

South Plains College

GOVT 2306

SUMMER II 2023

## **Texas Government**

Online course

Professor Drew Landry

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Levelland Campus, Student Services, rm 116

Office Phone Number: (806) 716 – 4032

Office Hours: By appointment only

### **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, LB Center, 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excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course.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 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 survey of the organizational principles of political science, including, and more emphasis of, the American system of government and the origins and development of the Constitution of the United States. Its emphasis is placed on constitutional backgrounds and the organization and functions of the executive, legislative, and judicial segments of the national government, civil liberties and civil rights, public opinion, media, bureaucracies, and domestic policies. This course satisfies the Legislative requirements for teacher certification.

### **Course Requirements/Expectations**

This is an online distance learning course. It takes a great deal of discipline, self-motivation, and effective time management to successfully complete an online course. Many students find it helpful to set aside specific times each week to work on the course.

While this course requires no prior knowledge of American politics, there is considerable reading related to a wide range of topics. It is essential that students complete the weekly readings before attempting to complete the assignments. We cover a great deal of material so it is critical that you take careful notes and keep abreast of the readings and assignments. If you feel you need extra help in managing the course materials, contact me and I will help you.

### **Required Textbook**

#### ***Comes as an E-Book with the Class***

Jones, M.P., & Crain, E (2021). *Texas Politics Today*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

### **Syllabus Agreement**

Every student has four (4) days to examine the syllabus. By remaining in this course beyond that point, the student indicates his/her acceptance of the syllabus. Any student who remains in the class beyond the first week, agrees to comply with the rules expressed or implied in this syllabus.

### **Grading Policy**

All quizzes, exams, and class sessions have specific due dates and are given in every assignment. The last assignment is due Thursday, August 10, 2023.

### Quizzes

This course will be fairly straightforward. You will read one chapter a week and then take its corresponding quiz. Quizzes will be twenty – five (25) multiple choice, true/false, or matching questions worth six tenths (.6) of a point apiece; meaning every quiz is worth fifteen (15) points.

Students may neither work ahead nor backward on the quizzes. Every session has a specific due date and they are made known to students; however, only a doctor's note will allow students to work on an exam once the due date expires. Once students complete all of the assignments, they have successfully finished the course.

All quizzes are to be taken without the assistance of your textbook or any outside source.

### Essays

At the end of every unit, students will answer cumulative questions pertaining to the chapters that were studied in every unit. The purpose of this is to test students' ability to analyze information, make connections to the chapters, and write proficiently at the collegiate level.

If, *unless directed otherwise in the assignment*, a student embeds, copies and pastes, or cites an outside source (including your textbook) into his/her answer, that student will receive a zero (0) on the essay. If the offense happens a second time, the student will be reported to the Department Chair and I will recommend the student be removed from the course due to plagiarism.

These are not research papers per se but think of them as in-class essays instead.

### Discussions

There will be a few discussions during the summer semester. The links to the discussion board will be located in the appropriate "*Exams and Quizzes*" folder.

The discussion may be over a topic in your reading or an outside article that coincides with the chapter. Your participation in the discussion board is essential as each one is worth ten (10) points. The other discussions concern more substantial topics and will be worth 50 points each.

Students need to make an original post and respond to two (2) different original posts made by their classmates before the deadline. Students may respond more times than the required amount.

Discussing politics can bring about an emotional side of people and that is why a "Netiquette" is found in the "Welcome – Start Here" page. Be sure to read and understand it because your acceptance of its use will be implied when you participate in the first discussion.

### Grading Discussions

If a student only makes one post, the grade for such a post has the potential of making half of the total points. If a student makes two posts, the grade has the potential of making 70% of the total points. In order to reach the maximum amount of points, three posts – consisting of one original post and two responses to two different original posts – must be made.

This part of the grade is meant to engage in a dialogue about issues, not to complement one another on her/his original post. Any response to an original post that does not add to the given discussion (such as “good post,” “good job,” “you did really well,” etc.) will count against that student’s weekly discussion grade. Remember, this is an academic setting and you are encouraged to politely challenge each other. This is not, however, a social media setting.

Finally, there will be no extra credit or bonus available for students.

### Rounding

On the issue of “rounding up” on grades, I have a strict but fair policy. I do not “round up” for any border line student unless that student has at least a “.9.” If a student has not attained a “.9,” then he/she’s grade will not be “rounded up.”

### Calculating Grades

In calculating final grades, I keep it simple. I divide the points a student accumulates over the semester by the total points possible, then multiply that answer by one hundred (100). The result of the calculations will be the student’s percentage for the semester.

