

South Plains College

GOVT 2306

FALL 2020

Texas Government

Traditional Course, SS 101

Professor Drew Landry

dlandry@southplainscollege.edu

Levelland Campus; Student Services rm 118

Office Phone Number: (806) 716 – 4032

Office Hours: MW: 12:30 – 3:30 pm; F: 9am – 12pm (noon) and/or by appointment

Common Course

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and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course.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

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. In this course, students will learn about 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.

Course Requirements/Expectations

No late work will be accepted without a note from a medical doctor.

Please no cell phone, pager, iPod, earbuds, headphones, etc. usage during class. This is rude to me and distracting to your classmates. Please be respectful of others and power down your cellular devices, pagers, iPods, etc. and remove your earbuds or headphones prior to the start of class.

Students may not use a laptop computer during unless given specific permission by the professor to do so. Also, no student is allowed to take a picture of notes unless given specific permission to do so.

While this course requires no prior knowledge of Texas politics, there is considerable reading related to a wide range of topics. It is essential that students complete the weekly readings before class. We cover a great deal of material so it is critical that you attend class regularly, take

Careful notes, keep abreast of the readings, and participate fully in class discussions. If you feel you need extra help in managing the course materials, contact me and I will help you.

Recommended Textbook

Jones, M.P., Maxwell, W.E., & Crain, E. (2020). *Texas Politics Today*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning (looseleaf)

MindTap will not be utilized. If any student wants it to be utilized

Communication

In the event students need to get in contact with Professor Landry, please send all communications to his South Plains College email. In doing so, please put the class in which you are enrolled in the subject line so I know how to specifically help you remedy the issue. Also, please follow the guidelines put forth in the Academic English portion of the syllabus when submitting an email.

Coursework

Students will be given four (4) exams throughout the semester. The exams are aimed to evaluate student progress in the class. If discrepancies exist, notify me immediately. There are no makeups except in the case of an emergency and with the display of a doctor's note.

Also, students will be given one (1) writing assignment. The writing assignment will be turned in through turnitin.com via Blackboard. Students will receive a written explanation on what is expected one (1) week before the assignment is due. For every day late – including weekends – the paper will succumb to a five (5) point deduction on its final grade.

There will be content quizzes throughout the semester. These are conducted through the class' Blackboard site and will be about five (5) to ten (10) questions covering the material from class to class. There are no makeups for these quizzes.

Last, and certainly not least, is class participation. Students are required to participate in class. A significant amount of class points lies in participating and if a student is absent, she/he cannot participate in class. If students are late and/or arbitrarily leave class for a significant amount of time, uses cell phone during class, etc., their participation grade will suffer. If an emergency occurs, that is a different situation and I should be notified.

Exam Day Conduct

When taking exams, students need a pencil and an eraser. Cellular devices, tablets, iPods, earbuds, headphones, pagers, etc., need to be either turned off, removed, or silenced – **not on vibrate** – and stowed away in a backpack, purse, bag, or any other packaging device. All backpacks, purses, bags, etc., need to be placed on the floor and in the front of the classroom and all course material need to be inside it and closed. If any student chooses to ignore this directive and unsilenced phone goes off during an exam, every student in the class will have ten (10)

points automatically deducted. Also, all hats are to be removed upon taking an in – class exam. In short, do not be a jerk.

Yawning

If any student feels the need to yawn during class, it is expected to do so silently while covering his/her mouth. Failure to follow such a simplistic social norm may result in the professor responding to such action.

Grades

Rounding

Students are ingrained to think a percentage ending in “.5” will be rounded to the nearest whole number. I only round to the nearest whole number if a student has at least a “.9.” This is my practice and I have done this for numerous years. I have no intention of changing it. If you desire a better grade, earn it.

In calculating grades, I keep it very simple. I take the total points a student accumulated and divide that number into the total points possible and multiply by one hundred (100). The result from this basic math is your class percentage. A scale of what percentage constitutes a letter grade is below.

Grading Breakdown

Four Exams (Two worth 110 points; One worth 101 points; One worth 100 points) =	421
One Writing Assignment is an exam	
Five Quizzes (Four worth 30 points; One worth 25 points) =	145
Participation (worth 75 points) =	75
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Total Points =	641

Grading Scale

100 – 90%	A
89 – 80%	B
79 – 70%	C
69 – 60%	D
59% and below	F

Attendance Policy

This is discussed in the “COVID-19” section of the syllabus.

