

Common Course Syllabus

Government 2306

Revised March 26, 2024

(As required by the Texas Legislature and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and approved by Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and SPC)

Department: Social Sciences

Discipline: Government

Course Number: GOVT 2306

Course Title: Texas Government

Credit: 3 Lecture, 0 Lab

This course partially satisfies a core curriculum requirement: Government/Political Science Foundational Component Area (070)

Available Formats: Conventional (Fully Face to Face), Fully Online, Hybrid, ITV

Campus: Levelland, Downtown Center, Plainview, Dual Credit

Textbook: Varies according to instructor. (Refer to each instructor's instructions for textbook requirements.)

Course Specific Instructions: Each instructor will attach his/her course with specific instructions.

Course Description: Origin and development of the Texas constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and inter-governmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas.

Course Objectives addressed:

1. **critical thinking:** to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
2. **communication:** to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
3. **social responsibility:** to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
4. **personal responsibility:** to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students who have completed this course will:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.
2. Describe state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.
6. Analyze the state and local election process.
7. Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas.

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: A writing assignment rubric will be used to determine the extent of improvement that the students have gained during the semester.

Course Evaluation: See the instructor's course information sheet for specific items used in evaluating student performance.

Attendance Policy: Students must make every effort to attend face-to-face courses. Whenever absences become excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the instructor may recommend that the student withdraw from the course. Each instructor will have additional information about attendance on his/her course information sheet.

Dropping a Course: Students may drop courses through Texan Connect, the Admissions and Records Office, or Advising and Testing Center through the late registration period.

After late registration has closed, a student must complete the online [Student Initiated Drop Request](#) to drop a course.

Students may also drop courses in person at any campus location by completing a Student Initiated Drop Form. Complete a [Student Initiated Drop Form](#) and return the signed form to the Levelland Admissions and Records Office, the Student Support Center at the Lubbock Downtown Center, the Lubbock Career and Technical Center, or Plainview Center. You must have a picture ID to complete the drop.

A mark of "W" will be given for student-initiated drops that occur prior to and through the last day to drop as indicated in the online Academic Calendar found here:

<https://www.southplainscollege.edu/academiccalendar/index.php>.

Syllabus Statements: For information about Artificial Intelligence, Disabilities, Non-Discrimination, Intellectual Exchange, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) Team, Campus Concealed Carry, and COVID-19, please use this link: <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/>.

Nelson Course Syllabus GOVT 2306

Texas Government: Texas Constitution and Topics

Course Description

The object of this course is to give the student a better understanding of Texas government. This course will focus on Texas in the federal system, the Texas Constitution, voting and elections, political parties, the Texas legislature, the Texas governor and the executive branch, the Texas judiciary, law and due process, public policy, and local government.

Instructor

Ms. Be Nelson, M.A.

Email

hnelson@southplainscollege.edu

Office Location & Hours

Room AD132, Levelland
Campus
(806) 716-2466 (office)
You may email to schedule a
video conference

Course Resources:

The Texas Experience: *Lone Star Politics Policy and Participation*, 1e Update, 2022 Midterm Elections Update, by Texas Tribune, Paul Benson, Anthony Giardino

TexBook Syllabus Statement:

This course is part of your TexBook program, which means you don't need to purchase a textbook or access code for this course. TexBook is the required content (either an eBook or online Courseware) for your course, and is provided for you via the Bibliu platform from Day 1 of class.

- Cost of TexBook: this required content is provided as part of a Program called 'Inclusive Access', which means that content is provided for you at the lowest price available from the publisher. The cost for this is included in your tuition.
- How to access your digital content via Bibliu: you can access your material via the Bibliu link inside your Blackboard Course, or directly via the Bibliu app. If you have issues with this, please contact your professor, the Bookstore Manager or Bibliu Support (see below).
- The Bibliu platform: you can use the Bibliu platform to enhance your learning experience, with features including: highlighting, notes and reading text aloud. For more details and support on how to use Bibliu, please visit the [BibliU support pages](#), or contact Bibliu support via the email: support@bibliu.com
- Opting out: you can Opt-Out of the TexBook Program, up until the Opt-Out deadline, via the banner displayed when you open the Bibliu platform. Remember that Opt-Out deadlines vary by term, and if you choose to Opt-Out you will lose access to this low-price option, and will need to purchase the content through a different method. If you opt-Out, the fee will be refunded to your account.

