

South Plains College

GOVT 2306

FALL 2020

Texas Government

Online course

Professor Drew Landry

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Office Hours: MW: 12:30 – 3:30pm; Friday: 9am – 12pm (noon); or by appointment

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, Reese, ATC, 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excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course.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 survey of the organizational principles of political science, including, and more emphasis of, the American system of government and the origins and development of the Constitution of the United States. Its emphasis is placed on constitutional backgrounds and the organization and functions of the executive, legislative, and judicial segments of the national government, civil liberties and civil rights, public opinion, media, bureaucracies, and domestic policies. This course satisfies the Legislative requirements for teacher certification.

Course Requirements/Expectations

This is an online distance learning course. It takes a great deal of discipline, self-motivation, and effective time management to successfully complete an online course. Many students find it helpful to set aside specific times each week to work on the course.

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

Required Textbooks (come looseleaf; only purchase at SPC bookstore)

Jones, M.P., & Crain, E (2020). *Texas Politics Today*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning. MindTap will not be utilized unless upon request.

Syllabus Agreement

Every student has four (4) days to examine the syllabus. By remaining in this course beyond that point, the student indicates his/her acceptance of the syllabus. Any student who remains in the class beyond the first week, agrees to comply with the rules expressed or implied in this syllabus.

Grading Policy

All quizzes, exams, and class sessions have specific due dates and are given in every assignment. The last assignment is due Friday, December 4, 2020.

Quizzes

This course will be fairly straightforward. You will read one chapter a week and then take its corresponding quiz. Exams will be twenty – five (25) multiple choice, true/false, or

matching questions worth one (1) point apiece; meaning every quiz is worth twenty – five (25) points.

Students may neither work ahead nor backward on the quizzes. Every session has a specific due date and they are made known to students; however, no excuse will allow students to work on an exam once the due date expires. Once students complete all of the assignments, they have successfully finished the course.

All quizzes are to be taken without the assistance of your textbook or any outside source.

Essays

At the end of every unit, students will answer cumulative questions pertaining to the chapters that were studied in every unit. The purpose of this is to test students' ability to analyze information, make connections to the chapters, and write proficiently at the college level.

If, unless directed otherwise in the assignment, a student embeds, copies and pastes, or cites an outside source (including your textbook) into his/her answer, that student will receive a zero (0) on the essay. If the offense happens a second time, the student will be reported to the Department Chair and I will recommend the student be removed from the course due to plagiarism.

These are not research papers but think of them as in-class essays instead.

Discussions

There will be a few discussions during the summer semester. The links to the discussion board will be located in the appropriate "Course Content" folder.

The discussion may be over a topic in your reading or an outside article that coincides with the chapter. Your participation in the discussion board is essential as each one is worth twenty (20) points. Since this is a summer course with shortened time, not every discussion will be assigned.

Students need to make an original post and respond to two (2) different original posts made by their classmates before the deadline. Students may respond more times than the required amount.

Discussing politics can bring about an emotional side of people and that is why a "Netiquette" is found in the "Welcome – Start Here" page. Be sure to read and understand it because your acceptance of its use will be implied when you participate in the first discussion.

Grading Discussions

If a student only makes one (1) post throughout the week, the grade for such a post has the potential of making seven (7) points. If a student makes two (2) posts throughout the week, the grade has the potential of making thirteen (13) points. In order to reach the maximum amount of points, three (3) posts – consisting of one (1) original post and two (2) responses to two (2) different original posts – must be made.

This part of the grade is meant to engage in a dialogue about issues, not to complement one another on her/his original post. Any response to an original post that does not add to the

given discussion (such as “good post,” “good job,” “you did really well,” etc.) will count against that student’s weekly discussion grade.

Finally, there will be no extra credit or bonus available for students.

Rounding

On the issue of “rounding up” on grades, I have a strict but fair policy. I do not “round up” for any border line student unless that student has at least a “.9.” If a student has not attained a “.9,” then he/she’s grade will not be “rounded up.”

Calculating Grades

In calculating final grades, I keep it simple. I divide the points a student accumulates over the semester by the total points possible, then multiply that answer by one hundred (100). The result of the calculations will be the student’s percentage for the semester.

Grading Scale

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

Communications

There are many methods to contact me. The top of the syllabus has my office hours if you need a face to face discussion; my email if a quick explanation will suffice your question; and my office number if you need an over the phone conversation. I am dedicated to a two (2) business day response to any correspondence from you. Odds are in favor of me getting back to you sooner than that. If there is an emergency – which is defined as a test failing on you via a Blackboard failure – then you should email me – at my SPC email – immediately. Do NOT send me a message at any time through Blackboard. Only email me through my SPC email.

When sending me an email, please put the class you are enrolled in the subject line. That will immediately help me find your information and help you.

Attendance Policy

Regulating attendance in an online course is tricky. With that being stated, students will be considered “no longer attending” after two (2) consecutive incomplete assignments and not informing me the reason for such inaction. This is the fairest action for all students. The point of this is twofold: do not miss any assignments and notify me immediately if you will miss. For more information concerning the attendance policy, please see the South Plains College General Catalog.

