

Course Syllabus

[Edit](#)

VERSION 2 (11 Feb 2024): Increases number of lowest Reality Check scores to be excluded from grade calculations to 2 at Midterm and 3 at end of semester. Changes marked with blue highlighting. Rationale for change explained in 11 Feb Canvas announcement.

POLS 207 (Roblyer) State & Local Government

Course Information

Course Number: POLS 207
Course Title: State & Local Government
Sections/Times/Locations:
501 / MWF 8:00-8:50am / ILCB 113
502 / MWF 9:10-10:00am / ILCB 113
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Details

Instructor: Dr. Dwight Roblyer, Ph.D., Aggie Classes of '84 and '09
Office: (ALL office hours and appointments will be via Zoom this semester)
Phone: 979-845-7693 (always forwards to my cell phone)
E-Mail: dwight.roblyer@tamu.edu (<mailto:dwight.roblyer@tamu.edu>)

Office Hours: Outside of class, I will be available to students in several ways, as stated below. ***If you want to meet with me, I want to meet with you!***

1. I welcome you meeting with me before or after lecture whenever time permits.
2. Weekly, I will schedule multiple opportunities for you to meet with me. These will vary week-by-week. There is no fixed "office hours" schedule for this course. Every Sunday night, I will post the meeting windows for that week on the Canvas course calendar and will send out an announcement. I vary the timing of these windows to accommodate as many students as possible due to their differing class and work schedules, as well as to work around my other university responsibilities and appointments. There will be **two types of meeting opportunities** and **all will occur using Zoom**. There will be no regular office hours held at my faculty office this semester.
 - **Group Office Hours via Zoom:** These will be group Zoom sessions where anyone can come and go as they wish. Students may attend to ask questions, just to listen in on the discussion and learn from other's questions and answers, or both. Don't be bashful—students are usually surprised by how helpful these group exchanges can be! Instructions for joining these Zooms are displayed when you hover your mouse over each associated event on the Canvas course calendar.
 - **Private Appointments via Zoom:** These 10- to 15-minute solo appointments are ideal for matters that are private in nature, such as reviewing grades or exams, but they also may be used for course material questions, etc. Whenever suitable, please use the Group Office Hours opportunities (see above) instead of a Private Appointment, but if the Private Appointment times are all that works for you that week, go right ahead and schedule! Instructions for scheduling these private time slots are displayed when you hover your mouse over each associated event on the Canvas calendar.
3. If you need to talk with me and none of the above methods work for your schedule that week, please email your request to me with subject line "Meeting Request." In the email, explain that none of the announced times work for you and then provide several time windows when you will be available to chat via Zoom or phone. I will get back with you to figure out a meeting time.

Course Description

This is *not* a course about Texas politics. Instead, I want to open your eyes to how and why many political actors and most state and local governments do what they do—both the routine and the flabbergasting. Along the way, we will focus on governments in Texas as we also compare those of different states and locales. More importantly, this semester can be the turning point in how you view politics outside of Washington D.C. Since this is not a federal government course, many of you might consider it to be unimportant, uninteresting, and unworthy of your attention. My job is to give you great reasons to change those preconceptions. Why? Because, in the coming years, **you and the local and state politics surrounding you will help make or break the future of the local community and the state in which your family lives**. Some of you may run for local or state elected office, a few of you will even win, but all of you will be citizens or residents of your communities and of your chosen states for the rest of your lives. How you *think* about politics and about fellow residents who see things differently than you do will make all the difference in our collective future. All of you

(hopefully!) will also go on to become "Old Aged" with wisdom, experience, service, power, and money. I want you to be prepared to use all of those assets in improving our communities and state for those who will come after us. You will also become more likely as you age to participate in some small or big way in governmental politics. Therefore, ***I want to invest in you now***, because in another 20-40 years your generation will be the one primarily influencing government at every level. My generation will only be able to hope that you do it well!

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course. However, a knowledge of basic math concepts (e.g., percentages, fractions, ordered pairs, x-y plots) is assumed.

Special Course Designation

This course fulfills half of the the university's Core Curriculum requirement for the *Government/Political Science* category. According to the university catalogue: "Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas. Courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations. The following skills will be addressed in the courses that comprise this area: critical thinking, communication, social responsibility, and personal responsibility." (See <https://catalog.tamu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/university-core-curriculum/> (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/university-core-curriculum/>)). Furthermore, the university defines each objective area as encompassing specific target skills, as follows.

- Critical Thinking: *creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information*
- Communication: *effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication*
- Social Responsibility: *intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities*
- Personal Responsibility: *the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making*

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate social and cultural competence that leads to more responsible citizenship.
 - A. Define, understand, and use concepts and terms relevant to the study of state and local government in the United States.
 - B. Comprehend the origins and evolution of state and local political systems, including political institutions, constitutions, and federalism, with an emphasis on Texas.
 - C. Describe the various parts and processes of state and local governmental systems, as well as how they function both alone and together to produce political outcomes.
 - D. Understand the necessity of, opportunities for, and discouragements against citizens' participation in government at the state and local level by understanding the differences in policy-influenced mechanisms and patterns of participation.
2. Demonstrate critical thinking in political matters.
 - A. Explain how citizens, political actors, and political analysts do not share a common vocabulary, yet when they use the same terms they often different things.
 - B. Understand the differences between facts and beliefs and their distinct roles. Identify biased or incomplete uses of empirical information, the motivations and processes that can produce them, and the threats they pose to democratic outcomes. Explain how different presentations of measurements control the messages the measurements support.
 - C. Recognize important aspects of issues that are *not* being discussed in political forums, and formulate incisive questions that would elevate these issues into the conversation.
 - D. Practice composing well-thought-out questions and responses to others' questions about state and local political issues.
3. Demonstrate preparation to engage in lifelong learning about issues of personal and corporate responsibility that should matter to citizens.
 - A. Assess the validity and reliability of political information.
 - B. Identify sources of political information that are likely to be more or less biased and be able to explain the rationale for this determination.
 - C. Access and use resources to "fact check" political beliefs, assumptions, and assertions.
 - D. Understand the consequences to democratic systems when political actors, governments, and citizens promote and operate from information and beliefs not based on verifiable facts.

Textbook and/or Resource Materials

The following are all **required** materials, unless otherwise noted:

Textbook (Free) - We will use a free, open-access textbook for this course. *Comparing States & Communities*, by Harvey J. Tucker, is available [here \(https://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/188539/Comparing%20The%20States%2010th%20Edition_Fall%202019_06.10.19.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y%20\)](https://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/188539/Comparing%20The%20States%2010th%20Edition_Fall%202019_06.10.19.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y%20) from the TAMU library's server (download begins immediately after selected the link--check your "Downloads" folder). My sincere appreciation goes to Dr. Tucker for his generous gift to all of us.

