

Spring 2023
GOVT 2306-007 and 008: Texas Government
Department of Social Sciences
South Plains College

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, Lubbock Downtown Center, ATC, Plainview

Textbook: Varies according to instructor.

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and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course.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

Dr. Jonathan Martin

Office: ADM 121

E-mail: jmartin@southplainscollege.edu

Office Phone: 806-716-2198

Office Hours:

- Monday: 9:30am-11:30am
- Tuesday: 9:50-10:50am
- Wednesday: 9:30am-11:30am
- Thursday: 9:50-10:50am
- Friday: 9-11am

Textbook

Benson, P., & Giardino, A. (2020). *The Texas Tribune: The Texas Government experience*. Pearson.

TexBook Program: *This course is in the SPC TexBook program, so you do not need to purchase a textbook or access code for this course.*

- **What is TexBook?** The required textbook/digital content for this course is available to you in Blackboard from the first day of class. The charge for the textbook/digital content is the lowest price available from the publisher and bookstore and is included in your tuition.
- **How do I access my TexBook?** Your course material is in your Blackboard course from the first day of class. Access to your course material is provided either by VitalSource or other links inside your Blackboard course. VitalSource (and many publisher’s) eBook features include the ability to hear the text read aloud, highlight, take notes, create flash cards, see word definitions, build study guides, print select pages, and download 100% of the book for offline access.
- **Help with TexBook issues and support:** check with your professor or visit: <https://support.vitalsource.com/hc/en-us/requests/new> (available 24/7 via chat, email, phone, and text)
- **Opting out of TexBook:** Participating in TexBook is not mandatory, and you can choose to opt out. However, by opting out you will lose access to the course textbook/digital content and competitive pricing, and you will need to purchase the required course material on your own. If you drop the class or opt-out before the opt-out deadline, the TexBook fee will be automatically refunded to your SPC account. The opt-out deadline for Fall and Spring is the twelfth class day. The opt-out deadline for shorter terms varies between the second and third class day.

**Please consult with your professor before deciding to opt-out.* If you still feel that you should purchase the course textbook/materials on your own, send an opt-out email to pwells@texasbook.com. Include your first name, last name, student ID number, and the course you are opting out of. Once you have been opted-out, you will receive a confirmation email. If you need assistance with the process, contact the SPC Bookstore:
Email: pwells@texasbook.com / Phone: 806-716-2097
Email: agamble@texasbook.com / Phone: 806-716-4610

Policies and Procedures

SPC Standard Disability Statement

Any students who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make and necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from the SPC Disability Service Office during the instructor's office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations until appropriate verification from the SPC Disability Service Office has been provided. For more information, you may contact the Disability Services Office (located in the Health & Wellness Center) at 806-716-2529 or visit <http://www.southplainscollege.edu/health/disabilityservices.php>.

For information regarding official South Plains College statements about diversity, disabilities, non-discrimination, Title V Pregnancy Accommodations, and Campus Concealed Carry, please visit: <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/>.

Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and 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. Phone number 806-716-2360. South Plains College is dedicated to providing a safe and equitable learning environment for all students. Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the college. The Health and Wellness Center offers confidential support (806-716-2529) and Voice of Hope has a 24-hour hotline: 806-763-7273. You are encouraged to report any incidents online at <http://www.southplainscollege.edu/about/campussafety/complaints.php>.

Covid-19 Statement

For information and resources about COVID-19, please visit <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/emergency/covid19-faq.php>.

Course Withdrawals

The last day to withdraw/drop with a grade of "W" is **April 27**. 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 Integrity

Cheating, plagiarism, or any other act of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. At the bare minimum, a student who cheats or plagiarizes will receive a zero for the assignment. In addition, I reserve the right to seek additional penalties, such as a zero for the entire course and filing an Academic Dishonesty Report.

There are now websites that will actually generate semi-unique material that somewhat resembles original material. Since the technology is available to create this content, technology is also available to detect this content. Make no mistake, this is plagiarism. I am not asking AI to write a paper, I am asking you, the student, to create this content. If you submit work that is not your own, original material, it will be considered plagiarism and receive a grade of zero. The incident will also be detailed to the Dean of Students for disciplinary actions.

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%
Participation	15%
Quizzes	15%
Essay	10%

Exams (60%)

There are three exams (including the final exam), and comprising 60% of your final grade. The third exam will be given during the final exam period and is not cumulative. Furthermore, all

three exams will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions. I will provide you with a scantron on exam day.

If you miss class on exam day for an unexcused reason, you will have to take the make-up exam. The make-up exam will have different questions from the normal exam, and I will automatically deduct 15 points from your exam grade as a late penalty. Finally, you are not allowed to the final exam earlier than the scheduled date in the syllabus.

Participation (15%)

At the end of the semester, you will receive a participation grade based on the quality and quantity of your participation during discussions, as well as successfully completing participation assignments, attendance, and adhering to classroom decorum.

I expect you to attend class regularly. For the attendance component, I allow each student **three** unexcused absences (excluding exam days). After that threshold is met, I will deduct 5 points from your participation grade for each additional unexcused absence. If you are absent on a day I assign a participation assignment, you must make-up that assignment.

Furthermore, I reserve the right to deduct points from your participation grade for violations of classroom decorum (e.g., tardiness, cell phone use, wearing earbuds, rude other students or the instructor). If you have questions about your participation grade throughout the semester, you are welcome to ask me for feedback on how you are doing.

Essay (10%)

For this assignment, you will write a persuasive essay to a fictitious newspaper editor (letter to the editor) in which you give your opinion on a current issue in federal politics. More information on this assignment will be provided to you later in the semester.

Quizzes (15%)

I will assign at least 6 quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz will have between 5-15 questions and cover material from the readings and lecture. Under normal circumstances, you will complete a quiz in Blackboard, but I might assign a pop quiz in class. At the end of the semester, I will drop your two lowest quiz grades.

Class Schedule*

Week 1 (Jan 16-19)

Course Introduction

Chapter 1: Texas Society and Political Culture

Week 2 (Jan 23-26)

Chapter 2: Federalism and the Texas Constitution

Week 3 (Jan 30-Feb 2)

Chapter 2: Federalism and the Texas Constitution

Week 4 (Feb 6-9)

Chapter 2: Federalism and the Texas Constitution

Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature

Week 5 (Feb 13-16)

Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature

Week 6 (Feb 20-23)

Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature

Exam 1 is on Thursday, February 13

Week 7 (Feb 27-March 2)

Chapter 8: The Governor in Texas

Week 8 (March 6-9)

Chapter 8: The Governor in Texas

Chapter 11: Local and County Governments in Texas

Week 9 (March 20-23)

Chapter 11: Local and County Governments in Texas

Chapter 3: Voting and Elections in Texas

Week 10 (March 27-30)

Chapter 3: Voting and Elections in Texas

Week 11 (April 3-6)

Chapter 4: Political Parties in Texas

Exam 2 is on Thursday, April 6

Week 12 (April 10-13)

Chapter 10: The Texas Courts System

Week 13 (April 17-20)

Chapter 13: Public Policy, Finance, and Budgeting in Texas

Week 14 (April 24-27)

Chapter 13: Public Policy, Finance, and Budgeting in Texas

Chapter 5: Interest Groups in Texas Politics

Week 15 (May 1-4)

Chapter 12: Criminal Justice Policy in Texas

Week 16 (May 8-11)

Final Exam Week

*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.