

**South Plains College**  
**GOVT 2306**  
**Section 203**  
**Spring 2021**  
**Texas Government**

**Traditional Course**

**Name:** Professor Britt Bearden

**Biography:** BA Texas Tech University; MA Texas Tech University; Additional Courses: South Plains College and George Mason University. Congressional Intern: Office of Congressman Pete Gallego, Summer 2013; Field Representative: Texas Democratic Party, 2014.

**Email:** [bbearden@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:bbearden@southplainscollege.edu)

**Office:** Reese Center, Building 3, Room 316E

**Office Hours:** Tuesday / Thursday : 1:00pm – 4:00pm | Friday 8:00am – 10:00am

**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

## **INSTRUCTOR SYLLABUS**

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### **Recommended Textbook:**

- Champagne, Anthony, Edward Harpham, and Jason Casellas. 2019. *Governing Texas: Forth Edition*. W.W. Norton & Company.
- ISBN: 978-0393680126

### **Required Technology:**

- Reliable access to computer or laptop.
- Reliable internet connection

**Grading Scale:**

1000 – 900 points = A

899 – 800 points = B

799 – 700 points = C

699 – 600 points = D

599 and below = F

**Coursework:**

(1) Discussions (2) = **200 points / 100 points each**

(2) Exams (3) = **600 points / 200 points each**

(3) Essay (1) = **200 points**

**Built-in Bonus:**

(4) Syllabus Quiz (1) = **10 points**

(5) Literacy Test (1) = **10 points**

(6) Public Opinion Poll = **10 points**

(7) In Person Attendance = **10 points**

**Optional:**

(8) Make-Up Discussion = **50 points**

(9) Make-Up Exam = **100 points**

(1) **Discussion Postings:** Two times throughout the semester you will write a discussion post which will be your reaction to an article related to Texas government and reply to a classmate's discussion. These can be found on the left side bar labeled "Discussion Board" as well as within each section folder.

- These original posts must be at least 400 words in length.

- Additionally, you must also reply (150 words) to one of your fellow classmates' posts.

- A full rubric and instructions can be found at the end of this syllabus.

(2) **Exams:** at the end of Section 1, 2, and 3 we will have an in-class exam. These will consist of 50 multiple choice questions. You will need a scantron in order to complete the exam.

(3) **Essay:** At the end of the semester you will need to turn in an essay. Instructions and rubric provided at the end of the syllabus and on Blackboard. Topics can be found on Blackboard. You will use Turnitin on Blackboard to turn in this assignment.

(4) **Syllabus Quiz:** You will have an unlimited amount of attempts and time to achieve full credit. This assignment can be found in folder “Course Syllabus: Start Here.” It is a quiz over the syllabus and a syllabus agreement.

(5) **Literacy Test:** You will have 10 minutes to answer 10 questions taken from Alabama’s 1965 Literacy Test. Do your best. This is a completion grade. This assignment can be found in folder “Course Syllabus: Start Here.”

(6) **Public Opinion Poll:** You will be given a link on Blackboard for a Google Form. Be sure to provide your SPC email so that you can receive credit.

(7) **In Person Attendance:** You will receive credit for coming to class in person. See attendance policy for more information.

(8) **Make-Up Discussion:** If you miss a discussion assignment or make below a 50, you will have the opportunity to receive up to 50 points through a make-up discussion.

(9) **Make-Up Exam:** If you miss an exam and do not have a documented excuse you will be able to make it up during finals week. It will be 100 questions over all the material we covered throughout the semester. These will be graded based out of 100 points.

**Note: Expect written assignments to be graded within a business week of the due date.**

## **Course Requirements, Expectations, and Policies**

**Late Work/Extra Credit:** You will NOT have the opportunity to earn extra credit points during the course, so do not ask. No late work will be accepted since you have ample time to complete assignments. There are no exceptions to this policy. Exams can only be made up with proper documentation such as a doctor's note.

**Attendance Policy:** Students are expected to attend class regularly and prepared. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late you will be counted absent. If you leave early without telling me beforehand, you will be counted absent. If you sleep during class, you will be counted absent.

**Drop Policy:** If I do not see you, hear from you, or you do not log-in to Blackboard for 3 consecutive weeks, I will drop you from the course. Besides that, it is your responsibility to drop the course.

**Disruption of Classroom Environment:** Your professor will not tolerate any disruption of the classroom environment. This includes any problems your facilitator encounters with you AND hateful/disrespectful remarks made in the classroom, on discussion postings, mail, or chat. I will drop you with an F for violation of this policy.

**Technology:** No cell phone, Apple Watch, iPod, etc. usage during class. The use of cellular/mobile phones is prohibited in the classroom. If you are expecting a call or need to leave early, notify me immediately or before class and I will make an exception for you.

Students may use a laptop computer during class but are not permitted to instant message others, check social network updates, email, etc. The usage of the laptop computers is meant for taking notes and considered a privilege, not a right, given to you by me and can be taken away at any time.