Packback Questions Account (\$\$) - You will use the *Packback Questions* platform (hereafter referred to as "Packback") to discuss course material by asking questions, thinking through answers, improving critical thinking, practicing concise writing, and scoring points. If you are new to

Packback, watch this [short video intro to the tool](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV7QmkrD68)  (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV7QmkrD68>).

The cost of access to this curiosity community will be about \$40-50 per student for the semester, depending on the purchase option you select. I also feel very strongly that **NO student should miss even a single meal to purchase this account. I have access to discounts and scholarships** to cover some or all the account cost if you need help with the bill. I will also prioritize protecting your privacy while helping you get the financial assistance you need. **Don't hesitate to let me know via email if I can help or if you'd like to discuss your options.**

- OPTION 1A: When purchased directly from Packback, the cost of access will be \$39, plus tax.
- OPTION 1B: Purchasing the access code from the MSC Barnes & Noble Bookstore will cost \$52, plus tax. This is the same product as offered in Option 1A, but students with some types of financial aid are required to purchase their course materials from this bookstore. Other students may just prefer to make their purchases in person instead of online.
- OPTION 2: In a financial bind? Need to delay payment? Need to make payments? Need a discount or a full scholarship? If so, email me after the start of class.

Access to Packback is sold on a by-course, by-semester basis. This means that if you used Packback last semester, you will need to purchase access again. The same is true if you have another course this semester that also requires Packback—you will need to purchase access for my course separately and in addition to the other concurrent course.

However you purchase your access, **please wait to register until after the first day of class.** There is no need to rush—the first set of posts will not be due until the end of the third week of class. **DO NOT attempt to register yourself through the Packback website, even if you already have an existing account from another course.**

Resources for registering and using Packback appear in Canvas Module 1A under "Orientation to Course Tools."

- Follow the registration instructions there. **DO NOT disregard these instructions and instead attempt to register yourself through the Packback website, even if you already have a previous account from another course.**
- You will also find detailed instructions, including videos, about how to post and score well, and how to obtain technical assistance whenever needed.

HONOR CHECK: Packback has been the platform where a number of my students have **cheated and plagiarized**, then paid stiff penalties for doing so. Please read the *Academic Integrity Statement* later in this document very carefully.

Poll Everywhere Account (Free) - We will use *Poll Everywhere* during lectures to allow you to respond to on-screen activities such as class polls. You will not need to purchase a special response device. Instead, you may use your own personal device to respond: mobile phone, tablet, or computer. *Poll Everywhere* is available to you in this course for free because the Bush School has paid for a license. No registration is required because your in-class responses will be anonymous.

Computer, Respondus LockDown Browser, and Webcam - All activities for course credit, including exams, will be accomplished online.

- **General Computer and Internet Access:** All assignments will only be available through Canvas, the university's digital learning system. You will need regular access to a computer and the internet throughout this course. If you experience problems with your computer, I encourage you to complete regular assignments (*but not exams*) using the university computers available at [Open-Access Labs across campus \(https://oal.tamu.edu/\)](https://oal.tamu.edu/). Technical assistance with your computer is available through TAMU Help Desk Central (979-845-HELP).
- **Portable Computing Device Required for Exams:** You will need to bring a portable computing device with you to take course exams. Exams will be given through Canvas, but will take place in the classroom or in the Disability Resources Testing Center.
 - **Permitted Device Types** - You may use a Windows or Apple laptop, a Chromebook, or an iPad. These are the only devices that are compatible with the exam security app we will use (see below). You may NOT use a mobile phone (Android or iOS) or an Android tablet to take exams.
 - **Financial Assistance** - If you do not have a portable computing device, you may review [this information from the university \(https://it.tamu.edu/services/academics-and-research/teaching-and-learning-tools/computer-requirements/\)](https://it.tamu.edu/services/academics-and-research/teaching-and-learning-tools/computer-requirements/) to learn more about potential eligibility for financial aid to obtain a satisfactory device.
 - **Borrowing a Device** - If needed, you may borrow a suitable device from a friend or check out a laptop for temporary use [from the University Libraries \(https://library.tamu.edu/services/media_services/equipment.html#laptops\)](https://library.tamu.edu/services/media_services/equipment.html#laptops). If this is not feasible, contact me as as soon as possible.
 - **Technical Issues** -
 - If you experience problems with your device before an exam, contact TAMU Help Desk Central (979-845-HELP) for troubleshooting assistance.
 - If you experience problems during an exam, let me know immediately. I may be able to help you resolve the issue. I also keep a limited number of paper copies of exams on hand in the event of stubborn issues we cannot resolve.
- **Respondus LockDown Browser:** To enhance the security of the examination process, your portable computing device **must have** the TAMU version of *Respondus LockDown Browser* installed. This software is free.
 - Use the Module 1A Canvas resource, [Respondus LockDown Browser Installation, Checkout, and Use](#) to properly download, install, and test this required tool.
 - This software, like the Aggie Honor Code, will assist students who want to take the exams honorably and fairly. The software will not prevent a student from cheating who is determined to do so. See the *Academic Integrity Statement & Policy* section near the end of this document for more important information about Honor Code violations and the critical role of personal responsibility.

- **Webcam:** A webcam will be required in only two situations: 1) When you are testing your portable computing device configuration after installing LockDown Browser; and 2) If you are taking a remote makeup exam.
 - An integrated (internal) webcam may be used for the device configuration check, but a standalone (USB-connected) webcam will be required for all makeup exams. See the Module 1A Canvas resource, *Respondus LockDown Browser Installation, Checkout, and Use* for more information, including how to check out USB webcams from the library.
 - A webcam will NOT be required when taking an exam in the classroom or in the Disability Resources Testing Center.
- Students with issues meeting any of these technical requirements should contact me as soon as possible after the start of the semester.

Authorized and Prohibited Tools and Resources

Student Rule 20, "Honor System Rules," states that the **only tools and resources students may use** in a course are those that have been **specifically authorized by the instructor**. This means that if you use any tool or resource that I have not specifically authorized, you are likely committing academic misconduct. In such a case, you should immediately stop using that resource and contact me for guidance.

When in doubt about a tool or resource, you should reference the Module 1A resources, *"Authorized & Unauthorized Tools & Resources in This Course"* and *"Use of Artificial Intelligence in This Course."* If any questions remain, you may always contact me to ask for clarification as needed.

