

Fall 2024
GOVT 2306-155: Texas Government
Department of Social Sciences
South Plains College

Instructor: Dr. Timothy Holland
Course Time: N/A Online
Course and Section Number: GOVT 2306-155
Location: Online (Blackboard)
Professor's Office: AD134
Email: tholland@southplainscollege.edu
Office Phone: (806) 716-2972

Course Description: This course is a survey of fundamental principles of political science, including the American system of government and the origins and development of the constitutions of the United States. This course satisfies the Legislative requirement for teacher certification.

Credit: 3 lecture hours
Prerequisites: TSI compliance in reading

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 intergovernmental relations, political participation, the electoral process, public policy, and the political structure of Texas. This course meets the statutory requirements as set forth by the State of Texas.

Approval Number: 45.1002.5125

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.

Internet Access: This course is an online course and you must have reliable access to a computer and the internet. If you do not own a computer or do not have access to a reliable internet connection then I would recommend using the computer lab, library, or other appropriate alternative. You must have access to a computer and the internet to complete this course. Failure to have access to either a computer or the internet is not a valid excuse for missing assignments, quizzes, exams, or other course content. Please make sure that you have a reliable internet connection when beginning exams and quizzes as you will only have one opportunity to complete those activities.

Course Content:

| Week | Begin Date | End Date | Subject | Graded Items |
|------|------------|----------|--|--|
| 1 | 26 Aug | 30 Aug | Introduction to Texas Politics | Syllabus Quiz; Introduction Discussion; Quiz 1 |
| 2 | 2 Sep | 6 Sep | Federalism and the States | Quiz 2 |
| 3 | 9 Sep | 13 Sep | Origins and Development of the Texas Constitution | Quiz 3 |
| 4 | 16 Sep | 20 Sep | Civil Liberties, Civil Rights, and the Duties of Citizenship | Quiz 4 and Discussion Post 1 |
| 5 | 23 Sep | 27 Sep | Exam 1 | Exam 1 |
| 6 | 30 Sep | 4 Oct | Texas Legislature | Quiz 5 |
| 7 | 7 Oct | 11 Oct | Plural Executive | Quiz 6 |
| 8 | 14 Oct | 18 Oct | Texas Judiciary | Quiz 7 and Discussion Post 2 |
| 9 | 21 Oct | 25 Oct | Local Government | Quiz 8 |
| 10 | 28 Oct | 1 Nov | Exam 2 | Exam 2 |
| 11 | 4 Nov | 8 Nov | Parties, Interest Groups, and Public Opinion | Quiz 9 |
| 12 | 11 Nov | 15 Nov | Campaigns, Elections, and Voting | Quiz 10 |
| 13 | 18 Nov | 22 Nov | Public Policy in Texas | Quiz 11 and Discussion Post 3 |
| 14 | 25 Nov | 29 Nov | Thanksgiving Break | None |
| 15 | 2 Dec | 10 Dec | Exam 3 | Exam 3 |

Class Schedule: All graded items must be completed **BEFORE 11:59PM** on their end date.

Office Hours: Please email me if you need to discuss your grade or the course content. Since this is an online course most of our communication will likely occur through email but feel free to attend my schedule office hours in person if you prefer.

| Office Hours | AD134 |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Monday | 1:00PM to 3:00PM |
| Tuesday | 1:00PM-3:00PM |
| Wednesday | By appointment only |
| Thursday | 1:00PM to 3:00PM |
| Friday | 10:00AM to 12:00PM |
| Email | tholland@southplainscollege.edu |

Textbook: No textbook for this course.

Grading Scale:

| Grade | Percent |
|-------|----------------|
| A | 90% or greater |
| B | 80% to 89.99% |
| C | 70% to 79.99% |
| D | 60% to 69.99% |
| F | Less than 60% |

Grade Distribution:

| Graded Item | Percent of Grade |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Exams | 60% (20% each) |
| Quizzes | 22% (2% each) |
| Discussion Posts | 15% (3% each) |
| Syllabus Quiz | 1% |
| Introduction Discussion | 2% |
| Total | 100% |

Exams: There will be three exams in this course. Each exam will be worth 15% of your total grade. Each exam will be composed primarily of multiple-choice questions, but there will likely be true/false questions and fill-in-the-blank questions. You will be informed if short answer or essay questions are used in the exam. If I use short answer or essay questions then that portion of the exam will compose no more than 50 percent of the exam's grade.

Quizzes: You will complete 11 quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz will cover the content found within the folder where the quiz is located and some information from previous weeks. Make sure that you read and/or watch all materials provided in the folder before beginning your quiz. Each quiz will be worth 2 percentage points each. Each quiz will be composed of 5 to 20 questions. The questions in the quiz will be multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and, or, True/False questions.