Academic Integrity

Every student is expected and required to do his or her own work in this course and all other courses at South Plains College. “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 a fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism,” as specified in the South Plains College General Catalog.

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 or take home essays.

Diversity Statement

In this class, the teacher will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves. By promoting diversity and intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

Nondiscrimination Policy

It is the policy of South Plains College and this instructor not to discriminate on the basis of age, race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation (choices of sports team, however, are fair game – ha).

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at Levelland Student Health & Wellness Center 806-716- 2577, Reese Center (also covers ATC) Building 8: 806-716-4675, Plainview Center Main Office: 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611, or the Health and Wellness main number at 806-716- 2529.

Computer Issues

Having access to a properly functioning and update computer is absolutely necessary for this course. Students may arrange to visit the SPC computer lab, library, your local library, or someone else’s computer, but using the excuse of a crashed computer will not be accepted for failing to complete tests or assignments. If a student does not have access to a functional computer, then do not take this course. Computer problems of any kind will not be excused. That is the nature of this computer course. If any student finds that unacceptable, then do not take the course.

Technical Support

Email blackboard@southplainscollege.edu or call 806-716-2180 for any and all technical problems with the Blackboard software (they are much better than me at solving computer problems).

South Plains College Libraries and Computer Labs

South Plains College has many library and computer lab locations. Feel free to find them and their hours of operation by clicking on the link below.

<http://www.southplainscollege.edu/information-for/current-spc-students/library.php>

Student Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student to make sure all tests have been completed by their due date. Any test not completed by the due date automatically receives a zero (0). Computer problems or mechanical failures are not considered acceptable excuses for late tests or assignments. You are highly encouraged not to wait until the last minute to complete tests. Technical and personal problems are not considered acceptable excuses for late tests.

Financial Aid and Advising Assistance

If you need assistance with financial aid or your course schedule you can contact the following:

Financial Aid:

806-894-9611 Ext. 3800

finaid@southplainscollege.edu

Advising:

806-716-2368 or 806-716-2366

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.

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 rules are in place to keep you, your classmates, and me safe. If you ever have any questions or concerns about these policies, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

If you violate the classroom COVID-19 policies repeatedly (e.g. not wearing a face-covering, coming in while sick) or you are combative or argumentative when I ask you to comply with a COVID-19 policy, I may ask that you no longer attend the course in person.

If you are unwilling or unable to comply with any of these policies, I suggest you drop this course. SPC has made many online only sections available.

Masks

It is the policy of South Plains College for the Fall 2020 semester that as a condition of on-campus enrollment (or when on campus for whatever reason), all students are required to engage in safe behaviors to avoid the spread of COVID-19 in the SPC community. Such behaviors specifically include the requirement that all students properly wear CDC-compliant face coverings while in SPC buildings including in classrooms, labs, hallways, and restrooms. Failure to comply with this policy may result in dismissal from the current class session.

If the student refuses to leave the classroom or lab after being dismissed, the student may be referred to the Dean of Students on the Levelland campus or the Dean/Director of external centers for Student Code of Conduct Violation.

This pamphlet from Mayo Clinic provides a good visual list of acceptable and unacceptable face coverings: https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/-/media/national-files/documents/covid19/acceptablemasks_fly_final.pdf?la=en&rev=3bde35f2384808b271388f1177f297&hash=CC838FBC69D98EA4C8AB1C533F7437FC

The mask must cover your entire nostrils and mouth, and it must not have any vent to allow air out. The CDC has guidance here on how to properly wear a mask:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Tests and Assignments

You will never need to be in class to complete a test or other assignment. You will always be able to complete all work via Blackboard. I will never give any assignment that requires you to be physically present in the room.

If you are unable to access the class for an extended period of time due to personal illness or COVID-19 related quarantine, we can plan for you to make up any missed work.

Quarantine Triggers

I will self-initiate quarantine under the following conditions:

- If I develop any COVID-19 symptom, I will self-quarantine until I receive a negative COVID-19 test. This will likely take at least three (3) to five (5) days.
- If I am exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID-19, I will self-quarantine for at least fourteen (14) days from the time I last had contact with that person.
- If I test positive for COVID-19, I will follow the advice of my doctor regarding when it is safe for me to return to class in person.
- If anyone in the class tests positive for COVID-19, I will cancel in person classes until at least fourteen (14) days after that student's last date of attendance.

Contingency in Case of Instructor Quarantine

If at any time I am unable to physically attend class, I will make every effort to continue broadcasting lectures at our regularly scheduled class time. I have the necessary hardware and software at home to broadcast and record lectures. If for any reason I am unable to continue live streaming lectures, I or another SPC faculty member will contact you with instructions on how the class will proceed.

Makeup of assignment(s) and exam(s)

If a student misses an assignment(s) and/or exam(s) due to COVID-19 or any other illness, a doctor's note will be required in order to makeup the assignment and/or exam. The note must cover the dates you missed, which must coincide with your missing assignment(s) and/or exam(s).

Confirmation

Upon completion of reading the syllabus, please email me at dlandry@southplainscollege.edu with the subject heading "Read the Syllabus" and state one thing you learned from the Grading Policy section. Please complete this task by 5pm, September 4th.