Just because you routinely or have previously used a specific tool or resource doesn't mean that its use is permitted in this course. Here are some examples:

- *Quizlet* - I require that all *Quizlets* created during this course be set to **Private Access Only**. I permit *Quizlet* to be used when students are generating their own resources using their own, original notes, but not when they are accessing and using resources created by anyone other than themselves from this or previous semesters.
- *Grammarly* - I permit the use of grammar-checking tools such as this, except when it is enhanced by AI (e.g., *Grammarly Premium*). See the next resource in this module for detailed guidance about the use of AI in this course.
- *Chegg*, *StudyBlue*, *Course Hero*, etc. - I prohibit the use of resources & tools of this type because they dishonestly characterize their answer-providing services as "tutoring" or other forms of acceptable studying assistance.
- *Quillbot* - I prohibit the use of websites and apps of this type because they use AI to compose text that is not the student's own work. See the next resource in this module for detailed guidance about the use of AI in this course.

Some tools or resources are always prohibited in this course. These include websites where students look for answers to assignments, "tutoring" services that look up answers, websites or individuals that create papers on behalf of a student, and "support" services that will complete and submit work in Canvas under a student's name. Also prohibited is the re-use, in part or in whole, of the student's previous submissions for any assignment at any time. If there are any tools or resources that shift the responsibility for some or all of a course assignment to anyone other than the student, then don't use it!

Use of artificial intelligence (AI) is rarely authorized in this course. The Module 1A resource, *"Use of Artificial Intelligence in This Course,"* describes different types of AI that students might use and clearly specifies if and when each type is an authorized tool or resource in this course.

Optional Small Groups

My sections are often REALLY big. You may have noticed! To help make the class experience more personal, **you *MAY* choose to join an optional small group** that I call a *POLS 207 Crew*. Each crew will have a maximum size of 5 students and can provide a set of peers you can easily ask questions of, study with, and obtain feedback from. For those who join, I encourage you to be creative and work together to make your *POLS 207 Crew* work well for all its members. For instructions on joining a Crew, look in Canvas Module 1A, *RESOURCE: POLS 207 Crews (Optional Small Groups)*. Participation is completely voluntary and you may opt in or out or switch groups at any time.

Course Conduct & Conflicts with Content

Respect is a particularly important Aggie Core Value because it talks to how we as individuals should interact with others. **Respect** should guide our words and our behavior in the classroom and other course-related interactions (virtual and in-person). This will help produce an environment conducive to learning and scholarship and free of harassment, hostile, and threatening behaviors. We all must be proactive in helping others and speaking up to minimize harm in the case that any of these unwelcome behaviors are observed--that is the Aggie way. I commit to treating all people with dignity and respect. My physical and virtual classrooms and offices are open to all students, and each of you are welcome as you are and valued for who you are.

By its nature, the **content of this course** will most certainly expose you to opinions and information that are contrary to your own ideas and understandings. We will see a significant amount of evidence that challenges our long-held convictions that the Great State of Texas is the "hands-down best state" in the Union. I work very hard to be an **equal-opportunity political critic**, although since the conservatives have been in power in Texas for well over two decades, they offer many more recent, local examples of problematic positions and actions than the state's liberals. However, no matter the reason or topic, we will all see information and be presented positions that disagree with what we believe is true and best. When this happens, we must **respectfully engage** and seek to understand the new information and contrary position. Both we will all be the poorer if anyone chooses agitation or anger, instead.

I strongly request that you **contact me immediately** if you have an issue or problem with anything I say or any other course content, including

statements by other students. ***I am always willing to converse via email or to meet with you outside of class to privately discuss any issue or idea that may be troubling to you.*** In the past, this has often resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the students involved.

No matter the strength of any person's convictions or the information they wield, respectful speaking and listening will be the rule in my course. One of the pillars of the greatness of America and the Great State of Texas is respectful and mutual consideration of our differing perspectives and opinions. We will lean and build upon that pillar in this course.

Canvas & Course Activities

This course is built using Canvas modules. ***The easiest way to follow the course and accomplish all required activities is to use the modules just as you would a recipe or to-do list.*** While you may have previously used the *Assignments* or *Quizzes* links in Canvas to access materials in other courses, those links are hidden in this course to encourage you to access activities sequentially through the modules.

Following best practices, this course consists of many individual activities that will work together to support your efforts to master the course material. These activities appear within the modules in Canvas, accessible either via the *Modules* link on in-course menu (left side of the page in Canvas) or using the *Week#* shortcuts at the bottom of the Canvas course home page. Module 1A contain resources you will need to reference throughout the course. Each module contains the activities for one week of the course, but may be broken up into parts, such as 10A and 10B. Below are brief descriptions of the types of activities built into these modules.

Attendance - *I strongly urge you to plan to attend as many lectures as possible--it is a critical step toward mastering the material, scoring well on the exams, and passing this course.* To encourage you to be present for lectures, I will take attendance during every lecture starting on the second class day and then assign points accordingly. We will use *Canvas* to record attendance using a very brief quiz at some point near the middle of each lecture period. (*Core Curriculum Skills addressed: Critical Thinking, Social Responsibility, Personal Responsibility*)

- Attendance will comprise 10% of your final course grade.
- To earn a perfect attendance score for the final course grade, ***you will need to attend and respond correctly to the attendance quiz during at least 66% of the lectures*** either before midterm or the end of the course, respectively.
- I will routinely consider excused absences of any type (illness, athletics, etc) to be part of the remaining 34% of lecture days (aka, allotted "miss days") when calculating your attendance grade. *See Canvas Module 1B for exceptions.*
- I will clearly announce the attendance quiz during every class. You may use a mobile phone, tablet, or laptop to respond.
- You should be prepared to ***answer the attendance quiz correctly*** every day you attend lecture. *See Canvas Module 1B for details.*
- **HONOR CHECK: Do not answer an attendance quiz if you are not present and seated in the classroom. Do not answer an attendance quiz for another student who is not present in the classroom.** These are both serious violations of the Aggie Code of Honor and Student Rule 20. I will report and sanction all honor violations. If you become aware of another student committing either of these violations, please notify me immediately via email because The Code enjoins every Aggie to *"not tolerate those who do."*

For additional information about attendance scoring in this course, see Canvas Module 1B.

