

**Statement of the SPC Social Science Department's
Government/Political Science Division for
GOVT 2306 Common Course Syllabus**

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and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn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

GOVT 2306, Texas Government

Term: Spring 2021

Instructor: Daniel Bunye

Office: Reese Center, Bldg. 3, #316I

Office Hours: As posted, or by appointment

Phone: 716-2467

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Text: Governing Texas, 4th edition. Champagne, Harpham, and Casellas.
ISBN: 978-0-393-644302

NOTE: Campus Concealed Carry - Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in South Plains College buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and South Plains College policy, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the SPC policy at:

(http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human_resources/policy_procedure/hhc.php)

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all South Plains College campuses. Report violations to the College Police Department at 806-716-2396 or 9-1-1.

Face Coverings: It is the policy of South Plains College for the Spring 2021 semester that as a condition of on-campus enrollment, 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. Students who believe they have been exposed or may be COVID-19 positive, must contact Health Services, DeEtte Edens, BSN, RN at (806) 716-2376 or dedens@southplainscollege.edu.

Covid-19: This class is planned as a full-semester, face-to-face course. With some luck and appropriate actions (face covering use, hand-washing/sanitizing, social distancing, classroom cleanliness, etc.), we will complete this course as planned. However, we must also prepare for the possibility of a minor or significant disruption in our plans. If such were to occur, the instructor will contact, and keep informed, students via Blackboard of any necessary changes to complete course objectives. For example, if we as a class, or you as an individual, cannot take the Midterm Exam, additional chapter quizzes and essays covering the appropriate materials will be assigned in place of the classroom-based Midterm Exam. Flexibility is key, but course objectives will be completed and course credit will be earned.

Purpose: The objective of this course is to acquaint the undergraduate student with the structure, organization, institutions, and functions of the Texas State Government. This course will be structured toward providing the student information, which will enable him/her to be an

intelligent, passionate, and active participant in the political realm. It has been said that the health of the political system depends on just such participation, and an underlying aim of this course is to encourage it. *The instructor's primary purpose is to demonstrate the importance and relevance of government and politics in our daily lives.* Further GOVT 2306 meets statutory requirements as set forth by the state of Texas.

Course Requirements: It is assumed that the student will attend all lectures and take notes. Should the student miss a lecture, it is the responsibility of that student to obtain the class notes from a fellow student. The requirements for this course are extensive, but should not be excessively difficult if granted appropriate attention. A breakdown of requirements, their relative value towards the final grade, and example grades are as follows:

<u>Requirements and Value</u>		<u>Example Grades</u>
Note Quiz Average	25%	85% x .25= 21.25
Chapter Quiz Average	25%	75% x .25= 18.75
Midterm Exam	25%	65% x .25= 16.25
Final Exam (Midterm 2)	25%	85% x .25= <u>21.25</u>
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Note quizzes may or may not be announced in advance, are comprehensive, and shall consist of True/False and Fill-in style questions. Chapter quizzes will cover a single chapter, will be taken by the student outside of class time via Blackboard, and will consist of multiple-choice questions. The Midterm and Final Exams will consist of True/False, Fill-in, and Multiple-choice type questions, with many questions coming from the Note Quizzes.

Grades: The grading scale for this course is as follows:

- 100-90= A
- 89-80= B
- 79-70= C
- 69-60= D
- 59-00= F

There is no curve for this course, nor for any assignment. You will be graded only by your own efforts. Rounding up of final grades will automatically occur for a maximum of one (1) point. The instructor reserves the right to round up grades in excess of 1 point for those students who have demonstrated perfect class attendance, effort, improvement, and especially class participation.

Missed Quizzes: There are NO make-ups for missed quizzes. If a student misses a quiz for any reason, the next quiz of that type (Note or Reading) will count twice. If the last quiz of that type is missed, it will be graded as a ZERO.

Missed Exams: If a student should miss the Midterm or Final Exam for any reason, an All-Essay Make-up Exam will be provided at a mutually-acceptable date and times. Failure to complete this will result in a grade of zero (0).

Extra Credit: Periodically, and without prior notification, extra credit quizzes will take place. These will typically be for five (5) points, will cover class notes, and the points will be assigned on a class-by-class basis to various course assignments. If an Extra Credit Quiz is missed, it can NOT be made up. No other extra credit is available in this course.

Attendance: Clearly, this is a very odd and hopefully unique semester. Thus, attendance will not be taken daily. However, if a student has not participated in any form for three weeks, and has made no effort to communicate with the instructor, that student will be removed from this course.

Promptness for Exams: In order to ensure the integrity and security of the examinations, no student may begin the Midterm or Final Exam once any other student has completed the exam and exited the classroom.

