointment, just drop in if you want to discuss the lectures, readings, assignments, etc. Because these meetings are open to everyone in class, you may be joined by other students.

Scheduled Office Hours:

- Friday (8am-1pm) in 30-minute blocks. Appointments must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. To schedule a meeting click on the “Schedule Office Hours” tab on our course Bb page. Before our scheduled meeting you will receive a Zoom calendar invitation by email for the time of your appointment. These office hours are first come, first served.

Objective:

Politics is about who gets what, when, and how. This course explores the ways in which environmental policies benefit some while harming others. Students explore the ways particular policies designed to promote environmental protections impact individuals. We also explore how a lack of environmental protections has consequences not just for flora and fauna but for humans. Students will learn to perform a cost/benefit analysis of environmental policies that takes into account residents of the impacted area and the world.

Student Learning Outcomes:

This course is designed such that students who have immersed themselves in the readings and lectures, attended discussion sections regularly, completed all assignments thoughtfully, studied the exam, and participated fully in the course in general should be able to do the following by the end of the course:

- SLO1: The student will understand major theories and issues in the field of environmental politics.
- SLO2: The student will understand best practices in common pool resource management.
- SLO3: The student will be able to engage critically and creatively with self-collected data to test an environmental politics hypothesis.

### Requirements:

Though it may be altered slightly and/or clarified by professorial edict either in class or via email, consider this syllabus a contract between you and your professor that lists both what you can expect from class and what is expected of you. Check it regularly. You are expected to read EVERYTHING assigned on the syllabus which averages approximately 100 pages per week. You are also expected to watch EVERY lecture and attend EVERY discussion. Visiting me regularly during ZOOM hours to discuss issues raised in class, readings, and your community conservation notebook is also a good idea.

You will be evaluated in this class based on your performance on 4 assignments. Rubrics for each of these assignments are available on our course Bb page. These assignments, along with their relative weights, are as follows:

Exam (35%) – The exam is open book and open note and covers all material from the readings, lectures, and in-class discussions for weeks 1 through 9. If you miss a class over this period, it is your responsibility to get notes from one of your colleagues. The exam measures Student Learning Outcome 1 (SLO1) and may include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. There will be NO review sheet. Late or early exams will only be given in extreme circumstances with a documented and approved excuse. Unexcused late exams will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day. If you miss an exam it is YOUR responsibility to contact me on the day of the exam or sooner to schedule a make-up.

Debate (15%) – During the third week of class each student will be assigned a debate and a side from the *Taking Sides* textbook. You will be expected to summarize the position you have been assigned in front of the class in 5 minutes or less. Maintaining your side in the debate, you and your debate partner will then be peppered with questions from your professor and peers about your topic for 20 minutes. You or your partner will be given 2 minutes to answer the question, the other will be given 2 minutes to respond, and then the original answerer will be given 1 minute to rebut. This is a role-playing exercise so just because a student takes a position does not mean they endorse this position in any way, shape, or form. The debate measures SLO1. If you miss your debate assignment, you may submit a 15-minute speech (recorded as a video .mp4) defending your position up to a week after the due date as a substitute assignment. Debates missed because of an unexcused absence forfeit half of the available points. Two-thirds of your grade is based on your debate performance. The rubric I use to grade this performance is available on Bb. One-third of the grade is based on you asking a well-informed question during AT LEAST four of the assigned debates.

Ostrom Book Review (15%) – As a class we read Elinor Ostrom's *Governing the Commons*. Each student is required to write a short (1500 words or less) book review of Ostrom following the guidance of the "How to Write an Academic Book Review" flier available to you on Bb. This assignment measures SLO2. Unexcused late reviews will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day.