Lectures (*Live and To-Read*) - Almost all lecture activities will correspond to live lectures in the classroom and will contain a link to download the associated slides. You are permitted to make audio recordings of any of my lectures as long as those recordings are only for your own personal use and you do not post or distribute them. On a few occasions, I will post lecture slides that you will need to cover on your own between scheduled lectures. I will clearly indicate in Canvas whenever posted slides will not be covered in class. All lecture materials are copyrighted and must be handled according to the Intellectual Property statement at the conclusion of this syllabus. (*Core Curriculum Skills addressed: Critical Thinking, Social Responsibility, Personal Responsibility*)

- If you have a fever, are nauseous, or do not feel well enough to come to class, ***please don't!*** Instead, follow the process described in the Module 1A resource, *"Absences, Excuses, and Makeup Work,"* to request an excused absence.
- If you are just coughing or sneezing, but otherwise are well enough to attend lecture, ***please do!*** In addition, please ***consider wearing a mask*** while in lecture to protect your fellow Aggies from contagion.

Practice Problems - For each chapter, I provide a set of short-essay prompts available for students who want to check their understanding of the material we have covered. These are optional and cannot be submitted for scoring. The prompts are derived from the learning objectives listed for each associated lecture and all answers are in the lecture material. Working practice problems is a familiar way of mastering material and preparing for exams in math and the physical sciences. Practice problems can work just as well in this course, but they take the form of essay-style instead of calculation-based questions because of the nature of the material we are covering. (*Core Curriculum Skills addressed: Critical Thinking, Social Responsibility, Personal Responsibility*)

- I strongly encourage students to work these problems in order to learn the course material and to better prepare for exams. Module 1A contains more tips on how to optimize your use of these activities (see *RESOURCE: How to Use Practice Problems to Prepare for Exams*).
- You may work on these problems as a group activity because they are not for credit. However, these practice problems will only help you if YOU know the answers and can clearly and correctly explain them to another person.
- There is no answer key for these practice problems because the answers are contained in the course material. I encourage you to work with your *POLS 207 Crew* (optional small group, see above) or other friends to verify or improve your answers and understanding. I will also gladly answer questions about these problems.

Textbook Readings - There will be assigned readings from the free course textbook (see above) for most of the chapters. These will be testable and will be the focus of up to 10% of the questions on the associated exams. (*Core Curriculum Skills addressed: Critical Thinking, Social Responsibility, Personal Responsibility*)

Reality Checks - These activities will be assigned approximately once each week and will require you to read several web pages, documents, and/or articles and then complete an "open-article" quiz based on those sources. These sources are designed to help you discover the connections between the concepts and theories we discuss in the course and the real-world activities, events, and decisions that shape our past, present, and future. They will also educate you on the rules and processes of the Aggie Honor System--it is much more than the 13 words of the Honor Code. (*Core Curriculum Skills addressed: Critical Thinking, Social Responsibility, Personal Responsibility*)

- **You are to work alone** on these activities. They are graded activities and are labeled in the modules as *Scored Assignments*.
- **HONOR CHECK: Submitting any Reality Checks that are not solely your own honest work will be an Honor Code violation.** Previously, students have worked together or obtained answers from the internet, then suffered stiff penalties as a result in the form of sanctions administered through the university's Honor System.
- **There will be 14 of these activities during the semester.**
- **"Dropping" Scores:**
 - I will *temporarily* exclude the two lowest Reality Check score for each student when I calculate midterm grades. However, the excluded scores will not be removed from the gradebook and will be considered as part of the 14 total scores at the end of the semester.
 - I will exclude the three lowest scores among all 14 of these activities when calculating your final course grade. These excluded scores will still appear in the gradebook.
 - These assignments vary in the number of questions they contain, and are weighted accordingly (e.g., an RC with 20 questions is worth more than an RC with 14 questions). Therefore, the RC(s) that will be dropped are those in which you missed the most questions.

Packback Posts - Packback is a moderated platform to promote your curiosity and build critical thinking and writing skills. You will be expected to use this tool every week, starting with the third week of the semester, to post one original question clearly related to our course material, as well as two responses to appropriate questions asked by other students. Registration instructions, as well as rules and criteria for successful posts are laid out in Canvas Module 1A. (*Core Curriculum Skills addressed: Critical Thinking, Communication, Social Responsibility, Personal Responsibility*).

- **You should always accomplish your posts by selecting the "Packback" menu item along the left side of the screen within our Canvas course to access the Packback website.** This will ensure that points earned from your posts will be transferred to the Canvas gradebook at the end of each posting period.
- **You must accomplish these posts individually.**
- **HONOR CHECK:** Allowing anyone else to post for you, making a post with the help of another person, using the words or ideas from generative AI, or copying the ideas or words of other students or sources in your posts will be an **Honor Code violation**. You are also prohibited from re-using any Packback posts you previously made or other work you submitted in other classes or schools.
- **There will be 12 of these weekly activities.**
- **"Dropping" Scores:**
 - I will *temporarily* exclude the one lowest Packback score for each student when I calculate midterm grades. However, the excluded score will not be removed from the gradebook and will be considered as one of the 12 total scores at the end of the semester.
 - I will exclude the two lowest scores among all 12 of these activities when calculating your final course grade. These excluded scores will still appear in the gradebook.

Exams - There will be 5 of these, each **covering the material assigned since the previous exam**. The fifth exam will occur during the final exam period, but will NOT be comprehensive. (*Core Curriculum Skills addressed: Critical Thinking, Social Responsibility, Personal Responsibility*)

- **Online & Secure:** All exams will be taken online using **Respondus Lockdown Browser** (See Module 1A: *RESOURCE: Respondus Lockdown Browser Installation, Checkout, and Use*). This browser is a tool that works with Canvas to help prevent students from accessing during the exam any unauthorized applications or information on their desktop/laptop, including other browsers and communications channels. (See Module 1A: *RESOURCE: Respondus Lockdown Browser Installation, Checkout, and Use* for more information.)
- **Location:** Most students will take their exams in the classroom. The only exceptions will be students taking a makeup exam or those with an exam-related accommodation from Disability Resources. Students with either of these exceptions will take the exam outside of the classroom. Students with disability accommodations associated with exams must schedule their exams directly with the Disability Resources Testing Center to occur on the same day the exam is given in the classroom. Students taking a makeup exam will take their exam at a time and location of their choice, but will have additional webcam monitoring requirements with which they must strictly comply. (See Module 1A: *RESOURCE: Respondus Lockdown Browser Installation, Checkout, and Use* for more information.)
- **Time:** Exams will be available only during an extended class period, with exams usually available up to 15 minutes before the usual lecture start time. Exceptions regarding start time are described in *Location*, above. Most students will be permitted 40 minutes to complete the exam but must submit their exams before the end of the class period even if they have not used all 40 minutes.
- **Disability Accommodations:** Students with disability accommodations will have their approved amounts of additional time to complete an exam loaded into Canvas before Exam 1. However, these students must take their exam in the Disability Resources Testing Center in order to receive all of their time, environment, and/or assistance accommodations. If students with accommodations test in the classroom, they will have no more time

than is available between the in-class exam window opening and closing. I also cannot provide any type of disability accommodations for any student without first receiving and acknowledging the formal notification email from Disability Resources.

