

Common Course Syllabus
GOVT 2306-153: 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: 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/>.

Instructor Information

Dr. Jonathan Martin

Office: Student Services Building 116

E-mail: 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.

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.

Blackboard Information

We will be using Blackboard for this course. Blackboard is used for announcements, completing assignments, emails, discussion boards and the gradebook. You will also find additional resource materials to help you this semester, such as lecture notes, power point presentations, video clips, audio clips, and more.

Blackboard can be accessed by logging into the MySPC portal or going directly to <https://southplainscollege.blackboard.com>.

Troubleshooting

If you experience technical difficulties with Blackboard, please submit a Blackboard help ticket on this webpage: <http://www.southplainscollege.edu/instructional-technology/Help.php>

Grading Scale

A: 89.5-100%
B: 79.5-89.4%
C: 69.5-79.4%
D: 59.5-69.4%
F: Below 59.5%

Overall Grade Formula

Quizzes	(15%)
Discussions	(15%)
Short Answer Assignments	(30%)
Letter to the Editor	(10%)
Exams	(20%)
Reflection Essays	(10%)

Assignments

Quizzes (15%)

Most weeks that cover a textbook chapter will include a quiz. Generally, a quiz will have at least 10 questions (e.g., multiple choice, true/false, or free response) based on the assigned reading and videos for that particular week. While I do accept late quizzes, there is a late penalty. Moreover, your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped.

Discussions (15%)

There are four discussion assignments in this course. Some discussion threads will be based on a current event in Texas politics, while other discussions will examine the structure of Texas government. The purpose of the discussions is for students to demonstrate their knowledge of course material and engage with other students on important topics in Texas politics.

For each discussion, you will be required to make an initial post in which you answer the question(s) posed in the prompt. After you make your initial post, you must read the posts from your fellow classmates and make two additional posts in response to posts from other students. I will accept late discussion assignments, but there will be a 10-point deduction for every day that it is late.

Finally, all students are required to maintain professional language in online discussions. If you offer criticism, do it in a polite and constructive manner. For example, avoid name-calling, curse words, and slurs. Any text that a reasonable person would find offensive will likely result in a loss of credit for the assignment. If you need further clarification, please contact the instructor.

Short Answer Assignments (30%)

There are four short answer assignments in this course. Each assignment will ask you to answer a series of questions covering important material from the textbook and lectures. It is important that you accurately answer all parts of the questions and cite the textbook (or another reputable source) to support your answers. All short answer assignments will be submitted through Blackboard. Late short answer assignments will be accepted, but there is a late penalty.

Letter to the Editor (10%)

This assignment requires you to critically read and assess a newspaper article or editorial. Then, you will write a letter to the editor in which you develop a persuasive argument and a call to action. More information on this assignment will be provided to you later in the semester.

Exams (20%)

There are two exams (midterm and final) in this course. Both exams will have multiple-choice and possibly some true/false or free response questions.

Reflection Essays (10%)

A reflection essay is a short paper where you explain how a topic connects to your own life. In this class, you will write two reflection essays. 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.

Policies and Procedures

Syllabus Statements

For information regarding Intellectual Exchange, Disabilities, Non-Discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) Team, and Campus Concealed Carry, please use the following link:

<https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/>

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.

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

Course Schedule

Week	Assignments	Due Date
1: Introduction	Syllabus Quiz	Aug 26
2: Texas Constitution	Quiz, Discussion	Aug 28
3: Texas in the Federal System	Quiz	Sept 3
4: Legislative Branch	Quiz, Short Answer Assignment #1	Sept 10
5: Executive Branch	Quiz, Discussion	Sept 17
6: The Judiciary	Quiz, Reflection Essay #1	Sept 24
7: Local Government	Quiz, Short Answer Assignment #2	Oct 1
8: Midterm	Midterm Exam	Oct 8
9: Political Parties	Quiz	Oct 15
10: Campaigns and Elections	Quiz, Discussion	Oct 22
11: Interest Groups	Quiz, Short Answer Assignment #3	Oct 29
12: State Finance	Quiz, Discussion	Nov 5
13: Public Policy	Quiz, Reflection Essay #2	Nov 12
14: Crime, Corrections, and Public Safety	Quiz, Short Answer Assignment #4	Nov 19
15: Essay	Letter to the Editor	Dec 3
16: Final Exam	Final Exam	Dec 9