Community Conservation Notebook (35%) – At the end of the term you will all submit a community conservation notebook. This notebook measures SLO3 and has four parts: (I) *Site Backgrounds*: a physical description of your three protected sites and a socio-

economic/demographic description of the neighborhoods in which they are situated, a history of the sites, and a account of how they are governed; (II) *Human Usage*: your measurement and observations of human usage at the three sites; (III) *Environmental Protection*: your measurement and observations of conservation at the three sites; and (IV) *Reflection*: an essay that answers the question – “What does the analysis of these three sites teach us about community conservation and development?” – that lets you reflect on what you have learned from your project. This notebook should be well written and researched, draw on insights from the literature, show careful consideration and application of the measurement devices we construct as a class, and have ample documentation to demonstrate your conclusions. Feel free to spice it up with pictures, graphs, and tables. Submit your assignment via a Turnitin link available in the course Bb Assignments tab. Unexcused late papers are penalized 5% per day. You will be given an opportunity during Weeks 14 or 15 to present your research and analysis for feedback. Though this assignment is ungraded, the opportunity for feedback is an important part of the research process for you and your peers. Shirking this opportunity without a documented and excusable absence results in a deduction of 20 points from your course notebook grade. Maximum page limit for this assignment is 15 pages inclusive of tables, pictures, and citations (single-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12pt TNR font).

Important Due Dates:

Debates	Weeks 6 - 9
Exam	Thursday 25 March
Ostrom Book Review	Thursday 1 April
Community Conservation Notebook	Friday 30 April

Required Texts:

- Dobson** Dobson, Andrew. *Environmental Politics: A Very Short Introduction*.  
ISBN: 9780199665570
- Easton** Easton, Thomas. *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Environmental Issues*. (17<sup>th</sup> ed)  
ISBN: 9781259853357
- Ostrom** Ostrom, Elinor. *Governing the Commons*.  
ISBN: 9781107569782
- 🔗 Article or chapter available through UT Blackboard.

Grading:

The course letter grade will be determined according to the following scale:

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Quality Points</i>	<i>Numeric Scale*</i>
A	4.0	93-100
AB	3.5	88-92
B	3.0	83-87
BC	2.5	78-82
C	2.0	73-77
CD	1.5	68-72
D	1.0	60-67
F	0.0	Below 60

\*I will round up at the .5 and NOT before. For example, if you earn an 87.49 you will receive a B for the class. If you earn an 87.5 you will receive an AB. The only exception to this rule concerns the line between a D and an F. If you make below 60 points, even if it is by the smallest fraction of a point, I will NOT round up.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

The course schedule is subject to change at the professor's sole discretion. Any changes will be announced in class, via email, and/or via Bb.

**Week 1 (January 19-22) – Syllabus and Introduction**

Reading: ♪ Syllabus

Thursday Discussion Topic: Familiarizing ourselves with the course

**Week 2 (January 25-29) – What is Environmental Politics?**

Readings: ♪ Brick, Philip. 2004. "The Greening of Political Science: Growth Pains and New Directions." *Perspectives on Politics* 2(2): 337-346; and ♪ Cronon, William. 1995. "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." In *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. New York, NY: WW Norton, 69–90.

Lectures: Environmental Politics (1)

Thursday Discussion Topic: Identifying the Politics in the Environment

**Week 3 (February 1-5) – History of Environmental Politics**

Readings: **Dobson** chs 1 and 2.

Lecture: History (2)

Thursday Discussion Topic: Sustainability, Preservation, and Conservation

**Week 4 (February 8-12) – Contemporary Actors in Environmental Politics**

Reading: **Dobson** ch 3.

Lecture: Actors (3)

Thursday Discussion Topic: Stakeholders in Environmental Politics

**Week 5 (February 15-19) – Contemporary Issues in Environmental Politics**

Readings: **Dobson** chs 4 and 5.

Lecture: Issues (4)

Thursday Discussion Topic: What we talked about yesterday, what we are talking about today, and what we will talk about tomorrow in Environmental Politics

**Week 6 (February 22-26) – Principles versus Politics Debates**

Reading: **Easton** unit 2

Lecture: Principles (5)

Thursday Discussion Topic: Debates 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4

**Week 7 (March 1-5) – Energy Issues Debates**

Reading: **Easton** unit 3

Lecture: Energy (6)

Thursday Discussion Topic: Debates 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4

**Week 8 (March 8-12) – Food and Population Debates**

Reading: **Easton** unit 4

Lecture: Food (7)

Thursday Discussion Topic: Debates 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3

**Week 9 (March 15-19) – Hazardous Releases Debates**

Reading: **Easton** unit 5

Lecture: Pollution (8)

Thursday Discussion Topic: Debates 5.2, 5.4, and 5.5

**Week 10 (March 22-26) – Exam**

Assignment: **Exam** – You may begin the exam anytime from 10am until noon Tampa time on Thursday 25 March via the “Assignments” tab on Bb. The exam is timed and you have 60 minutes from the moment you start.