- **"Closed Book:"** Exams will be **taken without using any notes, course material, internet searches, or unauthorized assistance or information of any kind.**
- **Format:** All questions will be multiple-choice, multiple-answer, or true/false. They will also be more challenging than many exam questions you have faced in high school or even in some TAMU courses. My exams are designed to gauge your **understanding** of the material, **not familiarity or ability to recall memorized facts.** This may require an unexpected shift in how many of you learn course material. I will provide both resources and guidance to help you improve your approach to learning and be able to improve your exam scores.
- **Signing Out:** Every student testing in the classroom MUST present their picture ID, sign the exam roster near the podium, and enter the current time **after completing the exam but before leaving the classroom.** Approved IDs include a TAMU ID, Driver's License, Green Card, passport, or other federal or state-issued ID that includes a picture. Digital photos of an acceptable ID may be presented in lieu of the actual card. Students without an ID should sign out with me after finishing the exam—they will be unable to receive credit for the exam until I have seen and verified their ID. Students who take the exam but do not sign the roster or enter the correct current time will NOT receive a score for the exam until they have met with me to help me establish whether this was an oversight or a possible Honor Code violation.
- **Excused Makeups:** Students with acceptable excuses who cannot take the the exam on the scheduled day should contact me as soon as they are aware of the conflict. Students who become ill or experience an emergency the night before, or the morning of, an exam should email me, NOT attend the exam, and know that I will excuse their absence. (See *UNIVERSITY POLICIES - Makeup Work Policy* later in this document, as well as the Module 1A resource in Canvas, *RESOURCE: Absences, Excuses, and Makeup Work*, for instructions on requesting excused absences.)
- **Unexcused Makeups:** I will permit each student **ONE opportunity during the semester to take an exam that was missed without an acceptable excuse.** Reasons may include sleeping through the exam, misremembering the date of the exam, etc.,. The request for an unexcused makeup must be submitted to me via email as soon as possible after the end of the scheduled exam period. If a request is not received within 24 hours of that exam window, I reserve the right to deny the request unless I agree there were justifiable extenuating circumstances. A student taking an **unexcused makeup exam** will forfeit 25 out of 100 possible points on the exam. I will deduct this penalty from whatever score they earn on the exam, making the maximum possible raw score a "75." Seeking to take more than one unexcused makeup exam during the semester will be a violation of the Honor Code.
- **"Dropped" Scores:** I will **exclude some of your lowest exam scores** when calculating your midterm and final course grades. However, the fifth exam score cannot be excluded because I want every student fully engaged in the last portion of the course. That last exam and the highest two of the first four exams will comprise the exam contribution to your **final course grade.** The highest of your first two exams will comprise the exam component of your **midterm grade.** In both cases, excluded scores will still appear in the gradebook.
- **HONOR CHECK: Cheating in any form, including helping others cheat, during exam preparation or execution will be an Honor Code violation.** The use of Respondus Lockdown Browser is intended to remind you of your obligations under the Aggie Honor Code and to help "level the playing field" and require honest work of all students taking an exam. However, your integrity is always the first and best line of defense. The responsibility of avoiding academic dishonesty lies solely with each of you. See the *Academic Integrity Statement & Policy* section near the end of this document for more important information about Honor Code violations and the critical role of personal responsibility.

Core Assessments -The university requires that I regularly submit work from every student that reflects their learning in the assigned Core Objective Areas. To meet this requirement, I have designed mandatory student activities that will be relatively short and not difficult, but they should be done thoughtfully and completely. The quality of your submissions will be assessed by the university, so I will not score these activities. However, your work will reflect on both yourself and this course. These assessments will be assigned in the Canvas modules and will count toward your final course grade, with credit being earned upon completion and submission of the assignments.

Course Communications

Largely because of my military background, I believe in the **critical value of clear, timely communication within a team.** Therefore, you will likely receive more messages from me than you have from many other faculty members. This is intentional. However, I also work very hard to send only important updates, notices, and recommendations.

Announcements - Announcements posted in Canvas will be my primary means of broadcast communication. These announcements will also automatically be forwarded to your TAMU email account. To ensure you do not miss any important changes or updates, **you must check Canvas or your TAMU email for any new announcements at least once a day.** Whenever I announce a change to the schedule, an assignment, or any other aspect of the course, I will assume that all of you will have received notification of any such change within 36 hours of the announcement.

Emails - I welcome your emails, but I will need your help. I spend hundreds of hours every semester responding to student emails. I use only my TAMU email account and never send personal messages through Canvas.

- **Please ensure that every subject line in every email starts with your course and section ID (section number or start time) or another clear course & section identifier, followed by the reason you are contacting me.** For example:
 - Subject: *POLS 207-502 - Request for excused absence*
 - Subject: *POLS 207 (9:10am) - Help with Activity 1.5*
 - Subject: *State & Local @ 8am - Urgent request for meeting*
- **Please DO NOT use Canvas messages to contact me.** I require that you email me via your TAMU email account instead of through Canvas.

This is because messages sent through Canvas arrive without any context and prevent me from replying with attachments. This slows me down and may result in a delay in my response.

Phone Calls - I prefer that we use emails to schedule phone calls in advance, whenever possible. If there is an urgent matter or an emergency, you may call me directly. Please note that **my office phone number is always transferred to my cell phone**. I also leave my cell phone ringer on most of each day and night, even when sleeping, so please be aware that most urgent matters can wait until the next morning before you press "CALL" between 10pm and 6am.

Grading Policy

Scores & Total Grade in Canvas

All activity scores will be posted on Canvas. The **Total Grade** calculated by Canvas and appearing in the Canvas gradebook will be calculated differently before and after midterm. Below, I explain how Canvas will do this.

- **BEFORE Midterm:** The **Total Grade** in Canvas will reflect the midterm grading weights shown below. In addition, I will configure Canvas to exclude some of your lowest scores before calculating midterm grades, as explained in each of the activity descriptions above and noted below. Any earned Exam 5 extra credit will not affect Canvas's calculated **Total Grade** because of Canvas's limitations. No course extra credit will yet be available before midterm. (*NOTE: An explanation of the two types of extra credit in this course follows below.*)
- **AFTER Midterm:** The **Total Grade** calculations in Canvas will be changed to reflect the final course grading weights, also shown below. I will also configure Canvas to automatically drop the lowest scores as described above in the activity descriptions and noted below. Any earned Exam 5 extra credit or course extra credit will not be included in Canvas's calculated **Total Grade** because of limitations in Canvas.

