

Spring 2026
GOVT 2306-002-H002: Texas Government
Department of Social Sciences
South Plains College

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, Lubbock Downtown Center, 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: 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.

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.

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.

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: 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](#).

Instructor Information

Dr. Jonathan Martin

Office: Student Services Building 116

E-mail: jmartin@southplainscollege.edu

Office Phone: 806-716-2198

Office Hours:

- Monday: 1pm-3pm
- Tuesday: 10am-11:30am
- Wednesday: 1pm-3pm
- Thursday: 10am-11:30am
- Friday: 10am-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.

Policies and Procedures

Participation Statement

For online courses, students **MUST** actively participate by completing an academic assignment by the official census date **January 28**. Students who do not do so, will be dropped from the course.

Course Withdrawals

The last day to withdraw/drop with a grade of “W” is **April 30**. 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 Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or unauthorized assistance, will not be tolerated in this course. This includes, but is not limited to, copying another student's work, submitting work completed by someone else, or using unapproved tools or sources. The use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT or similar, to generate, assist with, or complete any part of an assignment is strictly prohibited. If I determine that a student has used AI on an assignment:

1. On the first offense, the student will receive a zero on the assignment. In addition, the highest possible letter grade the student can earn in the course will be a C.
2. On the second offense, the student will receive a zero for the entire course, and I might file an academic dishonesty report to South Plains College.

In addition, if a student cites a source in an assignment, I may request reasonable evidence that the student accessed and used the source directly, such as notes, page numbers, or screenshots. Failure to provide such evidence may be treated as academic dishonesty. In short, students are expected to complete their work with honesty, integrity, and in accordance with college policies.

Classroom Decorum

You are expected to conduct yourself in an appropriate manner. It is important to arrive to class on time and not disturb others by talking, using your cell phone, or leaving class early. Furthermore, I expect every student to be respectful to other students when discussing politics. Failure to adhere to classroom decorum may result in a point deduction to your participation grade.

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

Grades

Grading Scale

A: 89.5-100%
B: 79.5-89.49%
C: 69.5-79.49%
D: 59.5-69.49%
F: Below 59.5%

Final Grade Calculation

Exams	60%
Quizzes	20%
Participation	15%
Reflection Essay	5%

Exams (60%)

There are three exams, and your exam average comprises 60% of your overall grade. Furthermore, all three exams will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions. For the first two exams, there is a late penalty if you miss class on exam day for an unexcused reason. If you miss Exam 3 (final exam), you will receive a zero. Finally, you are not allowed to take any exam early.

Quizzes (20%)

I will assign at least five quizzes throughout the semester, assigned either in class or through Blackboard. Quiz formats may vary, and all quizzes will be based on assigned readings and course content. Your final quiz grade is calculated as the average of all quiz scores and contributes 20% of your overall course grade.

Participation (15%)

Active participation is essential to your success in this class and, more broadly, to a meaningful learning experience. Your participation grade is based on the following components:

- Attendance
- Participation Assignments
- Class Discussions and Engagement

Your participation grade reflects your overall engagement, preparation, attendance, and professionalism throughout the semester. Participation is evaluated holistically rather than by assigning fixed percentage weights to each component.

Attendance

I will track your attendance throughout the semester. You are allowed up to six unexcused absences without penalty. Starting with the seventh unexcused absence, 5 participation points will be deducted for each additional unexcused absence.

Each student is also allowed three late arrivals without penalty. Starting with the fourth late arrival, three participation points will be deducted for each additional late arrival.

Participation Assignments

Participation assignments are given regularly and are typically completed during class. These activities are discussion-based, and students who complete them in good faith will receive full credit.

If you are absent on a day a participation assignment is given, you must make up the assignment in class to receive credit. At the end of the semester, 5 participation points will be deducted for each participation assignment not completed or made up.

Class Discussions and Engagement

Students are expected to remain engaged during class. Discussions typically occur on every regular class day, and you can contribute to your participation grade by answering questions or offering meaningful, constructive input during class discussions.

Finally, I may deduct participation points for violations of classroom expectations, including but not limited to excessive or distracting cell phone use during instruction or class discussions, leaving class early without an excused reason, wearing earbuds or headphones during instructional activities, and being disrespectful or rude to other students or the instructor. These deductions are applied only when classroom behavior interferes with the learning environment or fails to meet basic standards of academic professionalism and mutual respect. If you have questions about your participation grade throughout the semester, you are welcome to ask me for feedback on how you are doing.

Reflection Essay (5%)

A reflection essay is a short paper where you explain how a topic connects to your own life. In this class, you will write at least one reflection essay. I'll give you a news article to read, and then you'll write an essay that includes a summary of the article, any questions you had or parts that were unclear, and an explanation of how the information relates to or affects you personally. I'll provide detailed instructions for the assignment later in the semester, and I may assign a second reflection essay as well.

Class Schedule*

Week 1 (Jan 13 & 15)

Course Introduction

Chapter 1: Political Culture

Week 2 (Jan 20 & Jan 22)

Chapter 3: The Texas Constitution

Week 3 (Jan 27 & 29)

Chapter 2: The American Federal System

Week 4 (Feb 3 & 5)

Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature

Week 5 (Feb 10 & 12)

Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature

Week 6 (Feb 17 & 19)

Exam 1 is on February 19

Chapter 8: The Executive Branch and the Governor of Texas

Week 7 (Feb 24 & 26)

Chapter 8: The Executive Branch and the Governor of Texas

Week 8 (March 3 & 5)

Chapter 10: Local Government

Week 9 (March 10 & 12)

Chapter 10: Local Government

Week 10 (March 24 & 26)

Chapter 5: Elections and Political Participation in Texas

Week 11 (March 31 & April 2)

Chapter 4: Political Parties in Texas

Exam 2 is on Thursday, April 2

Week 12 (April 7 & 9)

Chapter 9: The Evolution of the Law in Texas

Week 13 (April 14 & 16)

Chapter 11: Public Policy in Texas

Week 14 (April 21 & 23)

Chapter 6: Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas

Week 15 (April 28 & 30)

Chapter 12: Criminal Justice Policy in Texas

Chapter 13: State Finance

Week 16 (May 7)

Exam 3 is on Thursday, May 7 at **10:15am**

*I reserve the right to alter the class schedule as I deem necessary. Any adjustments will be announced in class and/or listed on Canvas.