

Spring 2023
GOVT 2306-157: Texas Government
Department of Social Sciences
South Plains College

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, ATC, Plainview

Textbook: Varies according to instructor.

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: Since this is an online course, I will not take daily attendance. However, you are expected to complete your work on time in accordance with the course calendar. You may be dropped from the course if you miss two or more consecutive weeks of activities. Please email me if you are sick or have another valid reason for a prolonged absence.

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 in 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

Instructor Information

Dr. Jonathan Martin

Office: ADM 121

E-mail: jmartin@southplainscollege.edu

Office Phone: 806-716-2198

Office Hours:

- Monday: 9:30am-11:30am
- Tuesday: 9:50-10:50am
- Wednesday: 9:30am-11:30am
- Thursday: 9:50-10:50am
- Friday: 9-11am

Textbook and Course Readings

This course utilizes the Texas Government panOpen OER (Open Educational Resource) from LibreTexts. The textbook is FREE and available online through this link:

[https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Political_Science_and_Civics/Texas_Government_\(panOpen\)](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Political_Science_and_Civics/Texas_Government_(panOpen))

In addition to the textbook, I will assign other reading material in Blackboard throughout the semester.

Participation Statement

For online courses, students MUST actively participate by completing an academic assignment by the official census date **February 1**. Students who do not do so, will be dropped from the course.

Blackboard Information

We will be using Blackboard for this course. Blackboard is used for announcements, completing assignments, emails, discussion boards and the gradebook. You will also find additional resource materials to help you this semester, such as lecture notes, power point presentations, video clips, audio clips, and more.

Blackboard can be accessed by logging into the MySPC portal or going directly to <https://southplainscollege.blackboard.com>.

Troubleshooting

If you experience technical difficulties with Blackboard, please submit at Blackboard help ticket on this webpage: <http://www.southplainscollege.edu/instructional-technology/Help.php>

Grading Scale

A: 89.5-100%

B: 79.5-89.4%

- C: 69.5-79.4%
D: 59.5-69.4%
F: Below 59.5%

Overall Grade Formula

Quizzes	(15%)
Discussions	(20%)
Short Answer Assignments	(25%)
Letter to the Editor	(10%)
Exams	(30%)

Assignments

Quizzes (15%)

Most weeks that cover a textbook chapter will include a quiz. Generally, a quiz will have at least 10 questions (e.g., multiple choice, true/false, or free response) based on the assigned reading and videos for that particular week. I will not accept late work for quizzes, but your *two lowest quiz grades* will be dropped. Also, the syllabus quiz will count as a regular quiz.

Discussions (20%)

There are five discussion assignments in this course. Some discussion threads will be based on a current event in Texas politics, while other discussions will examine the structure of Texas government. The purpose of the discussions is for students to demonstrate their knowledge of course material and engage with other students on important topics in Texas politics.

For each discussion, you will be required to make an initial post in which you answer the question(s) posed in the prompt. After you make your initial post, you must read the posts from your fellow classmates and make two additional posts in response to posts from other students. I will accept late discussion assignments, but there will be a 10-point deduction for every day that it is late.

Finally, all students are required to maintain professional language in online discussions. If you offer criticism, do it in a polite and constructive manner. For example, avoid name-calling, curse words, and slurs. Any text that a reasonable person would find offensive will likely result in a loss of credit for the assignment. If you need further clarification, please contact the instructor.

Short Answer Assignments (25%)

There are four short answer assignments in this course. Each assignment will ask you to answer a series of questions covering important material from the textbook and lectures. It is important that you accurately answer all parts of the questions and cite the textbook (or another reputable source) to support your answers. All short answer assignments will be submitted through Blackboard. Late short answer assignments will be accepted, but there is a late penalty.

Letter to the Editor (10%)

This assignment requires you to critically read and assess a newspaper article or editorial. Then, you will write a letter to the editor in which you develop a persuasive argument and a call to action. More information on this assignment will be provided to you later in the semester.

Exams (30%)

There are two exams (midterm and final) in this course. Both exams will have a combination of 50 multiple-choice, true/false, and free response questions.

Policies and Procedures

SPC Standard Disability Statement

Any students who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make and necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from the SPC Disability Service Office during the instructor's office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations until appropriate verification from the SPC Disability Service Office has been provided. For more information, you may contact the Disability Services Office (located in the Health & Wellness Center) at 806-716-2529 or visit <http://www.southplainscollege.edu/health/disabilityservices.php>.

For information regarding official South Plains College statements about diversity, disabilities, non-discrimination, Title V Pregnancy Accommodations, and Campus Concealed Carry, please visit: <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/>.

Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Non-Discrimination Statement

South Plains College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Vice President for Student Affairs, South Plains College, 1401 College Avenue, Box 5, Levelland, TX 79336. Phone number 806-716-2360. South Plains College is dedicated to providing a safe and equitable learning environment for all students. Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the college. The Health and Wellness Center offers confidential support (806-716-2529) and Voice of Hope has a 24-hour hotline: 806-763-7273. You are encouraged to report any incidents online at <http://www.southplainscollege.edu/about/campussafety/complaints.php>.

Covid-19 Statement

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

Course Withdrawals

The last day to withdraw/drop with a grade of "W" is **April 27**. It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from this course. Otherwise, students will be assigned their earned letter grade at the end of the course. Course averages will be updated twice each week, and guidance will be provided throughout the term to help students decide whether they need to drop the class or not. For more information regarding drops/withdrawals, please visit <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/admission-aid/apply/schedulechanges.php>.

Academic Integrity

Cheating, plagiarism, or any other act of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. At the bare minimum, a student who cheats or plagiarizes will receive a zero for the assignment. In addition,

I reserve the right to seek additional penalties, such as a zero for the entire course and filing an Academic Dishonesty Report.

There are now websites that will actually generate semi-unique material that somewhat resembles original material. Since the technology is available to create this content, technology is also available to detect this content. Make no mistake, this is plagiarism. I am not asking AI to write a paper, I am asking you, the student, to create this content. If you submit work that is not your own, original material, it will be considered plagiarism and receive a grade of zero. The incident will also be detailed to the Dean of Students for disciplinary actions.

Student Grievance Procedure

A student grievance is a College related issue or condition that a student believes to be unfair, inequitable, discriminatory, or a hindrance to the educational process. A grievance also includes discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. You can find more information about the student grievance procedure here:

http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human_resources/policy_procedure/fm.php

Course Schedule

Week	Assignments	Due Date
1: Introduction	Syllabus Quiz	Jan 18
2: Texas Constitution	Quiz, Discussion	Jan 25
3: Texas in the Federal System	Quiz, Discussion	Feb 1
4: Legislative Branch	Quiz, Short Answer Assignment #1	Feb 8
5: Executive Branch	Quiz, Discussion	Feb 15
6: The Judiciary	Quiz	Feb 22
7: Local Government	Quiz, Short Answer Assignment #2	March 1
8: Midterm	Midterm Exam	March 8
9: Political Parties	Quiz	March 22
10: Campaigns and Elections	Quiz, Discussion	March 29
11: Interest Groups	Quiz, Short Answer Assignment #3	April 5
12: Public Finance	Quiz, Discussion	April 12
13: Public Policy	Quiz	April 19
14: Crime, Corrections, and Public Safety	Quiz, Short Answer Assignment #4	April 26
15: Essay	Letter to the Editor	May 3
16: Final Exam	Final Exam	May 10