

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

Ms. Be Nelson, M.A.

Email

hnelson@southplainscollege.edu

Office Location & Hours

Room AD132, Levelland Campus

(806) 716-2466 (office)

M/W 11AM – NOON

T/TH 2:20PM – 3:50PM

F 9AM – NOON

You may email to schedule a video conference

Course Resources:

The Texas Experience: Lone Star Politics Policy and Participation, 1e Update, 2022 Midterm Elections Update, By Texas Tribune, Paul Benson, Anthony Giardino

TexBook Syllabus Statement:

This course is part of your TexBook program, which means you don't need to purchase a textbook or access code for this course. TexBook is the required content (either an eBook or online Courseware) for your course, and is provided for you via the Bibliu platform from Day 1 of class.

- Cost of TexBook: this required content is provided as part of a Program called 'Inclusive Access', which means that content is provided for you at the lowest price available from the publisher. The cost for this is included in your tuition.
- How to access your digital content via Bibliu: you can access your material via the Bibliu link inside your Blackboard Course, or directly via the Bibliu app. If you have issues with this, please contact your professor, the Bookstore Manager or Bibliu Support (see below).
- The Bibliu platform: you can use the Bibliu platform to enhance your learning experience, with features including: highlighting, notes and reading text aloud. For more details and support on how to use Bibliu, please visit the [BibliU support pages](#), or contact Bibliu support via the email: support@bibliu.com
- Opting out: you can Opt-Out of the TexBook Program, up until the Opt-Out deadline, via the banner displayed when you open the Bibliu platform. Remember that Opt-Out deadlines vary by term, and if you choose to Opt-Out you will lose access to this low-price option, and will need to purchase the content through a different method. If you opt-Out, the fee will be refunded to your account.

Useful contacts:

1. Bookstore Manager: Christian Bruno - christian.bruno@bibliu.com
2. Bookstore Text Coordinator: Trish Wells - patricia.wells@bibliu.com
3. Bibliu Support: email support@bibliu.com

Additional Reading Materials: The instructor will share various readings, including current event articles, electronically when possible.

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.

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 September 10, 2025, the census date, or you will be automatically dropped from the course.**

GENERAL POLICIES

- ❖ **Behavior:** Students are expected to be considerate of one another as well as of the instructor. In the words of the late Molly Ivins, “It really is possible to disagree with someone's policies without hating them. Grown-ups can do that.” Conduct that interferes with other students’ right to learn will not be tolerated.
- ❖ **Getting help:** Please email me if you have any problems with readings, lecture, or assignments. If you are having difficulty of any kind **the earlier you ask for help, the easier the solution to your problem will be.** I cannot help if I am unaware. When emailing, please be sure to include your full name, the course number, and section number in the subject line of your email. Ex. GOVT 2306-152; the course number is 2306, the section number is 152.
- ❖ **Academic Honesty:** Honesty is the expected standard. **Plagiarism and cheating (copying answers from an outside source or another student, using AI to generate work) will not be tolerated and can be grounds for dismissal from South Plains College.** Incidents of cheating on examinations will result in failure of the course and potential consequences such as dismissal from South Plains College.
- ❖ **AI (artificial intelligence):** If I believe a student has submitted AI-generated work, I will provide detection sources and require a video conference for verbal responses. Failure to attend or answer questions results in a zero. AI can be helpful, but learning requires genuine 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.**

******I will accommodate students who have the appropriate documentation of disability. Documented or not; please contact me during the first week of class to discuss any concerns so we can create an actionable plan.******

EVALUATION METHOD

Quizzes	25%
3 Exams	35%
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).

- ❖ ***Quizzes:*** The instructor will administer approximately 13 (may drop a quiz) quizzes. Should a student miss a quiz deadline they will be required to contact the instructor. Students will be permitted up to two attempts **(for average grade)**.
- ❖ ***Exams:*** There will be **3 exams**. These exams account for 35% of your overall grade. The final exam will not be cumulative. Exams will consist of a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer or fill-in-the-blank questions. Make-up exams will be allowed with prior notification, but may require documentation. Students wishing to take a make-up exam must apply to the instructor via email. **There are no make-ups for the FINAL EXAM.**
- ❖ ***Assignments:*** There will be **video assignments/assignments** to supplement student knowledge and understanding. Assignments have a greater weight than a single quiz because there are fewer assignments than quizzes. It would be best not to attempt to offset a zero. Late assignments will receive an automatic deduction of **10 points per day** they are late. No assignment will be accepted **5 days** after their due date.
- ❖ ***Discussion Threads:*** Each semester, I post a discussion thread on current Texas government events. Your initial 500-word post must cite at least two non-class sources and be cited properly. You also need to write two separate, 150-word responses to classmates. Late posts lose **10 points per day** and are not accepted after **5 days**.

Tentative Course Schedule/Pacing

Materials will be organized into weekly modules. This schedule is subject to change by the instructor should it be needed. If you have any questions, please email the instructor.

Week 1	Texas Society and Political Culture	Chapter 1 Quiz 1 Discussion 1
Week 2	Federalism and the Texas Constitution	Ch. 2 Quiz 2
Week 3	The Texas Legislature	Ch. 7 Quiz 3 Assignment 1
Week 4	The Governor in Texas	Ch. 8 Quiz 4
Week 5	The Plural Executive and the Bureaucracy in Texas	Ch. 9 Quiz 5 Assignment 2
Week 6	The Texas Courts System	Ch. 10 Quiz 6 Assignment 3 EXAM 1
Week 7	Voting and Elections in Texas	Ch. 3 Quiz 7 Discussion 2
Week 8	Political Parties in Texas	Ch. 4 Quiz 8 Assignment 4
Week 9	Interest Groups in Texas Politics	Ch. 5 Quiz 9 Assignment 5
Week 10	The Media and Public Opinion in Texas	Ch. 6 Quiz 10 EXAM 2
Week 11	Criminal Justice Policy in Texas	Ch. 12 Quiz 11 Discussion 3
Week 12	Local and County Governments and Special Districts in Texas	Ch. 11 Quiz 12
Week 13-14	Public Policy, Finance, and Budgeting in Texas	Ch. 13 Quiz 13 Assignment 6
Week 16 - FINAL EXAM (WEEK OF DECEMBER 8TH) https://www.southplainscollege.edu/academiccalendar/finalexamschedule.php		

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 below to learn more about how to book an appointment, view the tutoring schedule, and view tutoring locations.

<http://www.southplainscollege.edu/exploreprograms/artsandsciences/teacheredtutoring.php>

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