Useful contacts:

1. Bookstore Manager: Christian Bruno - christian.bruno@bibliu.com
2. Bookstore Text Coordinator: Trish Wells - patricia.wells@bibliu.com
3. Bibliu Support: email support@bibliu.com

Additional Reading Materials: Instructor will provide additional readings from a variety of sources including current event articles. Readings will be made available to students electronically when possible.

Course Structure: This online course will include supplemental videos, handouts, assignments, quizzes, and tests. All materials, including the class required textbook, will be accessible through Blackboard.

Attendance: You must have a consistent, functioning internet connection to take this course. As this is an online-only course, you are required to have access to the internet. It is your responsibility to ensure that your computer (desktop or laptop) and connection are functioning properly. Technical problems are never an excuse for failed or incomplete work. If you experience a technical or internet issue that affects your graded work, contact me immediately.

Always maintain professional and respectful language, both in emails and in your online coursework. Any disruptive or disrespectful behavior will result in a loss of credit for the assignment and possibly a referral to the Office of Student Conduct. Racism, sexism, homophobia, or any other forms of bigotry are not acceptable in this class.

You are responsible for all information and announcements made in the course. Prepare to log onto Blackboard every day to check for updates, changes, or new information. Read the course home page thoroughly and check announcements daily. Also, be sure that you check your school email daily so that you do not miss any communication from the instructor. Course rules and expectations are subject to change. Students may not print, save, photograph, or make any record of graded content in this course.

Student Performance: You must maintain your standards throughout the duration of the semester. There will be no extra credit and there will be little time for playing “catch-up” in a course that runs for 4 weeks and two days. **If you fail three (3) consecutive assignments or quizzes, you may be dropped from the class with a failing grade with no further warning.** If you repeatedly fail to submit required work on time, you may be dropped from the class at the discretion of the instructor. Please do not drop this course without contacting the professor to ensure that this is the best course of action for you. **You must complete Quiz 1 and the Ice Breaker Discussion by July 10th, 2025, or you will be automatically dropped from the course.**

GENERAL POLICIES

- ❖ **Behavior:** Students are expected to be considerate of one another as well as of the instructor. In the words of the late Molly Ivins, “It really is possible to disagree with someone's policies without hating them. Grown-ups can do that.” Conduct that interferes with other students’ right to learn will not be tolerated.
- ❖ **Getting help:** Please email me if you have any problems with readings, lecture, or assignments. If you are having difficulty of any kind **the earlier you ask for help, the easier the solution to your problem will be.** I cannot help if I am unaware. When emailing, please be sure to include your full name, the course number, and section number in the subject line of your email. Ex. GOVT 2306-153; the course number is 2306, the section number is 153.
- ❖ **Academic Honesty:** Honesty is the expected standard. **Plagiarism and cheating (copying answers from an outside source or another student, using AI to generate work) will not be tolerated and can be grounds for dismissal from South Plains College.** Incidents of cheating on examinations will result in failure of the course and potential consequences such as dismissal from South Plains College.
- ❖ **AI (artificial intelligence):** If I suspect that a student has submitted artificially generated discussions, assignments, or test answers, I will provide sources of AI detection before requesting a conference. Whether you attend class in-person or online, you will be required to meet with me via video conference where you will be given the opportunity to respond verbally to questions. If you fail to attend a meeting, or you cannot answer questions verbally, you will be given a zero. While AI is useful, it is silly to attend a class where you have no intention of actually acquiring new information.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

For information regarding Intellectual Exchange, Disabilities, Non-Discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) Team, COVID-19, and Campus Concealed Carry, please use the following link: [Syllabus Statements \(southplainscollege.edu\)](https://southplainscollege.edu/syllabus-statements).