It is important to recognize that the Total Grade in the Canvas is only an approximation and is not your official grade. I will manually calculate your official midterm and final course grades based on the scores posted in Canvas and the rules laid out below. **You must be careful when using the Total Grade in Canvas** to judge your situation in this course. Below, I describe tools I have provided to you as a more reliable means to determine how you are doing in the course at any time.

Tracking and Projecting Your Course Grade

The **Canvas Module 1A resource**, *How to Track and Project Your Course Grade*, provides a complete description of the drawbacks of estimating your course grades as calculated by Canvas. There are also [links](#) in that resource to the **Course Grade Projection Tools I have built for you to use this semester**. These tools are much easier to use and more accurate than Canvas in helping you track and project your course grades they require that you not only enter the grades you have received so far, but also to project all remaining grades you will receive before the end of the course.

Letter Grades & Grade Calculations

Letter Grades - I will assign letter grades to Canvas at midterm and at semester's end using the following procedure. I will first calculate numerical grades, **rounding only to two decimal places** (00.00). I will then assign letter grades by **strictly** following the cutoffs below. **These letter grade cutoffs are non-negotiable!**

- A = ≥ 89.50
- B = ≥ 79.50 and < 89.50
- C = ≥ 69.50 and < 79.50
- D = ≥ 59.50 and < 69.50
- F = Any grade below 59.50

Calculation for Midterm Course Grades - I will round all scores to two decimal places. I will calculate your midterm grade as follows:

ACTIVITY	WEIGHT
Packback Posts	30% <i>(after excluding the lowest 1)</i>
Reality Checks	30% <i>(after excluding the lowest 2)</i>
Exam	40% <i>(after excluding the lowest 1)</i>
TOTAL	100%

Calculations for Final Course Grades - I will round all scores to two decimal places. I will calculate your final course grade as shown below.

ACTIVITY	WEIGHT
Attendance	10% <i>(based on 66% of lectures after Exam 1)</i>
Course Basics Quiz #1	1% <i>(Course Basics Quizzes 2-4 are Exam 5 Extra Credit)</i>
Packback Posts	15% <i>(after excluding the lowest 2)</i>
Reality Checks	15% <i>(after excluding the lowest 3)</i>
Core Assessments	4% <i>(full credit upon completion of all 3 activities)</i>
3-Exam Average	55% <i>(after excluding the lowest TWO scores from Exams 1-4 and adding all banked Exam 5 Extra Credit to Exam 5's score)</i>
Course Extra Credit	5% <i>(assigned after Midterm)</i>

TOTAL 105%

Extra Credit

I offer two types of extra credit.

1. **Exam 5 Extra Credit** opportunities may be offered at multiple points during the semester. Any points so earned will be cumulatively displayed in the Canvas grade book as "*Banked Exam 5 Extra Credit*" and will serve to increase your official Exam 5 score. Since Exam 5's score cannot be dropped, that is the most beneficial place to post any exam extra credit.
2. **Course Extra Credit** opportunities will be offered after midterm. I will add any points earned as *Course Extra Credit* directly to your final course grade. Thus, this type of extra credit has the greater potential to improve your course grade. I strongly recommend that you take advantage of these opportunities when offered.

Grade Change Requests

My policy on grade change requests is captured by the following maxim: "*Earn the grade you want—receive the grade you earned.*"

I will *only change a midterm or final course grade* if I made a mathematical error in computing the grade according to the guidelines defined above. To be fair to all my students, I will base your midterm and final course grade *solely* on the scores you earned in this course, including any extra credit *offered to the entire section* and satisfactorily completed by you. **I do not "bump" grades and I do not offer individual extra credit assignments.** I will uphold this policy even if you are short of the next higher letter grade by 0.01 points.

Since you will not be able to lobby for a higher grade at the end of this course, the best strategy is for you to learn well and earn more points than you will need for your needed or desired course grade. **Be sure to see me early and often this semester if this is difficult for you!**

Late Work Policy

All deadlines in this course will be before 5pm (not midnight!) on the designated days, unless otherwise announced in class and via Canvas. Any such changes will apply specifically to the designated assignment(s).

I will consider all assignments **submitted at or after the posted deadlines** to be late and they will be assigned a **score of zero**. The only clocks that count for assignment deadlines are the internal clocks within Canvas or Packback. Furthermore, "submitted" means that the assignment has been processed and accepted by Canvas or Packback. The time shown by the associated platform for the submission will be the official submission time.

In addition, **submissions made on the actual due dates of assignments will be done so at your own risk in the event that technical issues arise**. This means that any late-breaking technical problems on your end (e.g., computer), the distant end (e.g., Canvas, Packback), or in between (e.g., WiFi, internet provider) that occur on the due date and prevent your successful submission of an assignment will NOT be acceptable reasons for you to request additional attempts or deadline extensions from me.

Therefore, below is a highly recommended strategy:

- **Submit assignments early** whenever possible.
- If you must be working on an assignment on its due date, then plan to **submit the assignment as early as feasible that day** so you will have additional time to implement technical workarounds, if needed and possible.
- If it appears that you may be late submitting your work, then I recommend you **consider submitting an incomplete assignment before the deadline** in order to earn *some* points rather than be late and lose *all* of them.

Excused Absences - Work submitted by a student as makeup work for an excused absence is not considered late work and is exempted from the late work policy. (See *Attendance & Excused Absence Policy* and *Makeup Work Policy* sections in this document).

Projected Course Schedule

This is a **projected** schedule for the course. I will clearly announce any major changes to this schedule, especially exam dates. However, all changes will be reflected on Canvas and not in this syllabus. **Canvas will always be the default source for due dates, exam dates, and other major events and deadlines.**

