

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.

Instructor	Email	Office Location & Hours
Ms. Be Nelson, M.A.	hnelson@southplainscollege.edu	Office: AD132, Levelland Campus Office Phone: (806) 716-2466 Monday 11AM - Noon; 1PM - 3PM Wednesday 11AM - Noon Tuesday/Thursday 2:30PM – 3:30PM Friday 10AM - Noon

*If you are unable to meet with me during office hours, please feel free to email to arrange a video conference.

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 assignments or reading 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. **You must complete Quiz 1 and the Ice Breaker by January 28th, 2026, the census date, or you will be automatically dropped from the course.**

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).
- **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 professor. 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	20%
Exams	40%
Assignments	30%
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 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. If you have a question concerning grades, please email the professor.*

- **Quizzes:** There will be approximately six vocabulary quizzes (use your class quizlet to study). 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. 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 two weeks of the semester; be sure to pay attention to updated 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 will incur an automatic deduction of **10 points per day** beyond the deadline. Assignments submitted more than **5 days** after the due date will not be accepted.
- **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 of 400 words, citing at least two sources outside class materials with proper citation format ([Citation Guides](#)). Additionally, you need to respond to two different classmates, and each reply should be at least 150 words. Make sure your responses are substantial by asking questions or providing extra information; simply agreeing or disagreeing is not sufficient. The initial post must be submitted by Saturday, and replies are due by Sunday. Late work will lose **10 points per day**, and nothing will be accepted after **5 days**.

Tentative Course Schedule/Pacing

Course materials are structured into weekly modules. The instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule as necessary. For any questions, please contact the instructor via email. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to the relevant week, with the exception of Week 1.

Week 1	Political Culture and the People of Texas	Chapter 1 Ice Breaker
Week 2	The American Federal System	Chapter 2 Quiz 1
Week 3	The Texas Constitution	Chapter 3 Assignment 1
Week 4-5	The Texas Legislature	Skip to Chapter 7 Quiz 2
Week 6-7	The Executive Branch and the Governor in Texas	Chapter 8 Assignment 2 Quiz 3
Week 8	The Evolution of the Law in Texas	Chapter 9 Midterm Exam
Week 9	Political Parties in Texas	Back to Chapter 4
WEEK 10: SPRING BREAK MARCH 16 – 20, 2026		
Week 11	Elections and Political Participation in Texas	Chapter 5 Quiz 4
Week 12	Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas	Chapter 6 Assignment 3
Week 13	Local Government	Chapter 10 Quiz 5
Week 14	Public Policy in Texas	Chapter 11 Assignment 4
Week 15	The Criminal Justice System in Texas	Chapter 12 Quiz 6
Week 16	State Finance	Chapter 13
Week 17: FINAL EXAMS DUE WEDNESDAY, MAY 6TH, 2026. <u>FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE LINK</u>		

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.

