

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.

Assistant Professor	Email	Office Location & Hours
Ms. Be Nelson, M.A.	hnelson@southplainscollege.edu	Office: AD132, <i>Levelland Campus</i> Office Phone: (806) 716-2466 Office Hours: <i>Mondays</i> 11:00AM-Noon, 2:20PM-3:20PM <i>Tuesdays/Thursdays</i> 2:20PM-3:50PM <i>Wednesdays</i> 11:00AM-Noon <i>Fridays</i> 10:00AM-Noon *Please email to schedule in-person or virtual meetings.

Textbook: Teas, Andrew, et al. *Texas Government*. LibreTexts, Houston Community College; Alvin Community College; Midland College, n.d. LibreTexts, <https://libretexts.org/>

Additional Reading Materials: The instructor will provide electronic readings various current sources when available.

Course Structure: This course consists of supplemental videos (YouTube videos will be embedded), handouts, assignments, quizzes, and tests. All materials, including the required textbook, are available on Blackboard.

Attendance: Regular, on-time attendance is required and will be recorded each class. Class content frequently extends well beyond what is covered in the assigned readings or textbook, and exam questions may focus on information presented exclusively during lectures. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to catch up with peers or check Blackboard, as lectures are not repeated during office hours and PowerPoints are not provided online. Absences include missing class entirely, being 15+ minutes late, or leaving without approval. Three late arrivals (5+ minutes each) count as one absence. Notify the instructor of expected absences in advance when possible. Submit schedules for approved activities within two weeks and provide documentation for emergencies upon return.

Student Performance: Students are required to maintain academic standards throughout the semester. Extra credit opportunities will not be provided, and limited time is available for making up missed work. **Students who do not successfully complete three (3) consecutive assignments and/or quizzes may be removed from the class with a failing grade, without additional notification.** Repeated late submissions of required work may also result in removal from the class at the instructor's discretion.

Attendance in person and completion of the Syllabus Quiz by September 9, 2026, the census date, are necessary to remain enrolled in the course.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

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 \(southplainscollege.edu\)](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.**

**** Students with disabilities should contact me in the first week to arrange any necessary accommodations, regardless of documentation status. ****

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 2306-003; the course number is 2306, the section number is 003.
- **Academic Honesty:** Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of honesty. **Plagiarism and cheating, including copying answers from any external source, another student, or using AI to generate work, are strictly prohibited and may result in dismissal from South Plains College.** Any instance of academic dishonesty on examinations will lead to failure in the course, as well as possible additional disciplinary actions such as dismissal from the college.
- **AI (artificial intelligence):** If there is reasonable evidence that a student has utilized AI to produce their work, the student will be required to meet with the professor to discuss the matter. Failure to attend this conference or provide an appropriate response may result in a grade of zero. Although AI has legitimate applications, participation in class should always reflect a sincere commitment to learning.
- **Electronics:** Electronic devices are not allowed in class unless authorized by the instructor. Phones must be on silent, and earphones are banned. Computers may be used for notes, but handwritten notes are recommended. Misuse will result in loss of device privileges.
- **Recording:** Recording or capturing lectures or materials is forbidden without written instructor permission. Students with approved accommodations may record as permitted by their accommodation letter. Unauthorized recording or sharing may violate university policy and laws.

Evaluation Method:

Quizzes	30%
2 Exams	40%
Assignments	20%
Attendance	10%

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. Grades are updated bi-weekly (sometimes sooner if there is less reading involved). Unsubmitted work will automatically be given a zero until late work is accepted and graded.**

- **Quizzes:** There will be multiple quizzes. Missed deadlines require contacting the instructor. Students receive up to two attempts per quiz, but the **average score** will be recorded. This method helps prevent students from viewing questions before they are prepared.
- **Exams: Two examinations** will be administered during the course. The final examination is not cumulative. The format of exams may include any combination of multiple-choice, short-answer, and fill-in-the-blank questions. Make-up exams may be granted upon prior notification and may require supporting medical documentation. Students seeking to reschedule an exam must submit a request to the instructor via email. Make-up opportunities for the **FINAL EXAM** are not available due to time constraints at the end of the semester.
- **Assignments:** Assignments are designed to enhance students' knowledge and understanding by supplementing course content. Each assignment carries more weight than an individual quiz, as there are fewer assignments throughout the term. Students are advised not to rely on offsetting a zero for missed assignments. Late submissions will incur an automatic deduction of 10 points per day. Assignments will not be accepted more than 5 days past the due date.
- **Attendance:** Consistent class attendance is essential for success. If an absence is anticipated, please notify the instructor via email in advance. Absences may be excused with appropriate medical documentation.

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>

Brainfuse

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

Monday – Thursday: 8 pm-8 am 6pm

Friday – 8am Monday morning

For questions regarding tutoring, please email tutoring@southplainscollege.edu or call 806-716-2241.



Tentative Course Schedule

This course takes place across approximately 16 weeks. I will separate course content in Blackboard into those weeks to help you stay organized. This schedule is subject to changes at the discretion of the professor.

Week	Topics	Read	Due
1	Political Culture and the People of Texas	Ch. 1	Ice Breaker/Syllabus Quiz Ch.1 Quiz
2	The American Federal System	Ch. 2	Ch. 2 Quiz
3	Texas Constitution	Ch. 3	Ch. 3 Quiz ASSIGNMENT 1
4	Political Parties in Texas	Ch. 4	Ch. 4 Quiz ASSIGNMENT 2
5	Elections and Political Participation in Texas	Ch. 5	Ch. 5 Quiz DISCUSSION 1
6	Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas	Ch. 6	Ch. 6 Quiz
MIDTERM EXAM WEEK 7			
8-9	The Texas Legislature	Ch. 7	Ch. 7 Quiz
10	The Executive Branch and the Governor in Texas	Ch. 8	Ch. 8 Quiz ASSIGNMENT 3
11	The Evolution of the Law in Texas	Ch. 9	Ch. 9 Quiz
12	Local Government	Ch. 10	Ch. 10 Quiz
13	Public Policy in Texas	Ch. 11	Ch. 11 Quiz DISCUSSION 2
14	The Criminal Justice System in Texas	Ch. 12	Ch. 12 Quiz ASSIGNMENT 4
15	State Finance	Ch. 13	Ch. 13 Quiz
16	FINAL EXAMS DECEMBER 7-10, 2026		

Please pay attention to due dates. Do not assume they follow a pattern. Final grades must be submitted to the registrar shortly after your final.