Canvas Module	Day	Attendance Counted	Date	Chpt		Topic	Event
Week 1	W	No	17-Jan	0A	1	Course Intro	
	F	No	19-Jan	0B	2	Winning the Academic Battle	
Week 2	M	Practice	22-Jan	1A.1-A.4	3	What's Important in Politics?	**Add/Drop Deadline**
	W	Practice	24-Jan	1B	4	Science, Variations, Comparisons, Measures	Course Basics Quiz #1 due
	F	Practice	26-Jan	2A	5	Scatterplots & Correlation	
Week 3	M	Practice	29-Jan	2B	6	Causation & Spuriousness	
	W	Practice	31-Jan	3A.1-A.2	7	Political Cultures	**Official Census Date**
	F	Practice	2-Feb	3B	8	Public Continuums & Political Culture	Packback 1 due
Week 4	M	Practice	5-Feb	4A	9	Origins of Concern with Government	Course Basics Quiz #2 due RCs #1-3 due day before Exam 1
	W	No	7-Feb		10	EXAM 1 (Chpts 1-3)	
	F	1	9-Feb	4B	11	State Constitutions	Packback 2 due
Week 5	M	2	12-Feb	5A	12	Revenue Sources	
	W	3	14-Feb	5B	13	Budgeting	
	F	4	16-Feb	5C	14	Taxation, Part 1	Packback 3 due
Week 6	M	5	19-Feb	5D	15	Taxation, Part 2	
	W	6	21-Feb	5E	16	Expenditures & Debt	Course Basics Quiz #3 due
	F	7	23-Feb	6A	17	Voting & Participation	Packback 4 due
Week 7	M	No	26-Feb		18	EXAM 2 (Chpts 4-5)	RCs #4-5 due day before Exam 2
	W	8	28-Feb	6B	19	Voting Rights	
	F	9	1-Mar	6C	20	Voting Security & Accessibility	Packback 5 due
Week 8	M	10	4-Mar	7A	21	Political Parties & Competition, Part 1	**Midterm Grades Posted**
	W	11	6-Mar	7B	22	Political Parties & Competition, Part 2	
	F	12	8-Mar	7C	23	Interest Groups & Competition	Packback 6 due
*****SPRING BREAK (11-15 Mar)*****							<i>(No Packback posts due on 15 Mar)</i>
Week 9	M	13	18-Mar	8A	24	Local Governments, Part 1	Course Extra Credit Options open
	W	No	20-Mar		25	EXAM 3 (Chpts 6-7)	RCs #6-7 due day before Exam 2
	F	14	22-Mar	8B	26	Local Governments, Part 2	Packback 7 due
Week 10	M	15	25-Mar	8C	27	Local Governments, Part 3	Course Basics Quiz #4 due
	W	16	27-Mar	9B	28	Redistricting & Gerrymandering	
	F	No	29-Mar			READING DAY (No classes meet)	Packback 8 due
Week 11	M	17	1-Apr	9C	29	Legislative Ops 1	
	W	18	3-Apr	9C	30	Legislative Ops 2	
	F	19	5-Apr	10A	31	Executing the Law, Part 1	Packback 9 due
Week 12	M	20	8-Apr	10B	32	Executing the Law, Part 2	
	W	21	10-Apr	11A	33	Adjudicating the Law, Part 1	
	F	No	12-Apr		34	EXAM 4 (Chpts 8-10)	RCs #8-10 due day before Exam 4 Packback 10 due
Week 13	M	22	15-Apr	11B	35	Adjudicating the Law, Part 2	
	Tu	No	16-Apr			**Q-DROP DEADLINE**	
	W	23	17-Apr	11C	36	Adjudicating the Law, Part 3	
	F	24	19-Apr	12A1	37	Policy & Privilege	Packback 11 due
	Su	No	21-Apr				**Campus MUSTER @ 7pm, Reed Arena**
Week 14	M	25	22-Apr	12A2	38	Poverty, Part 1	
	W	26	24-Apr	12A3	39	Poverty, Part 2	
	F	27	26-Apr	12B1	40	Healthcare, Part 1	Packback 12 due
Week 15	M	28	29-Apr	12B2	41	Healthcare, Part 2	
	Tues	29	30-Apr	12C	42	Education (<i>Registrar's redefined "Friday"</i>)	All Excused Makeup Work Due
	W	No	1-May			READING DAY (No classes meet)	Core Assessments 1&2 Due Course Extra Credit Due Sect 501 RCs 11-12C due
	Th	No	2-May			EXAM 5 (Chpts 11-12) for Section 501 (8am lecture) @10:00-11:00am in ILCB 113	Sect 502 RCs 11-12C due
	F	No	3-May			EXAM 5 (Chpts 11-12) for Section 502 (9:10am lecture) @8:00-9:00am in ILCB 113	**Core Assessment 3 Due**
Week 16	Tu		7-May				All Exam 5 & final course grades posted to Canvas by 10pm
	W		8-May				All degree candidate grades due to Registrar before 6pm
	M		13-May				All remaining grades due to Registrar before noon

Use [this link](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13vx88oEb5JAbOOSTT6wdzM-on0DKSUE/edit?usp=sharing&oid=108238871677535719944&rtpof=true&sd=true)  (<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13vx88oEb5JAbOOSTT6wdzM-on0DKSUE/edit?usp=sharing&oid=108238871677535719944&rtpof=true&sd=true>) to download an accessible version of the above projected schedule as an Excel file

Use [this link](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13vx88oEb5JAbOOSTT6wdzM-on0DKSUE/edit?usp=sharing&oid=108238871677535719944&rtpof=true&sd=true)  (<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13vx88oEb5JAbOOSTT6wdzM-on0DKSUE/edit?usp=sharing&oid=108238871677535719944&rtpof=true&sd=true>) to download an accessible version of the above projected schedule as an Excel file

University Policies

COVID-19 Precautions

The university's latest policies and guidance about COVID-19 positive tests and exposures is always available at <https://covid.tamu.edu/index.html> (<https://covid.tamu.edu/index.html>).

Dr. Roblyer's Addendum:

- Mask-wearing is always respected in my classrooms.
- I believe that masks greatly reduce personal infections and transmission, that the vaccine reduces the seriousness of infection and saves lives, and that both masks and vaccinations are very necessary to protect our health and the health of others. I will be glad to explain why I hold these strong beliefs.
- In the event of a significant, local increase in COVID or flu cases, I may choose to wear a mask during lectures and indoor conversations.

Attendance & Excused Absence Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to **Student Rule 7** (<https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07/>) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Dr. Roblyer's Addendum:

- **Attendance in this course is part of the course grade** (See "Attendance" in the "Canvas and Course Activities" section above for more information)
- **Attendance** will be scored and comprise a portion of your final course grade. See Canvas Module 1B for details about attendance taking, tracking, and scoring.
- **Instructions for requesting an excused absence in this course are posted in Canvas Module 1A in a resource titled, "Absences, Excuses, and Makeup Work."** That resource contains a link to the **Excused Absence Request Form** that I use, as well as more important information about excused absences.
- *I will sometimes excuse absences that go beyond the reasons and timelines that **Rule 7** (<https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07/>) specifies when I believe the reason for the absence is morally equivalent to those listed in the rule or time timeline can be justified. (For example, I consider loss of a dear family friend to be justification for an excused absence to be with your family.) I am the sole determiner of whether to excuse any absence that exceeds the University requirements with regard to acceptable rationales and reporting timelines.*
- *If you are ill, I will almost always require that you obtain an excuse note from a healthcare provider. However, I will consider exceptions, depending on the circumstances. See the resource mentioned above for more details.*

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7 or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to **Student Rule 7** (<https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07/>) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the time frame for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" (**Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1** (<https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07/>)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" (**Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2** (<https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07/>)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (**See Student Rules 20 & 24** (<https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule24/>)).

