

South Plains College

GOVT 2306

FALL 2023

Texas Government

Traditional Course, SS 101

Professor Drew Landry

dlandry@southplainscollege.edu

Levelland Campus; Student Services rm 116

Office Phone Number: (806) 716 – 4032

Office Hours: MW: 2:30 – 4:30pm; TR: 12:30 – 1:30pm; F: 10am – 12pm (noon)

No office hours during finals week.

Common Course

Department: Social Sciences

Discipline: Government

Course Number: GOVERNMENT 2306

Course Title: Texas Government (Texas Constitution and Topics)

Credit: 3 Lecture, 0 Lab

Satisfies a core curriculum requirement? Yes, Social Science and ALL Undergraduate Degrees

Prerequisites: TSI compliance in Reading

Available Formats: Conventional, INET, ITV

Campus: Levelland, Lubbock Downtown Center, Lubbock Center, Reese, 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: This course is a study of the functions performed in the American system of state governments, with special reference to the development of governance in Texas and its Constitutions. This course satisfies the Legislative requirements for teacher certification.

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.

Approval Number: 45.1002.51 25

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excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course.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.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students who have completed this course will:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas Constitution.
2. Demonstrate and understanding of 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. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.

Fundamental Component Areas (FCA):

Students will be expected to perform satisfactorily in four FCA.

1. Critical Thinking Skills – to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information by:

- a. Generating and communicating ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information,
 - b. Gathering and assessing information relevant to a question,
 - c. Analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information.
2. Communication – to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral or visual communication by:
Developing, interpreting, and expressing ideas through written, oral, or visual communication.
3. Social Responsibility Skills – to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively I regional, national, and global communities by:
 - a. Demonstrating intercultural competence,
 - b. Identifying civic responsibility,
 - c. Engaging in regional, national, and global communities.
4. Personal Responsibility – to include the ability to connect choices, action, and consequences to ethical decision-making by:
 - a. Reading, understanding and affirming agreement and acceptance of principles, guidelines and requirements set forth in the “Statement of Personal Responsibility of Students” (Attached)
 - b. Evaluating choices and actions and relating consequences to personal decision-making
 - c. Accepting personal responsibility for decisions and actions taken or not taken

Course Description

This course is a study of the functions performed in the American system of state governments, with special reference to the development of governance in Texas and its Constitutions. This course satisfies the Legislative requirements for teacher certification. In this course, students will learn about 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.

Course Requirements/Expectations

Late work will not be accepted unless a note from a medical doctor is presented.

Please no cell phone, pager, iPod, earbuds, headphones, etc. usage during class. This is rude to me and distracting to your classmates. Please be respectful of others and power down your cellular devices, pagers, iPods, etc. and remove your earbuds or headphones prior to the start of class.

Once the time for class arrives, the doors will close and lock and class will begin. Your admittance into the class will not be allowed once the doors are closed. Should you be late, you may attend a later or earlier class similar to the one in which you are registered. This policy will

start in the third week of the semester. I advise you to not be late. If an emergency occurs, that is a different situation and I should be notified.

Students may use a laptop or tablet computer during lecture. However, no student is allowed to take a picture of notes unless given specific permission to do so. Students are prohibited from sending another person into class to take a picture of the notes.

While this course requires no prior knowledge of Texas politics, there is considerable reading related to a wide range of topics. It is essential that students complete the weekly readings before class. We cover a great deal of material so it is critical that you attend class regularly, take careful notes, keep abreast of the readings, and participate fully in class discussions. If you feel you need extra help in managing the course materials, contact me and I will help you.

Recommended Textbook

Comes with class as e-book

Jones, M.P., Maxwell, W.E., & Crain, E. (2023). *Texas Politics Today*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning

Communication

In the event students need to get in contact with Professor Landry, please send all communications to his South Plains College email. In doing so, please put the class in which you are enrolled in the subject line so I know how to specifically help you remedy the issue. Also, please follow the guidelines put forth in the Academic English portion of the syllabus when submitting an email.