**\*\*\* Monday 29 March is the last day to withdraw from 14-week classes \*\*\***

**Week 11 (March 29-April 2) – Ostrom and Community-Based Conservation**

Reading: **Ostrom.**

Lecture: Ostrom (9)

Assignment: **Ostrom Book Review** - Due via Bb before Thursday’s discussion.

Thursday Discussion Topic: Community-based conservation

**Week 12 (April 5-9) – Community Conservation Notebook**

Reading: United Nations Environment Programme. 2016. *Completing America's Inventory of Public Parks and Protected Areas*. Cambridge, UK: UNEP-WCMS; Hostetler, Mark E. and Martin B. Main. 2017. *Florida Monitoring Program: Point Count Method to Survey Birds*. UF IFAS: Gainesville, FL; and Alkire, Sabina and Andy Sumner. 2013. "Multidimensional Poverty and the Post-2015 MDGs." *Development* 56(1): 46-51.

Lecture: Measurement (10)

Thursday Discussion Topic: Developing data collection strategies

**Week 13 (April 12-16) – Fieldwork**

Thursday Discussion Topic: Open

**Week 14 (April 19-23) – Notebook Presentations I**

Tuesday Presentations: Group 1 (10-10:50) and Group 2 (11-11:50)

Thursday Presentations: Group 3 (10-10:50) and Group 4 (11-11:50)

**Week 15 (April 26-30) - Notebook Presentations II**

Tuesday Presentations: Group 5 (10-10:50) and Group 6 (11-11:50)

Thursday Presentations: Group 7 (10-10:50) and Group 8 (11-11:50)

Assignment: **Community Conservation Notebook** – Due Friday 30 April via Bb.

## General Classroom Information:

These are a few things every student should know.

Syllabus Subject to Change - This syllabus is informational in nature and is not an express or implied contract. It is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances, as a result of any circumstance outside the University's control, or as other needs arise. If, in the University's sole discretion, public health conditions or any other matter affecting the health, safety, upkeep or wellbeing of our campus community or operations requires the University to make any syllabus or course changes or move to remote teaching, alternative assignments may be provided so that the learning objectives for the course, as determined by the University, can still be met. The University does not guarantee that this syllabus will not change, nor does it guarantee specific in-person, on-campus classes, activities, opportunities, or services or any other particular format, timing, or location of education, classes, activities, or services.

Course Interruption due to Adverse Conditions - In case of any adverse condition or situation which could interrupt the schedule of classes, each student is asked to access [UT Homepage](#)<sup>1</sup> for information about the status of the campus and class meetings. In addition, please refer to [UT Blackboard](#)<sup>2</sup> for announcements and other important information. You are responsible for accessing this information.

Audio and Video Recording – Lectures are provided to you via .mp4 video files. Discussions are recorded so I have access to the chat log but deleted shortly after our meeting and not shared. These materials are for classroom purposes ONLY. You may NOT record lectures or discussions independently or share the provided recordings with individuals outside of class in any manner. If you do so, not only have you violated classroom policy, but you may be in violation of 17 U.S.C. § 1101 (civil), and 18 U.S.C. § 2319A (criminal) copyright law.

ADA Statement - If you require accommodations because of a disability, please call (813) 257-5757 or e-mail [disability.services@ut.edu](mailto:disability.services@ut.edu) for information on registering with Student Disability Services. You can also submit your request for accommodations and supporting documentation via an [Accommodation Request](#)<sup>3</sup>. Please feel free to discuss this with me in private for more information. If you encounter disability-related barriers accessing the online content for this course, please contact Sharon Austin, Academic Technology Accessibility Specialist, at [saustin@ut.edu](mailto:saustin@ut.edu). If the initial access to the content cannot be resolved, the university will provide individuals with disabilities access to, and use of, information and data by an alternative means that meets the identified needs.

