

**Fall 2025**  
**GOVT 2306-002-H002: Texas Government**  
**Department of Social Sciences**  
**South Plains College**

**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, Lubbock Downtown Center, Plainview

**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.

**Course Purpose:** Government 2306, as taught at South Plains College, is a reading intensive course designed to acquaint the learner with the 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. This course meets the statutory requirements as set forth by the state of Texas.

**Course Requirements:** To maximize a student's potential to complete this course, he/she should attend all class meetings, complete all homework assignments and examinations in a timely manner, and complete all other projects or papers as assigned in the instructor's specific instructions.

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

**Attendance Policy:** Whenever absences become excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn 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:** South Plains College policies concerning Disabilities, Non-discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation), Intellectual Exchange, Campus Concealed Carry, COVID-19, and AI (Artificial Intelligence) can be found here: [Syllabus Statements](#).

### **Instructor Information**

Dr. Jonathan Martin

Office: Student Services Building 116

E-mail: [jmartin@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:jmartin@southplainscollege.edu)

Office Phone: 806-716-2198

Office Hours:

- Monday: 8:45-10:45am
- Tuesday: 10:45-11:45am
- Wednesday: 8:45-10:45am
- Thursday: 10:45-11:45am
- Friday: 9:00-11:00am

### **Textbook and Course Readings**

This course utilizes the Texas Government panOpen OER (Open Educational Resource) from LibreTexts. The textbook is FREE and available online through this link:

[https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Political\\_Science\\_and\\_Civics/Texas\\_Government\\_\(panOpen\)](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Political_Science_and_Civics/Texas_Government_(panOpen))

In addition to the textbook, I will assign other reading material in Blackboard throughout the semester.

### **Policies and Procedures**

#### Participation Statement

For online courses, students **MUST** actively participate by completing an academic assignment by the official census date **September 10**. Students who do not do so, will be dropped from the course.

#### Course Withdrawals

The last day to withdraw/drop with a grade of “W” is **December 4**. It is the student’s responsibility to withdraw from this course. Otherwise, students will be assigned their earned letter grade at the end of the course. Course averages will be updated twice each week, and guidance will be provided throughout the term to help students decide whether they need to drop the class or not. For more information regarding drops/withdrawals, please visit <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/admission-aid/apply/schedulechanges.php>.

### Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or unauthorized assistance, will not be tolerated in this course. This includes, but is not limited to, copying another student's work, submitting work completed by someone else, or using unapproved tools or sources. The use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT or similar, to generate, assist with, or complete any part of an assignment is strictly prohibited. If I determine that a student has used AI on an assignment:

1. On the first offense, the student will receive a zero on the assignment. In addition, the highest possible letter grade the student can earn in the course will be a C.
2. On the second offense, the student will receive a zero for the entire course, and I might file an academic dishonesty report to South Plains College.

In addition, if a student cites a source in an assignment, I may request reasonable evidence that the student accessed and used the source directly, such as notes, page numbers, or screenshots. Failure to provide such evidence may be treated as academic dishonesty. In short, students are expected to complete their work with honesty, integrity, and in accordance with college policies.

### Classroom Decorum

You are expected to conduct yourself in an appropriate manner. It is important to arrive to class on time and not disturb others by talking, using your cell phone, or leaving class early.

Furthermore, I expect every student to be respectful to other students when discussing politics.

Failure to adhere to classroom decorum may result in a point deduction to your participation grade.

### Student Grievance Procedure

A student grievance is a College related issue or condition that a student believes to be unfair, inequitable, discriminatory, or a hindrance to the educational process. A grievance also includes discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. You can find more information about the student grievance procedure here:

[http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human\\_resources/policy\\_procedure/fm.php](http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human_resources/policy_procedure/fm.php)

### **Grades**

#### Grading Scale

A: 89.5-100%  
B: 79.5-89.49%  
C: 69.5-79.49%  
D: 59.5-69.49%  
F: Below 59.5%

#### Final Grade Calculation

Exams	60%
Participation	15%
Quizzes	10%
Letter to the Editor	10%
Reflection Essay	5%

### Exams (60%)

There are three exams, and your exam average comprises 60% of your overall grade. Furthermore, all three exams will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions. For the first two exams, there is a late penalty if you miss class on exam day for an unexcused reason. If you miss Exam 3 (final exam), you will receive a zero. Finally, you are not allowed to take any exam early.