Coursework

Students will be given four (4) exams throughout the semester. The exams are aimed to evaluate student progress in the class. If discrepancies exist, notify me immediately. There are no makeups except in the case of an emergency and with the display of a doctor's note.

Also, students will be given one (1) writing assignment. The writing assignment will be turned in through turnitin.com via Blackboard. Students will receive a written explanation on what is expected one (1) week before the assignment is due. For every day late – including weekends – the paper will succumb to a five (5) point deduction on its final grade.

There will be content quizzes throughout the semester. These are conducted through the class' Blackboard site and will be about five (5) to ten (10) questions covering the material from class to class. There are no makeups for these quizzes.

Last, and certainly not least, is class participation. Students are required to participate in class. A significant amount of class points lies in participating and if a student is absent, she/he cannot

participate in class. If students are late and/or arbitrarily leave class for a significant amount of time, uses cell phone during class, etc., their participation grade will suffer. If an emergency occurs, that is a different situation and I should be notified.

Exam Day Conduct

When taking exams, students need a pencil and an eraser. Cellular devices, tablets, iPods, earbuds, headphones, pagers, etc., need to be either turned off, removed, or silenced – **not on vibrate** – and stowed away in a backpack, purse, bag, or any other packaging device. All backpacks, purses, bags, etc., need to be placed on the floor and in the front of the classroom and all course material need to be inside it and closed. If any student chooses to ignore this directive and unsilenced phone goes off during an exam, every student in the class will have ten (10) points automatically deducted. Also, all hats are to be removed upon taking an in – class exam. In short, do not be a jerk.

Yawning

If any student feels the need to yawn during class, it is expected to do so silently while covering his/her mouth. Failure to follow such a simplistic social norm may result in the professor responding to such action.

Grades

Grade Calculation

In calculating grades, I keep it very simple. I take the total points a student accumulated and divide that number into the total points possible and multiply by one hundred (100). The result from this basic math is your class percentage. A scale of what percentage constitutes a letter grade is below.

Rounding

Students are ingrained to think a percentage ending in “.5” will be rounded to the nearest whole number. I only round to the nearest whole number if a student has at least a “.9.” This is my practice and I have done this for numerous years. I have no intention of changing it. If you desire a better grade, earn it.

Grading Breakdown

Four Exams (Two worth 110 points; One worth 101 points; One worth 100 points) = **421**

One Writing Assignment is an exam

Five Quizzes (Four worth 30 points; One worth 25 points) = **145**

Participation (worth 75 points) = **75**

Total Points = 641

At the end of the semester, I will not respond to any student who wishes to plead for a grade change. Students need to keep track of their grades throughout the semester.

Grading Scale

100 – 90%	A
89 – 80%	B
79 – 70%	C
69 – 60%	D
59% and below	F

Attendance Policy

Your attendance in class is heavily recommended but not required. Attendance will be taken throughout the semester at the discretion of the professor.

If any student accumulates excessive absences after the last day to drop classes (11/30/2023), he/she will be dropped from the course.

For further information on SPC's attendance policy, please seek the student handbook and college catalog.

Academic Integrity

It is the aim of the faculty of South Plains College to foster a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own any work which he or she has not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a most serious offense and renders the offender liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension.

Cheating: Dishonesty of any kind on examinations or on written assignments, illegal possession of examinations, the use of unauthorized notes during an examination, obtaining information during an examination from the textbook or from the examination paper of another student, assisting others to cheat, alteration of grade records, illegal entry or unauthorized presence in an office are examples of cheating. This includes the use of artificial intelligence (AI) assistance on any assigned materials.

Complete honesty is required of the student in the presentation of any and all phases of course work. This applies to quizzes of whatever length, as well as to final examinations, to daily reports and to term papers.

Plagiarism: Offering the work of another as one's own, without proper acknowledgment, is plagiarism; therefore, any student who fails to give credit for quotations or essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines and other reference works, or from the themes, reports or other writings of fellow student or from AI assistance, is guilty of plagiarism.

