

South Plains College
GOVT 2306
SUMMER SESSION TWO 2017

Texas Government

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and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course.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

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. In this course, students will learn about 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.

Course Requirements/Expectations

This course lasts five (5) weeks so that means we will cover a great deal of material in a very short amount of time. The pace of the course will be faster than usual and there will be some aspects that will not be covered. You are expected, however, to keep up with the PowerPoint slides, notes, extra readings, etc.

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. Also, this course requires an internet connection and South Plains College recommends using Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, or Safari as your web browser. Internet Explorer, however, is not recommended.

While this course requires no prior knowledge of Texas 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 Textbooks (Come bundled and can only be bought at SPC Bookstores)

Donovan, T., Smith, D.A., & Mooney, C.Z. (2015). *State and Local Politics: Institutions and Reform, Brief Contents*. Mason, OH: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Jones, M.P., Maxwell, W.E., & Crain, E.,(2018). *Texas Politics Today*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Syllabus Agreement

Every student will have one (1) week 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

Class sessions have one specific date as to when exams are due. They are due Tuesday, August 15, 2017, by 5:00pm (CST).

Exams

This course will be fairly straightforward. You will read one (1) or two (2) chapters and then take one (1) or two (2) exams. Exams will be twenty – five (25) multiple choice, true/false, or matching questions worth four (4) points apiece; meaning every exam is worth one hundred (100) points.

Students may work on the exams as they are available but may not work backward. No excuse will allow students to work on an exam once the due date expires. Once students complete all of the exams, he/she has successfully finished the course.

Students are free to work at her/his pace for the course but it is suggested to complete three (3) exams a week. That way, completion of the course is guaranteed.

All exams are to be taken without the assistance of your textbook or any outside source. If at any time a student cites or embeds into his/her answer an outside source, that student will receive a zero (0) on the exam. 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.

Typically discussions are utilized during the Fall and Spring semesters but during the Summer, however, we do not have that same kind of time. Because of that, discussions will not be utilized.

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

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 – then you should email me at my SPC account. Do **NOT** message me through Blackboard.

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.

Academic Integrity

Every student is expected and required to do his or her own work in this course and all other courses at South Plains College. “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 a fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism,” as specified in the South Plains College General Catalog.

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 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).

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 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, since you are able to take your tests well in advance of the test date.

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>

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

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.