

South Plains College
GOVT 2306
Section 271
Spring 2020
Texas Government

Traditional Course

Name: Professor Britt Bearden

Biography: BA Texas Tech University; MA Texas Tech University; Additional Courses: South Plains College and George Mason University. Congressional Intern: Office of Congressman Pete Gallego, Summer 2013; Field Representative: Texas Democratic Party, 2014.

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Office Hours: Monday – Thursday: 1:00pm – 2:30pm / Friday: 8:00am – 10:00am

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and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course.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

INSTRUCTOR SYLLABUS

Recommended Textbook:

- Champagne, Anthony, Edward Harpham, and Jason Casellas. 2019. *Governing Texas: Forth Edition*. W.W. Norton & Company.
- ISBN: 978-0393680126

Required Technology:

- Reliable access to computer or laptop.
- Reliable internet connection
- Note: make use of SPC computer labs if needed
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Grading Scale:

1000 – 900 points = A

899 – 800 points = B

799 – 700 points = C

699 – 600 points = D

599 and below = F

Coursework:

(1) Discussions (3) = **300 points / 100 points each**

(2) Exams (3) = **600 points / 200 points each**

(3) Syllabus Agreement (1) = **20 points**

(4) Syllabus Quiz (1) = **20 points**

(5) Attendance = **60 points**

(1) **Discussion Postings:** Three times throughout the semester you will write a discussion post which will be your reaction to an article related to Texas government and reply to a classmate's discussion. These can be found on the left side bar labeled "Discussion Board" as well as within each section folder.

- These original posts must be at least 400 words in length.

- Additionally, you must also reply (150 words) to one of your fellow classmates' posts.

- A full rubric and instructions can be found at the end of this syllabus.

(2) **Exams:** at the end of each Section, we will have an in-class exam. These will each cover four chapters and consist of 30 multiple choice questions and four short answer questions. This includes your Final Exam, which is your third exam and is not cumulative.

(3) **Syllabus Agreement:** This assignment is due January 24th by 5:00pm. This can be found in folder “Course Syllabus: Start Here.”

- This is a short answer assignment. You will be asked to reply “I Agree” to the following statement:

"All content within this syllabus is subject to change at any time and is completely up to the discretion of the professor. Students will be notified of such change(s) with appropriate time to adapt. By enrolling in this course you agree to follow all guidelines in this syllabus and be fully responsible for the grade you earn."

By replying "I Agree" below, you acknowledge that you have read the syllabus, agree to the guidelines within, and take responsibility for whatever grade you may earn. Failure to do so will drop you from the course.

(4) **Syllabus Quiz:** This assignment is due January 24th by 5:00pm. You will have an unlimited amount of attempts to achieve full credit. This assignment can be found in folder “Course Syllabus: Start Here.”

(5) **Attendance:** Attendance and participation in this course is crucial. You must be in your seat and paying attention at the scheduled start of class and remain in the room till the end of class to receive credit.

Note: Expect written assignments to be graded within a business week of the due date.

Course Requirements, Expectations, and Policies

Late Work/Extra Credit: You will NOT have the opportunity to earn extra credit points during the course, so do not ask. No late work will be accepted since you have ample time to complete assignments. There are no exceptions to this policy. Exams can only be made up with proper documentation such as a doctor's note.

Make-Up Discussion: If you miss a discussion assignment, you will have the opportunity to receive half credit through a make-up discussion. The prompt will be given March 23rd and due April 24th. This is only for students who received a zero on a discussion assignment.

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend class regularly and prepared. If you arrive after the "First Five" you will be counted absent. If you leave early without telling me beforehand, you will be counted absent. If you sleep during class, you will be counted absent.

Drop Policy: If you have more than 6 unexcused absences for MW/TT classes before the drop date, you will be dropped. There are no exceptions to this policy. Besides that, it is your responsibility to drop the course.

Disruption of Classroom Environment: Your professor will not tolerate any disruption of the classroom environment. This includes any problems your facilitator encounters with you AND hateful/disrespectful remarks made in the classroom, on discussion postings, mail, or chat. I will drop you with an F for violation of this policy.

Technology: Please no cell phone, pager, iPod, etc. usage during class. Please be respectful of others and power down your cellular devices, pagers, iPods, etc. The use of cellular/mobile phones is prohibited in the classroom.

If you are expecting a call or need to leave early, notify me immediately or before class and I will make an exception for you.

Students may use a laptop computer during class but are not permitted to instant message others, check social network updates, email, etc. The usage of the laptop computers is meant for taking notes and considered a privilege, not a right, given to you by me and can be taken away at any time.

Emailing Your Professor: I require students to send a professional email when contacting me. If you send an unprofessional email to me, I will not respond. In addition, do not attempt to argue with me over a grade you receive, if you do I will either lower your grade further, or drop you with an F. Please include what course you are enrolled in (Example: GOVT 2305.156).

DO NOT attempt to communicate with me through Blackboard. I only communicate through email, preferably your SPC email.

Unless there are unforeseen circumstances, you can expect me to reply to emails within 24 hours. If I do not, don't be afraid to email me again or forward your message to me.

Technology Problems: If you have an unreliable server or computer, please go to a public computer to do your work. If for some reason the professor or the Blackboard server has made a mistake, you will not be penalized.

Be aware that when something only happens to you, it is your problem not mine. Please always start early on assignments and finish early to avoid problems. Save assignments in Word to avoid losing your work.