Dishonesty: Cheating and/or plagiarism will **not** be tolerated! This will result in immediate failure of the course. Violators may be removed from South Plains College. Assisting another to cheat will also result in failure.

Electronic Devices: The use of cell/smart phones or laptops during course time will *not* be allowed in this class. These devices have proven excessively distracting in the classroom environment. The use of such devices will only be allowed if prior approval by the institution and instructor has been granted for special circumstances.

Foundation Skills: This course will attempt to accomplish the following academic skills:

Basic Skills: Reading (F-1), Writing (F-2), Listening (F-5), and Speaking (F-6).

Thinking Skills: Creative Thinking (F-7), Decision Making (F-8), Problem Solving (F-9), Knowing How to Learn (F-11), and Reasoning (F-12).

Personal Qualities: Responsibility (F-13), Self-Esteem (F-14), Sociability (F-15), Self-Management (F-16), and Integrity/Honesty (F-17).

Course Topics: The following is a general list of the topics that will be covered in this course. It is not meant to be binding, and the instructor reserves the right to alter the topics based on current events, personal preferences, and interests of individual classes.

Power
Introduction to Texas
Poverty in Texas
Federalism
Texas Constitution
Texas Legislature and How a Bill Becomes Law
Texas Executive
Texas Judiciary
Elections and Politics in Texas
Public Policy in Texas
Crime and Corrections in Texas
Public Finance in Texas
Local Government in Texas

Chapter Quizzes: Below is a list of chapters that will be covered in this course. All quizzes are available immediately, but please note the due dates (listed in parenthesis) for each. Questions for these quizzes will be of Multiple-choice style. There will be twenty questions for each quiz, and a time limit of forty-five (45) minutes will apply. You will be allowed to attempt each quiz twice, with the highest score saved. Quizzes will be accessible from 12:00 am on the first day of availability until 11:30 pm on the last day of availability (but please note, you will need to start the quiz by 11:14 pm to get the full 45 minute allowance). Students who fail to take a quiz during the availability period will receive a grade of zero (0) for that quiz.

Chapter 1: The Political Culture, People and Economy of Texas (9/11)
Chapter 14: Building the Future: Public Policies for a Changing Texas (9/25)
Chapter 13: Crime, Corrections and Public Safety Policy (10/9)
Chapter 12: Public Policy (10/23)
Chapter 11: Public Finance (11/6)
Chapter 10: Local Government (11/20)

Statement of Nondiscrimination: It is the policy of this instructor not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status, particularly veterans of the Vietnam era. In addition to complying with federal and state equal opportunity laws and regulations and/or resolutions of professional organizations in education and psychology, my diversity policy declares harassment based on individual differences to be inconsistent with my instructional mission and educational goals.

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.

ADA Statement: 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 through the Guidance and Counseling Centers at Reese Center (Building 8, Rooms 809 and 811) [716-4675](tel:716-4675), or Levelland (Student Services Building) [716-2577](tel:716-2577).

Pregnancy: If you are pregnant, or have given birth within six months, under Title IX you have a right to reasonable accommodations to help continue your education. To activate accommodations you must submit a Title IX pregnancy accommodations request, along with specific medical documentation, to the Director of Health and Wellness. Once approved, notification will be sent to the student and instructors. It is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor to arrange accommodations. Contact Chris Straface, Director of health and wellness, at (806) 716-2362, or email at cstraface@southplainscollege.edu for assistance.

Notes:

*This course is governed under the principles of Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Expression. **All** students are encouraged to voice their opinions before, during, and/or after class. The instructor will often play the role of devil's advocate in an attempt to increase student participation. ***Topics of a controversial nature WILL be discussed in class***; be prepared to be challenged, as very little is considered off-limits. If you are not comfortable discussing/examining either your political views, or controversial subjects, you may wish to enroll in a different section. Politics is based in large part on opinion, and it is a significant goal of this course to encourage the improved expression of one's opinion, as well as to increase one's understanding of the positions and opinions of others. Remember, our opinions are seldom right or wrong; they are simply our opinions. The instructor routinely employs anecdotal illustrations to explain and enhance course content. Such story-based examples are drawn freely from personal, familial, current event and student sources. The instructor strongly encourages all students to participate in class discussions; you and I will both get more out of this class. It is the instructor's hope that this class will be the one in which the student has the greatest opportunity to speak on a daily basis.

*There are, however, two significant exceptions to the Freedoms of Speech and Expression in this class: racist and/or sexist comments will **not** be tolerated (this includes comments concerning sexual orientation).

*A pen will be required for all classroom quizzes and examinations. The use of pencil is unacceptable.