Classroom Disruption Policy – Every student has the right to a comfortable learning environment where the open and honest exchange of ideas may freely occur. Each student is expected to do his or her part to ensure that the classroom (and anywhere else the class may meet) remains conducive to learning. This includes respectful and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ut.edu>

<sup>2</sup> <https://utampa.okta.com>

<sup>3</sup> [https://ut-accommodate.symplicity.com/public\\_accommodation/](https://ut-accommodate.symplicity.com/public_accommodation/)

courteous treatment of all in the classroom. According to the terms of the University of Tampa Disruption Policy, the professor will take immediate action when inappropriate behavior occurs. Details of the policy may be found at [Disruption of the Academic Process](#)<sup>4</sup>.

Academic Assistance – The Academic Success Center ([academicsuccess@ut.edu](mailto:academicsuccess@ut.edu)) in North Walker Hall offers free peer tutoring, credited academic skills courses, national testing services, and services for students with disabilities. The Saunders Writing Center (323 Plant Hall, x6244) aids students with their writing projects. The Public Speaking Center (KBB 200, [speakingcenter@ut.edu](mailto:speakingcenter@ut.edu)) offers students help with presentations. You pay for these services through your tuition and there is no shame in using them if you need help with your course work. I am more than happy to discuss any academic issues you might have during office hours but if I think one of these services can help you be more successful, I will not hesitate to recommend it.

Mental Health Counseling – College can be a stressful time in a young person’s life. The American Psychiatric Association published a recent study of college students observed over the course of a single academic year. Over 60% of students reported feeling things were hopeless one or more times, almost 40% of the men and 50% of the women reported feeling so depressed that they had difficulty functioning one or more times, and 10% of the students reported seriously considering attempting suicide at least one time. If at some point during your time at UT you begin to feel depressed or out of control for any reason you should realize that you are not alone and there is help available to you. Your professors are happy to counsel you on the problems you are having coping with academic life, but there are dedicated mental health counselors available to you through UT’s Health and Counseling Center located at 111 North Brevard Ave. (behind Austin Hall) who you may feel more comfortable disclosing certain types of non-academic problems to. The time to deal with mental health issues is when they arise and not after your grade has deteriorated. Their email is [healthcenter@ut.edu](mailto:healthcenter@ut.edu) and their phone numbers are 813-253-6250 (during business hours) and 813-257-7777 (outside of business hours for emergencies).

Academic Integrity – The University of Tampa is committed to the development of each student to become a productive and responsible citizen who embraces the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Upholding academic integrity and promoting an ethical standard that does not condone academic misconduct is an important demonstration of these values and underpins how we live and learn in a community of inquiry. Students are expected to act ethically in the pursuit of their education and to avoid behaviors that run counter to participation in and demonstration of their learning. The [Academic Integrity Policy](#)<sup>5</sup> lists several common types of violations related to cheating, unauthorized collaboration or assistance, plagiarism, and more. While the policy lists common violations and examples, it is not an exhaustive list and instructors may identify other types of conduct that impacts their ability to evaluate what has been learned substantively enough to constitute a violation of this policy. An instructor may impose a

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<sup>4</sup> <http://ut.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/catalog/Academic-Policies-and-Procedures/Disruption-of-the-Academic-Process>

<sup>5</sup> <http://ut.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/catalog/Academic-Policies-and-Procedures/Academic-Integrity-Policy>



wide range of sanctions for academic integrity violations from completing a more difficult replacement assignment to an F in the course. Particularly severe violations or multiple violations throughout a student's academic career may result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

Title IX Statement - Sexual misconduct, including, but not limited to: acts of sexual harassment, nonconsensual sexual intercourse, nonconsensual sexual contact, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, gender-based harassment or sexual exploitation are prohibited by Title IX, the Student Code of Conduct and other University policies. The University strives to maintain a safe and nondiscriminatory campus community, and to do so, it is important for the Spartan community to report any safety concerns, such as acts of sexual misconduct. If you experience or witness any of these University prohibited actions, the University encourages reporting these matters, so that the University is able to take prompt action to stop, prevent and remedy the effects of the harassment. University resources and grievance procedure information will be provided to individuals who may seek services or redress. There are many options to making a Title IX/Sexual Misconduct report. You may report this information through the University's online [Title IX Report form](#).<sup>6</sup> The information will be forwarded and reviewed by the Title IX Coordinator or a Title IX Deputy Coordinator, who will contact you to provide further information on University grievance procedure options and resources that are available.