I will be of no help with computer problems, mechanical failures, ISP problems, etc. You can contact **Blackboard and Tech Support** (blackboard@southplainscollege.edu) for any Blackboard related issues. If you are having trouble logging in to Blackboard or seeing your courses, please contact Blackboard Support. You can call the office Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm at 806-716-2180

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the taking of credit for something that is not the work of the owner. It is cheating and will not be tolerated. See the General Catalog for more information on plagiarism. Cheating or dishonesty of any type in this course will result in the student being dropped from this course with an "F."

The best way to avoid this situation is using your own original work and citing sources. Links to help you cite sources are provided on Blackboard in "Helpful Links" as well as below rubrics in the syllabus.

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.

For help, there is a link in "Helpful Hints" that describes writing for research purposes on Blackboard.

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.

SPC Standard Disability Statement

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 Office) 806-716-2577, Reese Center (Building 8) & Lubbock Center 806-716-4675, or Plainview Center (Main Office) 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611.

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, 806-894-9611

Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations Statement

If you are pregnant, or have given birth within six months, Under Title IX you have a right to reasonable accommodations to help continue your education. To activate accommodations you must submit a Title IX pregnancy accommodations request, along with specific medical documentation, to the Director of Health and Wellness. Once approved, notification will be sent to the student and instructors. It is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor to arrange accommodations. Contact Crystal Gilster, Director of Health and Wellness at 806-716-2362 or email cgilster@southplainscollege.edu for assistance.

Campus Concealed Carry

Campus Concealed Carry - Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in South Plains College buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and South Plains College policy, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the SPC policy at:

(http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human_resources/policy_procedure/hhc.php)

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all South Plains College campuses. Report violations to the College Police Department at 806-716-2396 or 9-1-1.

Syllabus Contract/Amendments: All content within this syllabus is subject to change at any time and is completely up to the discretion of the professor. Students will be notified of such change(s) with appropriate time to adapt. By enrolling in this course you agree to follow all guidelines in this syllabus and be fully responsible for the grade you earn.

Course Schedule and Readings:

Section 1:

Texas History and Constitution / Institutions

- Chapter 2
- Chapter 7
- Chapter 8
- Chapter 9

Discussion 1: Due February 14th by 5:00pm

Exam: February 12th

Section 2:

Federalism / Local Government / Public Finance and Public Policy

- Chapter 3
- Chapter 10
- Chapter 11
- Chapter 12

Discussion 2: Due March 13th by 5:00pm

Exam: March 11th

Section 3:

Texas Political Culture / Public Opinion and Media / Campaigns and Elections / Political Parties

- Chapter 1
- Chapter 5
- Chapter 4

Discussion 3: Due May 1st by 5:00pm

Exam: May 6th at 8:00am

Holidays: March 16th – 20th / April 13th

Concise Schedule:

- Syllabus Agreement and Syllabus Quiz: Due January 24th by 5:00pm
- Discussion 1: Due February 14th by 5:00pm.
- Exam 1: February 12th
- Discussion 2: Due March 13th by 5:00pm.
- Exam 2: March 11th
- Last Day to Drop: April 23rd
- Discussion 3: Due May 1st by 5:00pm.
- Final Exam: **May 6th at 8:00am**

Rubric and Instructions for Written Work:

Discussions:

Rubric Grading	59 or less points	60 – 69 points	70 to 79 points	80 to 89 points	90 or more points
	<p>No reply</p> <p>Student does not: - answer questions in prompt - Explain important concepts - appear to have read article</p> <p>Contains considerable grammar mistakes</p> <p>Does not meet word count</p> <p>No citations</p> <p>Poor sentence structure and organization</p>	<p>No reply</p> <p>Student does not: - answer questions in prompt - Explain important concepts - appear to have read article</p> <p>Some grammar mistakes</p> <p>Word count met</p> <p>No citations</p> <p>Poor sentence structure and organization</p>	<p>Reply</p> <p>Student: - answers most questions in prompt - Explains some important concepts</p> <p>Some grammar mistakes</p> <p>Word count met</p> <p>No citations</p> <p>Good sentence structure and organization</p> <p>Does not mention article</p>	<p>Reply</p> <p>Student: - answers most questions in prompt - Explains some important concepts - mentions article</p> <p>Few grammar mistakes</p> <p>Word count met</p> <p>Has citations</p> <p>Good sentence structure and organization</p>	<p>Reply</p> <p>Student: - answers all questions in prompt - Explains all important concepts - mentions article</p> <p>Few grammar mistakes</p> <p>Word count met</p> <p>Has citations</p> <p>Great sentence structure and organization</p>

Instructions:

- These original posts must be at least 400 words in length.
- Additionally, you must also reply (150 words) to one of your fellow classmates' posts to receive full credit.
- Make sure to cite reliable sources when writing your discussions. This includes using the article to answer the prompt.
- You must post your DISCUSSION POST BEFORE viewing classmates' discussions. Failure to do so will drop your grade 20 points. If you post a blank, I will assume you are attempting to plagiarize.

Writing Tips:

- Write in third person, as you would a research paper.
- I do not care to read your personal political opinions. Remain as objective as possible in answering the prompt.
- Use academic English and remain formal

<https://awc.ashford.edu/tocw-first-person-vs-third-person.html>

- For help on in-text citations:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/in_text_citations_the_basics.html

- For help on your works cited:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_author_authors.html

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_electronic_sources.html