If you use any electronic device during an exam, it will automatically be taken up and you will be given a zero.

**Emailing Your Professor:** I require students to send a professional email when contacting me. If you send an unprofessional email to me, I will not respond. In addition, do not attempt to argue with me over a grade you receive, if you do I will either lower your grade further, or drop you with an F. Please include what course you are enrolled in (Example: GOVT 2305.156).

DO NOT attempt to communicate with me through Blackboard. I only communicate through email, preferably your SPC email.

Unless there are unforeseen circumstances, you can expect me to reply to emails within 24 hours. If I do not, don't be afraid to email me again or forward your message to me.

**Technology Problems:** If you have an unreliable server or computer, please go to a public computer to do your work. If for some reason the professor or the Blackboard server has made a mistake, you will not be penalized.

Be aware that when something only happens to you, it is your problem not mine. Please always start early on assignments and finish early to avoid problems. Save assignments in Word to avoid losing your work.

I will be of no help with computer problems, mechanical failures, ISP problems, etc. You can contact **Blackboard and Tech Support** ([blackboard@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:blackboard@southplainscollege.edu)) for any Blackboard related issues. If you are having trouble logging in to Blackboard or seeing your courses, please contact Blackboard Support. You can call the office Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm at 806-716-2180

### **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism is the taking of 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. Cheating or dishonesty of any type in this course will result in the student being dropped from this course with an "F."

The best way to avoid this situation is using your own original work and citing sources. Links to help you cite sources are provided on Blackboard in “Helpful Links” as well as below rubrics in the syllabus.

### **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.

For help, there is a link in “Helpful Hints” that describes writing for research purposes on Blackboard.

### **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.

### **SPC Standard Disability Statement**

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 Office) 806-716-2577, Reese Center (Building 8) & Lubbock Center 806-716-4675, or Plainview Center (Main Office) 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611.

### **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, 806-894-9611

### **Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations Statement**

If you are pregnant, or have given birth within six months, Under Title IX you have a right to reasonable accommodations to help continue your education. To activate accommodations you must submit a Title IX pregnancy accommodations request, along with specific medical documentation, to the Director of Health and Wellness. Once approved, notification will be sent to the student and instructors. It is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor to arrange accommodations. Contact Crystal Gilster, Director of Health and Wellness at 806-716-2362 or email [cgilster@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:cgilster@southplainscollege.edu) for assistance.

### **Campus Concealed Carry**

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](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.

**SPC Mask Policy:** 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.

## **COVID**

If a person believes he/she has been exposed to COVID-19, they will be requested to remain off campus. Reporting should occur as follows:

Students – report to instructor or Health Services, DeEtte Edens, BSN, RN

### **Recommendation for Testing**

- Here is some information that may be helpful to make a decision about getting tested:
- Most people have mild illness and can recover at home without medical care. Contact your healthcare provider if your symptoms are getting worse or if you have questions about your health.
- Decisions about testing are made by state and local health departments or healthcare providers.
- If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and are not tested, it is important to stay home.

**IF YOU ARE TESTED POSITIVE, PLEASE CONTACT DEETTE EDENS, BSN, RN AT 806-716-2376 OR DEEDENS@SOUTHPLAINSCOLLEGE.EDU FOR QUARANTINE GUIDANCE.**

**Asymptomatic Positive** (Tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms) - If a person continues to have no symptoms, he/she can be with others after 10 days have passed since positive test. Following the 10 days, the person is required to wear a face covering when in contact with anyone.

**Syllabus Contract/Amendments:** All content within this syllabus is subject to change at any time and is completely up to the discretion of the professor. Students will be notified of such change(s) with appropriate time to adapt. By enrolling in this course you agree to follow all guidelines in this syllabus and be fully responsible for the grade you earn.

**If campus operations are required to change because of health concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible that this course will move to a fully online delivery format. Should that be necessary, students will need to have access to a webcam and microphone for remote delivery of the class.**

## **Course Schedule and Readings:**

### **Section 1: Texas History and Constitution / Federalism / Local Government / The Budget**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 2
- Chapter 3
- Chapter 10
- Chapter 11

#### **Discussion: March 12<sup>th</sup> by 5:00PM**

- Discussion 1: Texas Constitution and the Amendment Process

#### **Exam 1: February 24<sup>th</sup>**

### **Section 2: Legislature / Executive / Judiciary / Public Policy**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 7
- Chapter 8
- Chapter 9
- Chapter 12

