

**Fall 2023**  
**GOVT 2306-001: 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excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course.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

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Office Phone: 806-716-2198

Office Hours:

- Monday: 8:20-9:20am and 1-3pm
- Tuesday: 8:20-9:20am and 2:20-3:20pm
- Wednesday: 10:45-11:45am
- Thursday: 8:20-9:20am
- Friday: 9:30-11am

### **Textbook and Course Readings**

This course utilizes the Texas Government panOpen OER (Open Educational Resource) from LibreTexts. The textbook is FREE and available online through this link:

[https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Political\\_Science\\_and\\_Civics/Texas\\_Government\\_\(panOpen\)](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Political_Science_and_Civics/Texas_Government_(panOpen))

In addition to the textbook, I will assign other reading material in Blackboard throughout the semester.

### **Policies and Procedures**

#### Syllabus Statements

For information regarding Intellectual Exchange, Disabilities, Non-Discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) Team, and Campus Concealed Carry, please use the following link:

<https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/>

#### Course Withdrawals

The last day to withdraw/drop with a grade of “W” is **November 30**. 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.

### 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](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	20%
Quizzes	10%
Essay	10%

#### Exams (60%)

There are three exams, and your exam average comprises 60% of your overall 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. If you miss class on exam day for an unexcused reason, you will take the make-up exam.

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 (20%)

Active participation is crucial to your success in this class and, more broadly, to the success of any learning experience. There will be numerous opportunities throughout the semester to participate by engaging in class discussions and completing participation assignments. Moreover, I expect you to show up to class on time and be ready to participate. At the end of the semester, you will receive a participation grade based on the quality of your participation (e.g., participating in discussions, completing in-class assignments, attending class, and adhering to classroom decorum).

I will track your attendance, and you will get a low participation grade if you do not regularly attend class. Furthermore, I reserve the right to deduct points from your participation grade for excessive unexcused absences, 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 Texas politics. More information on this assignment will be provided to you later in the semester.

### Quizzes (10%)

I will assign at least 5 quizzes throughout the semester in Blackboard. Quiz format will vary and will be based on assigned readings.

## **Class Schedule\***

### Week 1 (Aug 28-31)

Course Introduction

Chapter 1: Political Culture

### Week 2 (Sept 5-7)

\*\*\*No Class on September 4 (Labor Day)

Chapter 3: The Texas Constitution

### Week 3 (Sept 11-14)

Chapter 3: The Texas Constitution

Chapter 2: The American Federal System

### Week 4 (Sept 18-21)

Chapter 2: The American Federal System

Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature

### Week 5 (Sept 25-28)

Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature

Week 6 (Oct 2-5)

Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature

\*\*\*Exam 1 is on Wednesday, October 4\*\*\*

Week 7 (Oct 9-12)

Chapter 8: The Executive Branch and the Governor of Texas

Week 8 (Oct 16-19)

Chapter 8: The Executive Branch and the Governor of Texas

Chapter 10: Local Government

Week 9 (Oct 23-26)

Chapter 10: Local Government

Week 10 (Oct 30-Nov 2)

Chapter 5: Elections and Political Participation in Texas

Week 11 (Nov 6-9)

Chapter 4: Political Parties in Texas

\*\*\*Exam 2 is on Wednesday, November 8\*\*\*

Week 12 (Nov 13-16)

Chapter 9: The Evolution of the Law in Texas

Week 13 (Nov 20-23)

Chapter 11: Public Policy in Texas

Week 14 (Nov 27-30)

Chapter 11: Public Policy in Texas

Chapter 6: Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas

Week 15 (Dec 4-7)

Chapter 12: Criminal Justice Policy in Texas

Chapter 13: State Finance

Week 16 (Dec 11-14)

\*\*\*Exam 3 is on Wednesday, December 13 at 8am ([link](#))\*\*\*

\*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.