Student Absence for Observation of Religious Holy Days: A student who is absent from classes for the observation of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence **if, not later than the fifteenth day after the first day of the semester, the student had notified the instructor of each scheduled class that the student would be absent for a religious holy day.**

*****I will accommodate students who have the appropriate documentation of disability. Documented or not; however, contact me during the first week of class to discuss our plan of action.*****

EVALUATION METHOD

Quizzes	20%
3 Exams	35%
Assignments	45%

Grading: The grading scale will be as follows:

90-100 = A	80-89 = B	70-79 = C	60-69 = D	59 or below = F
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You earn your grade; that grade is entered.

- ❖ **Quizzes:** The instructor will administer approximately 13 (may drop a quiz) quizzes. Students will be permitted up to two attempts (for an average grade). This will prevent those tempted to “peek” at the quiz before being prepared.
- ❖ **Exams:** There will be **3 exams**. These exams account for 35% of your overall grade. The final exam will not be cumulative. Exams will consist of a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer or fill-in-the-blank questions. Make-up exams will be allowed with prior notification, but may require documentation. Students wishing to take a make-up exam must apply to the instructor via email. **There are no make-ups for the FINAL EXAM. Exam 1 and Exam 2 will use HonorLock for proctoring.**
- ❖ **Assignments:** There will be varying **assignments** to supplement student knowledge and understanding. Assignments have a greater weight than a single quiz because there are fewer assignments than quizzes. It would be best not to attempt to offset a zero. Late assignments will receive an automatic deduction of ten points each day they are late. No assignment will be accepted 3 days after their due date. Keep in mind that grades are due immediately after the final so late work cannot be accepted in the 5th week. As the assignments vary in this course, some assignments will take me longer to grade than others. If you feel that feedback is not coming fast enough, please email me. I will make every effort to update grades within a week of their due date. If you have any issues getting work done in the time given, please reach out to me. I will make every effort to help you succeed in this class. Please just be sure to communicate.

Tentative Course Schedule for Pacing

This course takes place across 4 weeks and a few days. I will separate your course content into those weeks to help you stay organized. Email me if you wish to jump ahead so that I can accommodate you, but exams will have a scheduled window. The heaviest weeks of work and material in this class are Week 2 and Week 3.

WK	Topic	Reading	
1	Texas Society and Political Culture Federalism and the Texas Constitution	Ch. 1 Ch. 2	Ice Breaker Quizzes 1-2 ASSIGNMENT 1
2	The Texas Legislature The Governor in Texas The Plural Executive and the Bureaucracy in Texas The Texas Courts System	Ch. 7 Ch. 8 Ch. 9 Ch. 10	Quizzes 3-6 ASSIGNMENTS 2-4 EXAM 1 – DUE JULY 20th
3	Voting and Elections in Texas Political Parties in Texas Interest Groups in Texas Politics The Media and Public Opinion in Texas	Ch. 3 Ch. 4 Ch. 5 Ch. 6	Quizzes 7-10 ASSIGNMENT 5-7 EXAM – DUE JULY 27th
4	Criminal Justice Policy in Texas Local and County Governments, and Special Districts in Texas	Ch. 12 Ch. 11	Quizzes 11-12 ASSIGNMENT 8
5	Public Policy, Finance, and Budgeting in Texas	Ch. 13	Quiz 13 FINAL (EXAM 3) – DUE AUG 7th

***Please pay attention to due dates. Do not assume they will follow a pattern.**

Week 5 only includes Aug 4th – Aug 7th Final grades must be submitted to the registrar by Aug 8th, 2025.*

GETTING ADDITIONAL HELP

SPC Tutors

Tutoring is FREE for all currently enrolled students. Make an appointment or drop-in for help at any SPC location or online! Visit the link below to learn more about how to book an appointment, view the tutoring schedule, and view tutoring locations.

<http://www.southplainscollege.edu/exploreprograms/artsandsciences/teacheredtutoring.php>

Tutor.com

You also have 180 FREE minutes of tutoring with Tutor.com each week, and your hours reset every Monday morning. Log into Blackboard, click on the tools option from the left-hand menu bar. Click on the Tutor.com link and you will automatically be logged in for free tutoring. You may access tutor.com tutors during the following times:

Monday – Thursday: 8pm-8am, Friday: 6pm – 8am Monday morning.

For questions regarding tutoring, please email tutoring@southplainscollege.edu or call 806-716-2538.