#### **Discussion: April 23<sup>rd</sup> by 5:00PM**

- Discussion 3: Governor's Power

#### **Exam 2: April 7<sup>th</sup>**

### **Section 3: Local Government / Public Finance / Public Policy**

#### **Readings:**

- Chapter 1
- Chapter 4
- Chapter 5

- Chapter 6

**Final Essay: Due May 7<sup>th</sup> by 5:00pm.**

**Last Day to Drop: April 29<sup>th</sup>**

**Final Exam: May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1:00PM – 3:00PM**

**Due Dates and Exams**

- Syllabus Quiz, Literacy Test, Public Opinion Poll: Due January 29<sup>th</sup> by 5:00pm
- Exam 1: February 24<sup>th</sup>
- Discussion: Due March 12<sup>th</sup> by 5:00PM
- Exam 2: April 7<sup>th</sup>
- Discussion: Due April 23<sup>rd</sup> by 5:00PM
- Last Day to Drop: April 29<sup>th</sup>
- Make-Up Discussion: Due May 7<sup>th</sup> by 5:00PM
- Final Essay: Due May 7<sup>th</sup> by 5:00pm.
- Final Exam: May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1:00PM – 3:00PM
- Make-Up Exam: Due May 13<sup>th</sup> by 12PM

## Rubric and Instructions for Written Work:

### Discussions:

Rubric Grading	59 points or less	60 – 69 points	70 to 79 points	80 to 89 points	90 or more points
	No reply	No reply	Reply	Reply	Reply
	Student does not: - answer questions in prompt - Explain important concepts	Student does not: - answer questions in prompt - Explain important concepts - appear to have read article	Student: - answers most questions in prompt - Explains some important concepts	Student: - answers most questions in prompt - Explains some important concepts - mentions article	Student: - answers all questions in prompt - Explains all important concepts - mentions article
	Contains considerable grammar mistakes		Some grammar mistakes	Few grammar mistakes	Few grammar mistakes
	Does not meet word count	Some grammar mistakes	Word count met	Word count met	Word count met
	No citations	Word count met	No citations	Has citations	Has citations
	Poor sentence structure and organization	No citations	Good sentence structure and organization	Good sentence structure and organization	Great sentence structure and organization
	Does not mention podcast/article	Poor sentence structure and organization	Does not mention podcast/article	Uses article	Uses article
		Does not mention podcast/article		Has at least 2 sources.	Has at least three sources.

### Instructions:

- These original posts must be at least 400 words in length.
- Additionally, you must also reply (150 words) to one of your fellow classmates' posts.
- Use citations.
- Make sure to cite reliable sources when writing your discussions.

No Wikipedia

- You are expected to use the article and slides/book.
- This includes using the article to answer the prompt.
- Write in academic English, paragraph style prose, as you would a research essay

- You must post your DISCUSSION POST BEFORE viewing classmates' discussions. Failure to do so will drop your grade 20 points. If you post a blank, I will assume you are attempting to plagiarize.

**Essay:**

Rubric Grading	100 – 119 points	120 - 139 points	140 to 159 points	160 to 179 points	180 or more points
	<p>Student does not answer important concepts found in prompt</p> <p>Contains considerable grammar mistakes</p> <p>Poor sentence structure and organization</p> <p>Does not follow instructions</p> <p>Less than 3 sources</p>	<p>Student does not answer important concepts found in prompt</p> <p>Contains considerable grammar mistakes</p> <p>Poor sentence structure and organization</p> <p>Follows most instructions</p> <p>Less than 3 sources</p>	<p>Student does not answer important concepts found in prompt</p> <p>Contains considerable grammar mistakes</p> <p>Good sentence structure and organization</p> <p>Follows all instructions</p> <p>Has 3 – 4 sources</p>	<p>Student answers some important concepts found in prompt</p> <p>Contains few grammar mistakes</p> <p>Good sentence structure and organization</p> <p>Follows all instructions</p> <p>Has 3 – 4 sources</p>	<p>Student answers most important concepts found in prompt</p> <p>Contains few grammar mistakes</p> <p>Good sentence structure and organization</p> <p>Follows instructions on length</p> <p>Has at least 5 sources</p>

**Instructions on Topic:**

- There will be three topics posted on Blackboard for you to choose from

**Instructions Final Draft:**

- Double spaced
- 12 point font
- Times New Roman
- 1 inch margins
- at least 1000 words in length (that is NOT including headers, footers, citations, etc.)
- Uses citations (APA or MLA)
- These will be turned in using Turnitin on Blackboard.

## **Writing Tips:**

- Write in third person, as you would a research paper.
- Use paragraphs NOT bulletpoints.
- I do not care to read your personal political opinions. Remain as objective as possible in answering the prompt.
- Use academic English and remain formal

<https://owl.massey.ac.nz/academic-writing/1st-vs-3rd-person.php>

- For help on in-text citations:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_in\\_text\\_citations\\_the\\_basics.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_in_text_citations_the_basics.html)

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/in\\_text\\_citations\\_the\\_basics.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/in_text_citations_the_basics.html)

- For help on your works cited:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/reference\\_list\\_author\\_authors.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_author_authors.html)

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/reference\\_list\\_electronic\\_sources.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_electronic_sources.html)