

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

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 11:00AM-Noon, 2:20PM-3:20PM</i> <i>Tuesdays/Thursdays 2:20PM-3:50PM</i> <i>Wednesdays 11:00AM-Noon</i> <i>Fridays 10:00AM-Noon</i> *Please email to schedule in-person or virtual meetings.

Course Resources:

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 online course provides supplemental videos, handouts, assignments, quizzes, tests, and textbook access, all available on Blackboard.

Attendance: A consistent and functional internet connection is required for this online-only course. Students are responsible for ensuring that their computers (desktop or laptop) and internet connections operate properly. Technical difficulties do not excuse incomplete or failed assignments. In the event of technical or internet issues affecting graded work, contact the instructor promptly. Tablets or iPads may have limited functionality; **access to a desktop or laptop is necessary for testing.**

Communication should remain professional and respectful in emails and coursework. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior may result in loss of credit for assignments and referral to the Office of Student Conduct. Instances of racism, sexism, homophobia, or other forms of discrimination are not permitted in this class.

Students are accountable for all information and announcements provided in the course. Logging into Blackboard daily is recommended to check for updates, changes, or new information. The course homepage and announcements should be reviewed regularly. School email should also be checked daily to ensure receipt of communications from the instructor. Course rules and expectations may change. Students are not permitted to print, save, photograph, or otherwise record graded content from this course.

Student Performance: You must maintain your standards throughout the duration of the semester. There will be no extra credit and there will be little time for playing “catch-up.” **If you fail three (3) consecutive quizzes, you may be dropped from the class with a failing grade with no further warning.** If you repeatedly fail to submit required work on time, you may be dropped from the class at the discretion of the instructor. When in doubt, always email the instructor.

GENERAL POLICIES

- **Behavior:** Students are required to demonstrate respect toward their peers and the instructor. As stated by the late Molly Ivins, “It really is possible to disagree with someone's policies without hating them. Grown-ups can do that.” Behavior that disrupts the learning environment or infringes upon other students’ right to learn will not be permitted.
- **Requesting Assistance:** If you encounter any issues with readings, lectures, or assignments, please contact me via email. Early communication is beneficial, as it allows for timely resolution of any difficulties. I am able to assist only when informed of the situation. When sending an email, kindly include your full name, course number, and section number in the subject line (e.g., GOVT 2306-152; where 2306 is the course number and 152 is the section number). I will endeavor to answer all emails within 24 hours (emailing me directly is the best way to ensure a speedy response).
- **Academic Honesty:** Adherence to honesty is required of all students. **Plagiarism and cheating, including copying answers from external sources, other students, or using AI-generated work, are strictly prohibited and may result in dismissal from South Plains College.** Instances of academic dishonesty on examinations will lead to course failure and may result in further disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from South Plains College.
- **AI (artificial intelligence):** If there is reasonable suspicion that a student used artificial intelligence to complete their assignment, the student will be notified and must arrange a video meeting with the instructor. Not attending or failing to explain adequately during this meeting will result in a grade of zero. AI can be useful, but genuine learning comes from personal effort.

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](#).

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 documented disabilities will receive accommodations. If you have questions or concerns, regardless of documentation, please reach out during the first week of class so that we can develop a workable plan together.

EVALUATION METHOD

Quizzes	30%
Exams	40%
Assignments	20%
Discussions	10%

Grading: 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 biweekly (from due date). Unsubmitted work will automatically be given a zero until late work is accepted and graded. If you have a question concerning grades, please email the instructor.

- **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.**
- **Examinations:** Two examinations will be administered, collectively accounting for 40% of the final grade. The final examination is not cumulative. Exam formats may include any combination of multiple-choice, short answer, or fill-in-the-blank questions. **HonorLock** will be used to proctor exams. Requests for make-up exams must be submitted in advance to the instructor via email and will require supporting documentation; however, no make-up opportunities will be provided for the final examination due to end-of-semester time constraints. No matter what, please email the instructor if you miss an exam. Please note that assignment due dates will be adjusted during the last week of the summer session; be sure to pay attention to deadlines (check your calendar every Monday to ensure you do not miss deadlines).
- **Assignments:** Students will be given a reasonable number of **assignments** designed to enhance their knowledge and understanding. Assignments carry more weight than individual quizzes due to their lower frequency. It is advisable for students not to rely on offsetting a zero grade. Late submissions may incur an automatic deduction of **10 points per day** beyond the deadline. Missed deadlines require contacting the instructor.
- **Discussion Threads:** Each semester, I organize discussion threads on topics related to Texas government. For each thread, you are required to write an initial post. Greek philosopher The Greek philosopher Plato once wrote: "Opinion is the medium between knowledge and ignorance." If you make a claim please provide supporting evidence. If you use outside sources, please provide evidence and proper citations using the citation guides ([SPC Citation Guides](#)). Additionally, you must respond substantively to at least two classmates. Each reply should be between 100-150 words. Make sure your responses add meaningful discussion by asking questions, providing additional information, or offering analysis. Simply agreeing or disagreeing will not receive credit.

You must log into your Blackboard course to complete the Ice Breaker and Syllabus Quiz by September 9, 2026, the census date, or you will be automatically dropped from the course.

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.

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 [SPC Tutoring](#) to learn more about how to book an appointment, view the tutoring schedule, and view tutoring locations.

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.