If any student accumulates excessive absences after the last day to drop classes (11/19/2020), he/she will earn an “F” for the course.

For further information on SPC’s attendance policy, please seek the student handbook and college catalog.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the taking credit for something that is not the work of the owner. It is cheating and will not be tolerated. See the General Catalog for more information on plagiarism.

Technology Policy

The following is Professor Landry's policy on the usage of laptop computers, iPads, earbuds, headphones, and other mobile tablets in the classroom. Professor Landry will not allow students to use them and no student may take a picture of the notes unless given special permission to do so.

The use of cellular/mobile phones is prohibited in the classroom. If caught, the professor will ask you to stow it away. If a phone rings in class, Professor Landry reserves the right to answer the phone for you, politely inform the caller that you cannot answer the phone, and keep the phone until the end of class.

Texting is a neat method of communicating but will not be tolerated in the classroom. It is obvious when a student is texting and if/when a student is spotted, he/she will be asked to stow it away. If a student is caught a second time, the phone will be confiscated until the end of class. If you are expecting a call or have children in daycare, notify me immediately and I will make an exception for you.

Please remove all earbuds/headphones prior to the start of class. The class works well enough without background music.

I do not desire to be the "bad guy" but have no problem playing that role. If you do not want an uncomfortable classroom setting, then please do not update social media or text during class. That can wait until class is over.

Blackboard and Technology Use in Class

Supplementary class materials may be found on our class' Blackboard webpage. Any additions will be announced in class in hopes to stem any confusion.

There may be times when YouTube is utilized in class to illustrate a point made either by the professor or the textbook or both. When it is, closed captioned options will be used for the hearing impaired.

There will be no videos posted on the class' Blackboard website.

Academic English

South Plains College requires all students to become proficient in "academic English," a form of English typically used in academic, professional, and business contexts. While slang, regional idioms, and informal kinds of self-expression are appropriate in some contexts, they are out of

place in academic writing. Professors expect all students to demonstrate proficiency in using the conventions of academic English in all their written work, whether it is in – class exams, take home essays, or emails.

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.

Nondiscrimination Policy

It is the policy of South Plains College and this instructor not to discriminate on the basis of age, race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation (choices of sports team, however, are fair game – ha).

Tobacco Use

Students are to follow SPC’s rules and regulations on cigarette and electronic cigarette use. Also, students are not to use smokeless tobacco in class. This includes but not limited to: snuff, dip, chew, packets, etc. It is rude and distracting to do this during class and any violation will be dealt with accordingly.

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.

Students with Disabilities

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 at Levelland Student Health & Wellness Center 806-716-2577, Reese Center (also covers ATC) Building 8: 806-716-4675, Plainview Center Main Office: 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611, or the Health and Wellness main number at 806-716-2529.

COVID-19

Because of the ease with which COVID-19 can be spread in an indoor setting such as a classroom, we will be following strict classroom policies designed to reduce the risk that anyone in our class transmits or contracts COVID-19 while in the room. These rules are in place to keep you, your classmates, and me safe. If you ever have any questions or concerns about these policies, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

If you violate the classroom COVID-19 policies repeatedly (e.g. not wearing a face-covering, coming in while sick) or you are combative or argumentative when I ask you to comply with a COVID-19 policy, I may ask that you no longer attend the course in person.

If you are unwilling or unable to comply with any of these policies, I suggest you drop this course. SPC has made many online only sections available.

Masks

It is the policy of South Plains College for the Fall 2020 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.

This pamphlet from Mayo Clinic provides a good visual list of acceptable and unacceptable face coverings: https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/-/media/national-files/documents/covid19/acceptable_masks_fly_final.pdf?la=en&rev=3bde35fbc2384808b271388f1177f297&hash=CC838FBC69D98EA4C8AB1C533F7437FC

The mask must cover your entire nostrils and mouth, and it must not have any vent to allow air out. The CDC has guidance here on how to properly wear a mask:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Course Attendance

You are never required to attend class physically. I will take in class attendance only to have a reference point for starting quarantine in case someone in the class tests positive for COVID-19. All lectures will be available online and all coursework will be completed via Blackboard.

You are only allowed to attend class physically on your assigned day of the week. You will be assigned an attendance day at the beginning of the semester, and it is your responsibility to remember this day and to ensure that you do not come to class on your non-assigned day. You will not be allowed into the classroom if it is not your assigned day. Should you arrive on the wrong day, you will be asked to leave. There are no exceptions to this rule.