### Grading Scale

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

### Grade Breakdown

3 Discussions (one worth 10 points and two worth 50 points) = 110 points  
13 Quizzes (12 worth 15 points each, and one worth 10 points) = 190 points  
4 Essays (each worth 120 points) = 480 points

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Total Points Possible: 780

At the end of the semester, I will not respond to any student who wishes to plead for a grade change. Students need to keep track of their grades throughout the semester.

### **Communications**

There are many methods to contact me. The top of the syllabus has my office hours if you need a face to face discussion; my email if a quick explanation will suffice your question; and my office number if you need an over the phone conversation. I am dedicated to a two (2) business day response to any correspondence from you. Odds are in favor of me getting back to you sooner than that. If there is an emergency – which is defined as a test failing on you via a Blackboard failure – then you should email me – at my SPC email – immediately.

Do NOT send me a message at any time through Blackboard. Only email me through my SPC email.

**When sending an email to me, please put the class you are enrolled in the subject line. That will immediately help me find your information and help you.**

Please note that I do not use exclamation points, gifs, memes, emojis, etc., in my email correspondence with students. The fact that I write declarative sentences ending with periods gives students the impression that I am rude. I promise that I am not being rude when I write or respond to emails. Please read them in a robotic, informative manner because that is how they are written and delivered.

### **Attendance Policy**

Regulating attendance in an online course is tricky. With that being stated, students will be considered “no longer attending” after two (2) consecutive incomplete assignments *and* not informing me the reason for such inaction. This is the fairest action for all students. The point of this is twofold: do not miss any assignments and notify me immediately if you will miss. For more information concerning the attendance policy, please see the South Plains College General Catalog.

### **Academic Integrity**

It is the aim of the faculty of South Plains College to foster a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own any work which he or she has not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a most serious offense and renders the offender liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension.

**Cheating:** Dishonesty of any kind on examinations or on written assignments, illegal possession of examinations, the use of unauthorized notes during an examination, obtaining information during an examination from the textbook or from the examination paper of another student, assisting others to cheat, alteration of grade records, use of A.I. software, illegal entry, or unauthorized presence in an office are examples of cheating.

Complete honesty is required of the student in the presentation of any and all phases of course work. This applies to quizzes of whatever length, as well as to final examinations, to daily reports and to term papers.

**Plagiarism:** Offering the work of another as one’s own, without proper acknowledgment, is plagiarism; therefore, any student who fails to give credit for quotations or essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines and other reference works, or from the themes, reports or other writings of fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism.

#### *Punishment for Plagiarism*

**Any student who commits plagiarism and is caught in doing so will be punished on the first offense with a zero (0) for the grade. If a student commits and is caught on a second offense of plagiarism, the professor will seek the removal of the student from the course with an F for the grade, report the student to the Dean of Students, and may suggest the student’s expulsion from the college.**

### **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 or take-home essays.

## **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).

## **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.

## **Computer Issues**

Having access to a properly functioning and update computer is absolutely necessary for this course. Students may arrange to visit the SPC computer lab, library, your local library, or someone else's computer, but using the excuse of a crashed computer will not be accepted for failing to complete tests or assignments. If a student does not have access to a functional computer, then do not take this course. Computer problems of any kind will not be excused. That is the nature of this computer course. If any student finds that unacceptable, then do not take the course.

## **Technical Support**

Email [blackboard@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:blackboard@southplainscollege.edu) or call 806-716-2180 for any and all technical problems with the Blackboard software (they are much better than me at solving computer problems).

## **South Plains College Libraries and Computer Labs**

South Plains College has many library and computer lab locations. Feel free to find them and their hours of operation by clicking on the link below.

<http://www.southplainscollege.edu/information-for/current-spc-students/library.php>

## **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 (0). Computer problems or mechanical failures are not considered acceptable excuses 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.

## **Financial Aid and Advising Assistance**

If you need assistance with financial aid or your course schedule you can contact the following:

Financial Aid:  
806-894-9611 Ext. 3800  
[finaid@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:finaid@southplainscollege.edu)

Advising:  
806-716-2368 or 806-716-2366

## **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.

## **COVID-19**

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.

## **Schedule of Work**

A schedule of when the assignments are due will be available for students to view on the class' Blackboard site. You can find it upon clicking on the "Exams/Quizzes" tab.

## **Confirmation**

Upon completion of reading the syllabus, please email me at [dlandry@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:dlandry@southplainscollege.edu) with the subject heading "Read the Syllabus" and state one thing you learned from the Grading Policy section. Please complete this task by 5pm, July 13.