### Participation (15%)

Active participation is essential to your success in this class and, more broadly, to the success of any learning experience. There will be numerous opportunities throughout the semester to participate by answering questions and completing participation assignments. At the end of the semester, your participation grade will be based on attendance, the successful completion of participation assignments, and engagement during class discussions.

I will track your participation and attendance throughout the semester. You are allowed up to 6 unexcused absences without penalty. Beginning with the seventh unexcused absence, I will deduct 5 points from your participation grade for each additional absence. Furthermore, I reserve the right to deduct points from your participation grade for excessive tardiness, violations of classroom decorum (e.g., cell phone use, leaving class early for unexcused reason, wearing earbuds, rude other students or the instructor).

If you have questions about your participation grade throughout the semester, you are welcome to ask me for feedback on how you are doing.

### Quizzes (10%)

I will assign at least 4 quizzes throughout the semester in Blackboard. Quiz format will vary and will be based on assigned readings.

### Letter to the Editor (10%)

For this assignment, you will write a persuasive essay to a fictitious newspaper editor (letter to the editor) in which you give your opinion on a current issue in Texas politics. More information on this assignment will be provided to you later in the semester.

### Reflection Essay (5%)

A reflection essay is a short paper where you explain how a topic connects to your own life. In this class, you will write at least one reflection essay. I'll give you a news article to read, and then you'll write an essay that includes a summary of the article, any questions you had or parts that were unclear, and an explanation of how the information relates to or affects you personally. I'll provide detailed instructions for the assignment later in the semester. Also, I may assign a second reflection essay as well.

## **Class Schedule\***

### Week 1 (Aug 25 & 27)

Course Introduction

Chapter 1: Political Culture

Week 2 (Sept 3)

\*\*\*No Class on Monday, September 1 (Labor Day)\*\*\*

Chapter 3: The Texas Constitution

Week 3 (Sept 8 & 10)

Chapter 2: The American Federal System

Week 4 (Sept 15 & 17)

Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature

Week 5 (Sept 22 & 24)

Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature

Week 6 (Sept 29 & Oct 1)

\*\*\*Exam 1 is on Wednesday, October 1\*\*\*

Chapter 8: The Executive Branch and the Governor of Texas

Week 7 (Oct 6 & 8)

Chapter 8: The Executive Branch and the Governor of Texas

Week 8 (Oct 13 & 15)

Chapter 10: Local Government

Week 9 (Oct 20 & 22)

Chapter 10: Local Government

Week 10 (Oct 27 & 29)

Chapter 5: Elections and Political Participation in Texas

Week 11 (Nov 3 & 5)

Chapter 4: Political Parties in Texas

\*\*\*Exam 2 is on Wednesday, November 5\*\*\*

Week 12 (Nov 10 & 12)

Chapter 9: The Evolution of the Law in Texas

Week 13 (Nov 17 & 19)

Chapter 11: Public Policy in Texas

Week 14 (Nov 24)

Chapter 6: Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas

\*\*\*No Class on Wednesday, November 26 (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 15 (Dec 1 & 3)

\*\*\*Letter to the Editor is due on Wednesday, December 3\*\*\*

Chapter 12: Criminal Justice Policy in Texas

Chapter 13: State Finance

Week 16 (December 10)

\*\*\*Exam 3 is on Wednesday, December 10 at **10:15am**\*\*\*

\*I reserve the right to alter the class schedule as I deem necessary. Any adjustments will be announced in class and/or listed on Canvas.