Discussion Posts: You will complete 3 discussion post assignments throughout this semester. Each discussion post assignment will cover a topic addressed within the weekly folder where the discussion post is located. To complete the discussion post assignment you will need to post a discussion addressing the question I post to you and the class. You will need to respond to that question in roughly 300 to 400 words (a word count function exists on the bottom left corner of Microsoft Word). However, you should write more than 400 words if you need to. It is always better to write more and fully answer the question than to write too little and leave important details out of your discussion.

You will also need to respond to at least 2 discussion posts by other students. You may respond twice to the same student or respond once to two different students. To make a response post hit the "Reply" button at the bottom of their discussion post. Each response post should be roughly 150 words, but once again write more if you need to.

The discussion post assignment will have two due dates. You will be required to submit your first discussion post on one day (which will be assigned in the appropriate folder) and then you will be required to post your two response posts on a different day as assigned in the appropriate weekly folder.

Introduction Activities: You will complete two introduction activities in Week 1 that will be graded. The Syllabus Quiz will cover the syllabus and ensure you understand the syllabus and the expectations of this course. The Introduction Discussion will be a short discussion post assignment that will allow you to practice using the discussion board feature and allow us all to get to know one another in the online setting.

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/>

Plagiarism and Cheating: Plagiarism and cheating in any form will not be tolerated in this course. South Plains College provides for a wide range of punishments for cheating including failing the assignment, quiz, exam, or course. I will be vigilant against cheating and you will at a minimum fail the assignment, quiz, or exam in which cheating or plagiarism has occurred.

A.I. Policy: The use of A.I. technology to create or supplement written work for this class is prohibited. Using A.I. to create or supplement your written work constitutes both cheating and plagiarism in this course. If I suspect a student has used A.I. to create or supplement their written work or an A.I. detection service identifies part or all of the written work to have been generated using A.I., then I will assign the student a zero for the assignment. If a student's written work was incorrectly identified as created or supplemented by A.I. then the student must contact and meet with the instructor within 7 days of their grade posted in Blackboard. The instructor will replace the student's grade if they can demonstrate mastery of the content covered by the assignment. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor if their assignment was incorrectly flagged as using A.I. to create or supplement their written work.

Late Work: I will allow students to complete assignments, quizzes, and exams after their due date for half credit. Assignments, quizzes, and exams completed after their due date will only be eligible for half credit if they are completed within 7 days of their due date. A student may receive full credit for their assignments, quizzes, or exams if they have a reasonable excuse for not completing their coursework on time. A reasonable excuse will be determined at the discretion of the instructor. Late work will not be accepted once Week 15 has begun.

Extra Credit: I do not intend to provide any extra credit opportunities in this course. If I provide extra credit it will be announced to the entire class.

Viewing Graded Material: You will be able to view your graded assignments, quizzes, and exams in the Gradebook.

Attendance Policy: Since this is an online course I will not take daily attendance. However, you are expected to complete your work on time in accordance with the course calendar. Please email me if you are sick or have another valid reason for failure to complete your assignments.

Classroom Discussions: Given the nature of this course students may express political views contrary to your own and while no one is required to agree with another's political views you are required to be respectful. I encourage you to honestly express your views in this class, when it is appropriate and relevant, but you must be respectful in both your tone and delivery.

SPC Policy Regarding "Standard English": All written assignments should be presented using the conventions of Standard Written English. South Plains College requires all students to become proficient in "academic English," a form of English that is typically used in academic, professional, and business contexts. While slang, regional idioms, and formal kinds of self-expression are appropriate in some contexts, they are out of place in academic writing. Writing instructors and professors in courses across the campus expect all students to demonstrate proficiency in using the conventions of academic English in their written work, whether it is in-class exams or take-home essays.

Emails: Every email must include your name, course and section number so that I can promptly address your question or concern. I will respond to your email within 24 hours. However, I will not respond to emails sent on Saturday or Sunday until the following Monday. Emails sent after normal business hours will not receive a response until the following workday. If Monday, or any other day is a public holiday for which SPC is closed, then I will not respond to the email until the following workday.

Course Evaluations: See the instructor's course information sheet for specific items used in evaluating student performance.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas Constitution
2. Demonstrate an 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
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas
6. Analyze state and local election processes
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens
8. Analyze issues, policies, and the political culture of Texas

Fundamental Component Areas (FCA):

Students will be expected to perform satisfactorily in four FCAs

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.
 - a. 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 in 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, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making by:
 - a. Reading, understanding, and affirming agreement and acceptance of principles, guidelines, and requirement 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 Amendment Statement: The professor reserves the right to make changes to the course and this syllabus as necessary. You will be informed of any changes in the “Announcements” section of this course’s Blackboard page.

Syllabus Agreement: By continuing to complete the course you agree to the terms of this Syllabus. If you do not agree to the terms of the Syllabus you must drop the course.