You may also make a direct report by contacting the University's Title IX Coordinator:

Donna Popovich, Title IX Coordinator  
Southard Family Building Suite #266  
([DPopovich@ut.edu](mailto:DPopovich@ut.edu)) (813)-257-3723

If you decide to discuss an incident with your course professor, it is important to note that they are considered a Responsible Employee and are obligated to report the information you share to the University's Title IX Coordinator.<sup>7</sup> If you are not ready to disclose or report this information to the University, you may disclose the information to a confidential party, such as a Victim Advocate, or a Counselor or Health Clinician at the Student Health and Wellness Center, to discuss any further options and resources available before making a decision to report.

- The Victim's Advocacy Hotline: ([victimadvocacy@ut.edu](mailto:victimadvocacy@ut.edu)) (813) 257-3900.
- Health and Counseling Center ([healthcenter@ut.edu](mailto:healthcenter@ut.edu) or [counseling@ut.edu](mailto:counseling@ut.edu)) (813) 253-6250

For more information, see The University of Tampa's [Title IX webpage](#)<sup>8</sup> and the [Student Code of Conduct](#)<sup>9</sup> webpage.

Face Coverings/Masks - All face coverings, whether disposable or reusable, must be made with at least two layers of breathable material;

- fully cover the nose and mouth and secure under the chin;
- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face; and

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ut.edu/titleixreport>

<sup>7</sup> There is an exception to this required reporting for preventative education programs and public awareness events or forums. For more information about exempt events, please contact the Title IX Office.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ut.edu/about-ut/university-services/human-resources/title-ix->

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ut.edu/campus-life/student-services/office-of-student-conduct/student-code-of-conduct>

- be secured with ties or ear loops, allowing one to remain hands-free.

Based on guidance from health authorities, the following are *not* acceptable face coverings: neck gaiters, open-chin triangle bandanas, and face coverings containing valves, mesh material, or holes of any kind. Unless a face shield is coupled with a face mask, it is *not* considered an acceptable masking practice on campus.

Failure to wear a mask will mean that one cannot enter a building nor attend class. Refusal to wear a mask within the classroom is considered disruptive behavior and will be handled through the classroom disruption policy. Refusal to wear a mask in other settings will be handled through Student Conduct or Human Resources if faculty or staff.

It is important to note that UT policy may vary from City and County Executive Orders. You may want to refer to local government websites as you travel the City and the County.

[City of Tampa](#)<sup>10</sup>

[Hillsborough County](#)<sup>11</sup>

Additional information on face masks can be found on UT's [COVID-19 web page](#).<sup>12</sup>

Student Code of Conduct and COVID-19 - All students whether living on or off campus are responsible for their own behavior and their personal safety. In the current COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that students understand their responsibility to support not only their own health and safety, but also how their personal actions contribute to the safety and welfare of others, including those within and outside the UT community. Non-compliance with the Spartan Shield Health and Safety Plan has been incorporated into the [Student Code of Conduct](#)<sup>13</sup> to promote accountability. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, violating isolation and/or quarantine restrictions, not maintaining appropriate physical/social distancing or not following the required use of approved facial coverings in public campus spaces indoors, and outdoors when physical/social distancing is not possible. Behavior that violates city, county and/or state executive orders specifically related to the public health emergency in the state of Florida due to the spread of COVID-19, is also prohibited. Engaging in any behaviors that violate the Spartan Shield Health and Safety Plan may result in disciplinary action ranging from a disciplinary reprimand through expulsion from the University. As a community, we abide by the Spartan Code and express care for ourselves and each other by sharing the obligation of compliance and holding each other accountable to the health and safety measures outlined by the University's Spartan Shield Health and Safety Plan. Violations of University policy should be reported by contacting Campus Safety at (813) 257-7777 or by submitting a [student conduct incident report](#)<sup>14</sup>.