Punishment for Plagiarism

Any student who commits plagiarism and is caught in doing so will be punished on the first offense with a zero (0) for the grade. If a student commits and is caught on a second offense of plagiarism, the professor will seek the removal of the student from the course with an F for the grade, report the student to the Dean of Students, and may suggest the student's expulsion from the college.

Intellectual Property: All material on the course's Blackboard page, including quizzes, are the intellectual property of the professor and at no time may a student screenshot a question or post any exam or quiz material online. If a student does this, he/she will be warned on the first offense. If the instance repeats, the student will be disciplined accordingly. This is a form of stealing from me and it will not be tolerated.

Technology Policy

The following is Professor Landry's policy on the usage of laptop computers, iPads, earbuds, headphones, and other mobile tablets in the classroom. Professor Landry will allow students to use tablets and laptops but no student may take a picture of the notes unless given special permission to do so.

It is strongly advised not to use cellular/mobile phones while in the classroom. Texting is a neat method of communicating but it is obvious when a student is texting and/or using mobile devices. Please understand you are in an educational setting and people are around you. If you would rather watch social media than come to class, that is your choice but watching social media while in class is rude to me and your classmates. It is asked of students to be respectful of me and other students while attending class.

Please remove all earbuds/headphones prior to the start of class. The class works well enough without background music.

Blackboard and Technology Use in Class

Supplementary class materials may be found on our class' Blackboard webpage. Any additions will be announced in class in hopes to stem any confusion.

There may be times when YouTube is utilized in class to illustrate a point made either by the professor or the textbook or both. When it is, closed captioned options will be used for the hearing impaired.

There will be no videos posted on the class' Blackboard website.

Academic English

South Plains College requires all students to become proficient in "academic English," a form of English typically used in academic, professional, and business contexts. While slang, regional idioms, and informal kinds of self-expression are appropriate in some contexts, they are out of

place in academic writing. Professors expect all students to demonstrate proficiency in using the conventions of academic English in all their written work, whether it is in – class exams, take home essays, or emails.

Statements on Intellectual Exchange, Disabilities, Nondiscrimination, Title IX, C.A.R.E., and Campus Carry

Please visit <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/> for the aforementioned information.

Tobacco Use

Students are to follow SPC’s rules and regulations on cigarette and electronic cigarette use. Also, students are not to use smokeless tobacco in class. This includes but not limited to: snuff, dip, chew, packets, etc. It is rude and distracting to do this during class and any violation will be dealt with accordingly.

COVID-19

Because of the ease with which COVID-19 can be spread in an indoor setting such as a classroom, we will be following strict classroom policies designed to reduce the risk that anyone in our class transmits or contracts COVID-19 while in the room. These guidelines are in place to keep you, your classmates, and me safe. If you ever have any questions or concerns about these policies, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Attending While Sick

If you or someone with whom you have close contact (e.g. family member, coworker, roommate) are experiencing ANY symptom associated with COVID-19, please do not come to class. Per the CDC, any of the following may be symptoms of COVID-19:

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|---|--------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Fever or chills | Cough | Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | Fatigue | Muscle or body aches | Headache |
| New loss of taste or smell | Sore throat | Congestion or runny nose | Nausea or vomiting | Diarrhea | |

Availability of Lecture Material Outside of Class

All lectures (technology permitting) are recorded. You will have the option to watch the lectures from home. While you still need to be in class, the recorded lectures are there in case you are absent.

For information and resources about COVID-19, please visit <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/emergency/covid19-faq.php>

Course Outline

Weeks 1 – 4: Introduction; Texas Culture and Diversity; Texas Constitution and Federalism;

First Exam

Weeks 5 – 7; Texas Governors;

Second Exam

Weeks 9 – 11; Texas Legislature;

Third Exam

Weeks 12 – 14; Political Parties; Voting and Elections

Final Exam

Amendments

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus at any time. Students will be notified of such change(s) with appropriate time to adapt.

Dates to Remember

September 4 – Labor Day, No Class!

November 22-24 – Thanksgiving Break, No Class!

Thursday, November 30 – Last Day to Drop Classes!

December 11-14 – Final Exams