Dr. Roblyer's Addendum:

- *If you are not certain if your absence could be excused or not, I welcome you contacting me to discuss the reason for your absence and the possibility of receiving an excuse.*
- *I do not offer makeup opportunities for unexcused absences except for the once-per-semester Unexcused Makeup Exam option. See the "Exams" section above for additional information about unexcused makeup exams.*
- **All work missed due to excused absences must be made up before 5:00pm on the last lecture day of the semester unless you have requested and received permission for a later submission. Such extensions are not common and are usually reserved for those students who had a very recent or complex excused absence.**
- *Complete instructions for accomplishing makeup work are posted in Canvas Module 1A: "RESOURCE: Absences, Excuses, and Makeup Work."*

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case" ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20 \(https://aggiehonorsystem.tamu.edu/Rules-and-Procedures/Rules/Honor-System-Rules\)](https://aggiehonorsystem.tamu.edu/Rules-and-Procedures/Rules/Honor-System-Rules)).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at [aggiehonorsystem.tamu.edu \(https://aggiehonorsystem.tamu.edu\)](https://aggiehonorsystem.tamu.edu).

Dr. Roblyer's Addendum: *Academic integrity is important because integrity is one of our Aggie Core Values. Someone who has integrity is inherently trustworthy. Trust is the foundation of not only honor, but also the education process and society as a whole. Without trust, this university and our world would become a miserable, horrid place.*

As a Former Student, faculty member, retired military officer, father, husband, brother, and son, I take the Aggie Honor Code and Student Rule 20 very seriously. I want all of you to do the same, going beyond the memorization of the 13 words it contains to actually knowing why it exists and how it is enforced. I believe this is so important that I am willing to take course time to teach you about the Aggie Honor System, as well as hold myself and my students responsible for upholding it. Through assignments in this course, all of my students will learn about multiple aspects of the Honor Code and the university rules concerning academic misconduct that put teeth in The Code.

Violations of Student Rule 20 in past semesters have included:

- Copying, passing, or otherwise misusing, exam, assignment, and extra credit materials (Fall 2016)
- Preparing for exams with "exam-like" materials that I did not provide and have not approved (Fall 2016)
- Obtaining, receiving, or providing unauthorized assistance or assistance that provides an unfair advantage (Fall 2023)
- Forging, or altering excuse documentation (Fall 2014)
- Answering attendance polls while not present in class or for someone else who is not present (2017)
- Copying answers during exams (Fall 2023, Spring 2019, and previously)
- Obtaining help from others on individual assignments (Fall 2023, Fall 2019, and previously)
- Submitting completion-credit assignments that are blank (Spring 2021)
- Submitting Packback posts that are re-worded versions of classmates' posts (Spring 2021), copied directly from the internet or my lecture slides (Fall 2022 and Spring 2023), re-used from previous courses (Fall 2022 and Spring 2023) or generated in part or in whole by AI-enabled chat bots (Spring 2023)

Because you are an Aggie, I am extending to you the trust conferred to those who fully understand and faithfully adhere to our Honor Code. Abuse of this trust will damage your honor, your academic standing, the reputation of this institution, and the foundation of the superb educational process that has existed here for many years.

It is also important to note the potential personal costs of engaging in academic misconduct. For a first-time honor violation, the university's recommended sanction is an F in the course (you'll learn all this entails during this course). For a second violation the expected sanctions is at least a one-semester suspension. Know that I will report and sanction ALL Honor Code violations. There will be no second-chances or negotiations.*

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Resources in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit [disability.tamu.edu \(https://disability.tamu.edu\)](https://disability.tamu.edu). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit [disability.tamu.edu \(https://disability.tamu.edu\)](https://disability.tamu.edu).

Dr. Roblyer's Addendum:

- *I will gladly and actively work with and for students with disabilities to optimize their educational experience in my courses. I have multiple family members with different types of disabilities, so I have had much practice in adjusting and accommodating. Do not hesitate to contact me if you are facing these kinds of challenges and there is something I can do to help.*
- *If you know or suspect that you may have a disability, you must advocate for yourself to receive assistance and accommodations. The first step in doing this is to make an appointment with Disability Resources (contact info above). I will also be happy to meet with you to discuss and encourage you to take this initial step, as well as for follow-up after any accommodations have been granted.*
- **Statement on Accessibility:** *I strive to make this course, including all its materials, accessible to all my students. If you take note of any part or aspect of my course that is not fully accessible to you, please inform me as soon as possible so I can work to remedy the problem.*

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1 \(https://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/08.01.01.M1.pdf\)](https://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/08.01.01.M1.pdf)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, you will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services \(https://caps.tamu.edu\)](https://caps.tamu.edu) (CAPS).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage \(https://titleix.tamu.edu\)](https://titleix.tamu.edu).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in proper self-care by utilizing the resources and services available from Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS).

Students who need someone to talk to can call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>.

Dr. Roblyer's Addendum:

- *All of my family members, including me, are familiar with personal mental health challenges. Life happens. Sometimes we are hurt or get broken and we cannot fix it ourselves. Make use of the many university resources that are free to you: CAPS, HelpLine, and the My SSP app. Talk with me. Don't remain silent or alone.*
- **Food/Housing Insecurity:** *These situations can cause substantial anxiety and stress. I urge any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing to contact me. As your instructor, I will connect you to TAMU resources that will help address these serious problems and bring you needed relief. (Note: Adapted from "Aggie Collegiates Ready to Explore the World (ACREW) Course Syllabus," Palomin, L., 2019.)*

Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. ^(Note 1) Each faculty member is entitled to full freedom in the classroom discussing the subject which the faculty member teaches. ^(Note 2) Texas A&M will not penalize or discipline members of the faculty because of their exercise of academic freedom.

Along with this freedom comes responsibility. It is the responsibility of faculty members to ensure that topics discussed are related to the classroom subject. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. ^(Note 3) It is not the proper role of the university or any outside agency to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive. ^(Note 4) Engaging with new ideas and perspectives helps students grow intellectually and is beneficial to the educational process.

Note 1: 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure

Note 2: Texas A&M System Regulation 12.01: Section 1.2

Note 3: American Association of University Professors Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students

Note 4: The Chicago Statement

Course Updates, Copyright, and Intellectual Property

The dates, times, and assignments listed or described in this document are subject to change at any point during the semester. Any such changes will be made as soon as known and will be posted on *Canvas* and announced via email.

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