### Class Rules, Etiquette, and Advice:

I like my job a lot. There are few things I can imagine doing more satisfying than providing inquisitive minds with an atmosphere conducive to thinking more critically about their own

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.tampagov.net/emergency-management/covid-19/face-covering>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/en/residents/public-safety/emergency-management/stay-safe/face-coverings-and-masks>

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.ut.edu/uploadedFiles/Student\\_Services/Health\\_and\\_Wellness\\_Center/Face-Coverings.pdf](https://www.ut.edu/uploadedFiles/Student_Services/Health_and_Wellness_Center/Face-Coverings.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ut.edu/campus-life/student-services/office-of-student-conduct/student-code-of-conduct>

<sup>14</sup> [https://ut-advocate.symphlicity.com/public\\_report/index.php/pid148678?](https://ut-advocate.symphlicity.com/public_report/index.php/pid148678?)

assumptions and the world in which we live. The image of students leaving my classroom just a bit more prepared to make their society better is sustaining. Following is a list of things you can do to help me maintain this image as well as some things you can do to reveal it as a mirage. Doing more of the former and less of the latter will make me happy, whereas the converse will make me sad!

DO read the assigned texts – The amount and content of the reading assignments are well within the realm of reasonable for a class at this level. I have looked at syllabi from many different institutions of higher learning to come confidently to this conclusion. Do the assigned readings before each class and you will get the most out of the lectures and discussions. Though there are some things covered in the assigned readings that will not be covered in lecture or discussion, and vice versa, the lectures/discussions and readings build off each other. I will not hesitate to pull exam questions from readings not covered in class and from lectures not covered in the readings.

DO engage in class discussions – There will be lots of opportunities for you to contribute to conversations in the weekly Zoom discussions. Discussions are designed for student input because I think it is important that you not only read and hear the information, but have to reconstitute and challenge it. I am also delighted to entertain questions when you have them and follow tangents that you would like to explore. Class periods when students are engaged and contributing seem to go by much faster than class periods when students are checked out. Students who regularly contribute to the classroom conversation do significantly better on average than students who do not on exams. So pretend the information we are covering is really interesting and jump at the opportunity to challenge the material. After a while you will find that you do not have to pretend any more. If you are shy this is good practice for you. Use the class to build your confidence and public speaking skills. If you are worried about your peers' impressions of you forget about it. Those who value education will find your contributions useful and those who roll their eyes are dull and uninteresting.

DO be a good ZOOM citizen – Zoom discussions are not being recorded by me and you do not have my consent to record the meetings. Please mute your microphone as you enter and when you are not talking. While I will not require or call you out for turning your video off, it can be very disheartening leading a discussion in a room full of black boxes. So if you need to turn your video off for whatever reason you may, but please try to leave it on if you can. Do not share our class Zoom links or password with anyone outside the class. This, and the fact that you will use your real name to join the class, will help us mitigate the potential for Zoom bombing. If a Zoom bombing does happen, I will end the meeting as quickly as I can. If you are kicked out of Zoom while class is ongoing, reenter the meeting and I will let you in from the waiting room. Be patient, it might take a couple of minutes to get the discussion back up again.

DO visit me during office hours – If you have a question about something we covered in class, need feedback on an assignment, want to discuss something you discovered outside of class that you think connects to course content in an interesting way, or just want to chat FEEL FREE to drop in on weekly review hours or schedule a ZOOM during appointment

hours. I hold both drop in and scheduled office hours each week and these hours are for you. You are not pestering me or taking me away from something more important. It is nice to talk with students outside of our regular classroom setting.

DO NOT send me an email unless it is necessary – With several classes and nearly 100 students a semester emails can become burdensome. While I know email seems convenient from the student point of view because it is more instantly gratifying and relatively labor free, I have found the method of communication a poor way to convey the complex concepts we deal with in class and for general points of inquiry it is inefficient as emails regularly get lost in my Inbox. So how can you decide if an email must be sent to me? I would encourage you to ask yourself the following three questions:

- 1) Can I find the answer on the syllabus, in a text, or online?
- 2) Is it something one of my colleagues in class can answer?
- 3) Can it wait until next class or office hours?

