

Course: Government 2306, Texas Government

Instructor: Bob Bilodeau

Office: Reese Center, Building 3, Room 316 C

Office Phone: 894-9611 Ext. 2464

E-Mail: Blackboard e-mail system. I will try to respond to student inquiries as soon as possible and within 24 hours.

**Statement of the SPC Social Science Department's
Government/Political Science Division for
GOVT 2306 Common Course Syllabus**

*(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: 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

Government 2306 Online Course Syllabus

Carefully read the entire syllabus below. When you have completed reading the syllabus send me an e-mail (**through the course Blackboard e-mail**) stating, "I have read the entire syllabus and agree to follow all of its requirements." Then state your name at the bottom of the e-mail. By sending me an e-mail, you will be held to all the requirements stated in the syllabus. The syllabus agreement is essential for me to know that you understand the rules of this course

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Text: Cal Jillson, *Texas Politics: Governing the Lone Star State*, 6th Edition, Routledge Publishing.

Purpose: The object of this course is to give students a better understanding of Texas government.

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.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities, whether learning or physical, who wish to request accommodations should notify the Disability Services Office as early as possible. 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 through the Guidance and Counseling Center at the Reese Center (Building 8) 716-4606 or the Student Services Building in Levelland 716-2577.

Diversity Statement: In this class, the instructor will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences. This instructor encourages students understand, respect, and appreciate students from different backgrounds, so that we can learn from each other's experiences.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students who have completed this course will be expected to:

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.

Methods to Attain Learning Outcomes: The following suggestions will help you better understand the material, and improve your knowledge of Texas government.

1. Review the learning outcomes (Focus Questions) at the beginning of each chapter.
2. Read the chapter carefully at least twice.
3. Outline the chapter to focus on the authors' organization of the chapter, and discover what he believes to be the most important points in the chapter.
4. Review all graphs and charts.
5. Review all the key terms.

Study Guide: A course study guide is provided for you under the Course Content icon, located in the top left hand corner of the home page. The study guide will provide study questions for each chapter, to help you better understand the major points in each chapter. While the study guide will not cover every question on the test, it will assist you in answering most of the questions.

Discussion Board: A discussion board is required by all South Plains College online classes. In the discussion board you will have the opportunity to introduce yourself to the class, and discuss topics related to that week's reading material. There will be 3 topics for the Discussion Board this semester. The discussion will be open on Monday and close on Friday. I will announce when the discussion topic is open for the week.

Each Discussion Board is worth 15 points or .5% of your final average. A discussion post must be at least 3 or 4 sentences, and provide thoughtful analysis of the material in that week's chapter. Any post, which is too brief, shows little thought, or is mostly BS will receive no points. Unfortunately, most students believe the Discussion Board is to give them free points, and their posts seldom receive any credit. Posts will receive either full credit or no credit; I will not give partial credit on discussion posts. A comment of "God Job" means you have received full credit. Please remember that it is okay to have different opinions on any discussion topic. All I ask is that you respect each other's opinions and be civil in your responses. It is not acceptable to use profane or abusive language in the discussion board. I will monitor all discussions to make sure everyone behaves in a proper manor.

Exams and Grading **(Read this section carefully)**

1. Exams: You will have 10 chapter tests and a final exam. The best 10 scores will be counted towards your grade (your lowest test score will be dropped). Each test will have 25 multiple choice and true/false questions worth 4 points each, for a total of 100 points. You must take the test by 11:59 PM on the assigned date. Otherwise, you will receive a **zero** for the test. All tests will be timed, just as if you were in class, so make sure you know the material before you take the test. You will not have time to look for the correct answers in the book. Tests will last 25 minutes.

Note carefully: once you click on “Begin” you must complete the test in its entirety. Please be sure to click on the save button after you answer each question. Otherwise, your answer will not be saved, and you will receive no credit for that question. If the test is not completed within the allotted time, you will receive a zero for that grade. Please do not wait until the last second to click “Save and Submit” for the test. Students, who have tried this, have found that the computer will not accept their test.

Computer malfunctions happen. If you have a computer malfunction during a test, it is considered an incomplete test, and I will use your one drop for that test. There are no make-up tests.

All tests are available on the first day of class. Any test may be taken before the scheduled test date, but no test may be taken after the scheduled test date.

2. Final Exam: All government classes have a writing requirement. The final exam will meet your writing requirement for this course. The final exam will be an essay over what you have learned in this course. In a one or two page essay, you will be required to list three things you have learned in this course. Explain in your own words why you think these things are important to Texas government. Make sure not all three things come from the same chapter. Your essay will be graded on how well you understand the material, and how well you present your ideas. The final essay will not be timed, so please take the time to proof read your essay to make sure it can be easily understood by the reader, using proper grammar. In Blackboard, essays are single spaced with one inch margins. If you copy and paste a Word document into Blackboard for your final essay, make sure it meets these requirements. Just remember, if you try to give me the least amount possible, by double spacing with wide margins: it's your grade!

3. Grading:

- a. You will take 11 exams each worth 100 points.
- b. Your grade will be an average of the best 10 tests. (I will drop your lowest grade, either a chapter test or the final exam. If you are happy with your grade at the end of the semester, you do not have to take the final exam.)
- c. Grading scale: A = 100-90, B = 89-80, C = 79-70, D = 69-60 & F = below 60
- d. Exams will not be curved.

Chapters for Reading Tests: You will take a test on the following 10 chapters and a final exam. See your Test Schedule for test dates. **Test may be taken before the assigned test date, but not after.** Anyone failing to take a test by the assigned date will receive a **zero** for that test score.

Chapter 1 – Texas and Texans: Then and Now
Chapter 2 – The Texas Constitution and American Federalism
Chapter 3 – Political Participation in Texas: Voters, Campaigns and Elections
Chapter 4 – Interest Groups in Texas
Chapter 5 – Political Parties in Texas
Chapter 6 – The Texas Legislature
Chapter 7 – The Governor and the Executive Branch
Chapter 8 – The Judicial System in Texas
Chapter 9 – Local Government in Texas
Chapter 10 – Financing State Government: Budgets, Revenues, and Expenses
Final Exam

For All Technical Support - blackboard@southplainscollege.edu or call 806-716-2180.
(They are much better than I am at solving computer problems.)

Student Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student to make sure all tests have been completed by their due date. Any test not completed by the due date automatically receives a zero. Computer problems or mechanical failures are not considered acceptable for late tests or assignments. You are highly encouraged not to wait until the last minute to complete tests. Technical and personal problems are not considered acceptable excuses for late tests, since you are able to take your tests well in advance of the test date.