You may not trade days with other classmates, even temporarily. If it is not your day to be in class, you will not be allowed to be in class.

The CDC has a list of medical conditions that make a person higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. If you have any of the conditions on this list, you are strongly advised (for your own safety) not to attend the class in person. The CDC list of underlying medical conditions can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

Tests and Assignments

You will never need to be in class to complete a test or other assignment. You will always be able to complete all work via Blackboard. I will never give any assignment that requires you to be physically present in the room.

If you are unable to access the class for an extended period of time due to personal illness or COVID-19 related quarantine, we can plan for you to make up any missed work.

Food and Drinks

Because neither food nor drinks can be consumed while wearing a face-covering, they will be prohibited in the classroom. If you remove your face-covering to take a drink or to eat, you will be asked to leave for the remainder of that day.

Physical Distancing

You must maintain at least six (6) feet of distance between yourself and all other persons while in class. That includes me and your classmates, regardless of any relationship you have outside the classroom. That means that even if you are in the class with friends or family, please maintain six (6) feet of distance. Obviously, I will not use a ruler to measure the distance between you and others in the room, but if you are asked to move away from someone, please do so.

Attending While Sick

If you or someone with whom you have close contact (e.g. family member, coworker, roommate) are experiencing ANY symptom associated with COVID-19, please do not come to class. If you are sneezing or coughing excessively in class, you will be asked to leave. As noted above, you are never required to be in class physically, and I will never take attendance in class. Per the CDC, any of the following may be symptoms of COVID-19:

Fever or chills	Cough	Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	Fatigue	Muscle or body aches	Headache
New loss of taste or smell	Sore throat	Congestion or runny nose	Nausea or vomiting	Diarrhea	

If you or someone you have close contact with are experiencing any of the above symptoms, you are strongly advised to get tested for COVID-19. The Lubbock Health Department maintains a list of COVID-19 testing sites; you can access that list here:

<https://ci.lubbock.tx.us/departments/health-department/about-us/covid-19-testing-location>.

Please do not return to class until you or the person you had contact with have received a negative result on a COVID-19 test (meaning you don't have the disease).

If you test positive for COVID-19, please follow the guidance of your healthcare provider regarding when it is safe to return to class.

If someone you have close contact with tests positive for COVID-19, you will need to quarantine. Current CDC guidelines (as of this writing) are to quarantine for fourteen (14) days from the time of last contact with the infected person. The CDC has more information on how and when to quarantine at the following website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

Availability of Lecture Material Outside of Class

All lectures (technology permitting) will be live streamed. You will have the option to watch and participate from home. Thus, you are never required to be in class. I will also make recordings of all lectures available after class, so you may watch them at a later time if you prefer.

Quarantine Triggers

I will self-initiate quarantine under the following conditions:

- If I develop any COVID-19 symptom, I will self-quarantine until I receive a negative COVID-19 test. This will likely take at least three (3) to five (5) days.
- If I am exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID-19, I will self-quarantine for at least fourteen (14) days from the time I last had contact with that person.
- If I test positive for COVID-19, I will follow the advice of my doctor regarding when it is safe for me to return to class in person.
- If anyone in the class tests positive for COVID-19, I will cancel in person classes until at least fourteen (14) days after that student's last date of attendance.

Contingency in Case of Instructor Quarantine

If at any time I am unable to physically attend class, I will make every effort to continue broadcasting lectures at our regularly scheduled class time. I have the necessary hardware and software at home to broadcast and record lectures. If for any reason I am unable to continue live streaming lectures, I or another SPC faculty member will contact you with instructions on how the class will proceed.

Makeup of assignment(s) and exam(s)

If a student misses an assignment(s) and/or exam(s) due to COVID-19 or any other illness, a doctor's note will be required in order to makeup the assignment and/or exam. The note must cover the dates you missed, which must coincide with your missing assignment(s) and/or exam(s).

Course Outline

Weeks 1 – 4: Introduction; Texas Culture and Diversity; Texas Constitution and Federalism;

First Exam

Weeks 5 – 7; Political Parties; Voting and Elections

Second Exam

Weeks 9 – 11; Texas Legislature;

Third Exam

Weeks 12 – 14; Texas Governors;

Final Exam

Amendments

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus at any time. Students will be notified of such change(s) with appropriate time to adapt.

Dates to Remember

September 7 – Labor Day

October 16 – Fall Break

November 25-27 – Thanksgiving Break

Thursday, November 19 – Last Day to Drop Classes!

December 7-10 – Final Exams