If you answer any of these questions in the affirmative, PLEASE fight against the temptation to hit send. If you answer all of the questions in the negative, feel free to send the email. Make sure, however, to send it from your @spartans.ut.edu email account and keep in mind that I only check email once a day so my response will likely not be instantaneous. Also if you submit an assignment by email I will NOT grade it. Assignments are submitted via Bb.

DO NOT ask if it is on the exam – I do not give out study guides. This is a university class and when I attended university ages ago study guides, like the iPod and indoor plumbing, were not yet invented. This experience taught me that learning things the readings and lectures cover that are not on the exam can be just as important and enlightening as learning things that will appear on the exam. Anything in the readings, lectures, and/or discussions is fair game for an exam. Things covered copiously are more likely to show up on the exam than things covered sparsely.

DO NOT ask for extra credit – Rarely I give out extra credit opportunities. When I do, the opportunity is initiated by me and open to all students in class. I have never given an extra credit assignment to a student who initiated the request. Giving out extra credit opportunities to select students makes grades for my courses unreliable measures of student success and your goal should be to master the material assigned on the syllabus.

DO understand what your grade represents – I assume every student who enters my class wants to take away a greater understanding of the world and that the grade (s)he receives is but a formal, and somewhat abstract and imprecise, reflection of the knowledge (s)he has gained. The average student in my courses typically earns a low B (3.0) or a high C (2.0). This grade represents both effort and skill so students that put in more effort than average and/or are more skilled than average will do better than this, whereas students who put in less effort than average and/or are less skilled will do worse. It is not easy to earn an A in my course and few will. On the other hand it is even more difficult to earn an F in my course but a few students every semester put in nearly no effort and/or do not have the skills necessary for a college-level course in Political Science. I have given failing marks to students who I think are wonderful people and given A grades to students who I would rather never see again. Grades are not personal statements on your character, they are a professional opinion of the work you submit.

DO learn how to question grades respectfully – I do my best to communicate expectations and make sure my comments on graded assignments pinpoint areas where you did well and areas where you needed to put in some more work. There will, however, occasionally be questions about the grade you receive. I will NOT change a grade or let you resubmit an assignment simply because you want a better grade. If, however, you think I have made a mistake I will consider changing a grade only after the following conditions have been met: 1) You must wait at least 24 hours but no more than ten days after receiving your graded assignment to file a complaint. 2) You must submit in writing a detailed explanation of why you think you deserve a different grade by sending me an email with the subject heading “GRADE DISPUTE”. I will review your submission and give you my final decision within a week of receipt at which time I will consider the “negotiation” complete and any further appeals on the issue will be directed to the department chair. Challenges that resemble “I’m an A student so there is no way this paper is a B,” “I was making a good argument it just did not come across in my paper,” “I was having a bad day can you cut me some slack,” or “I need to pass this class to graduate” will be summarily dismissed as they do not speak to the quality of the work.

DO know the university policy on “excused” absences – I do not take roll so the only time you need an excused absence is when there is an assignment due. The UT catalog has a detailed section on excused absences. It falls under the heading “Class Attendance and Participation” in the Academic Policies and Procedures section. There are no excuses for late written assignments. You know about them well in advance and a last minute disruptions should not affect your ability to turn in the assignment. Excuses for missed exams or presentations are granted following university procedures. The best way to be granted an excused absence is with prior approval. If you will miss an exam or presentation due to a previously scheduled event, let me know at least two weeks in advance and you will almost always be allowed an early exam or presentation. In the event that prior approval is not possible, you must provide acceptable documentation detailing the reasons for your excuse as soon as possible. Be thorough with this documentation as the burden of proving an absence is excusable falls on the student. For each assignment listed in this syllabus there is a detailed policy regarding late penalties. Many of these policies grant an exception for “excused” absences. Whether an absence is “excused” or not is up to the discretion of your professor based on the guidelines outlined above.