

Fall 2020
GOVT 2306: Texas Government
Department of Social Sciences
South Plains College

Instructor: Timothy Holland

Course Time:

GOVT 2306-003: Mondays and Wednesdays (1:00pm-2:15pm)

GOVT 2306-005: Tuesdays and Thursdays (9:30am-10:45am)

Location: AD 129

Professor's Office: AD119

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 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 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

SPC COVID-19 Policy: It is the policy of South Plains College for the Fall 2020 semester that as a condition of on-campus enrollment, all students are required to engage in safe behaviors to avoid the spread of COVID19 in the SPC community. Such behaviors specifically include the requirement that all students properly wear CDC-compliant face coverings while in SPC buildings including classrooms, labs, hallways, and restrooms. Failure to comply with this policy may result in dismissal from the current class session. If the student refuses to leave the classroom or lab after being dismissed, the student may be referred to the Dean of Students on the Levelland campus or the Dean/Director of external centers for Student Code of Conduct Violations.

Class COVID-19 Policy: The instructor reserves the right to drop a student from the class if the student refuses to correctly wear a mask and follow social distancing guidelines while in the classroom.

Office Hours: Please attend my regularly scheduled office hours listed below if you have any questions or concerns. My office is located in the Administration Building, room 119. If you cannot attend my office hours you may email me to set up an alternative time or we can discuss your question or concern via email.

Textbook: We are using a free online textbook through OpenStax. You can access this textbook for free at the URL below.

American Government 2e by Glen Kurtz and Sylvie Waskiewicz

ISBN: 97819471726611

<https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-2e>

Grades:

Grading Scale

Grades	Points	Percent
A	900 and above	90% and above
B	800 to 899.9	80% to 89.9%
C	700 to 799.9	70% to 79.9%
D	600 to 699.9	60% to 69.9%
F	Less than 600	Less than 60%

Grade Distribution

Assessment	Points	Percent
Exam 1	200	20%
Exam 2	200	20%
Exam 3	200	20%
Final Exam	200	20%
Attendance and Participation	50	5%

COVID-19 Compliance	50	5%
Essay	100	10%
Total	1000	100%

Flex Schedule: In order to facilitate social distancing we will be utilizing a flex schedule for this course. This means the class will be divided into two groups so that one group meets on one day and the second group meets on another day. Therefore, **you will only attend class one day per week.**

Face-to-Face Instruction: When we meet in class I will present a focused lecture on content that I deem important, other content you are expected to learn will be provided through a video lecture in Blackboard. In addition to the focused lecture we will engage in discussion about topic and course content.

Online Instruction: In addition to our face-to-face meetings you will need to complete content online. The exams and essay must be completed in Blackboard and I have provided a more detailed lecture in blackboard.

Exams: There will be four exams in this course. Exams will consist of multiple-choice questions and possibly a few true/false questions. The Final Exam is not cumulative. You will complete each exam in Blackboard outside of class.

- Exam 1 will cover Introduction to Texas Government, Federalism, and the Texas Constitutions
- Exam 2 will cover Texas Legislature and Texas Plural Executive
- Exam 3 will cover the Texas Judiciary, Local Government, Interest Groups, and Public Opinion
- The Final Exam will cover Parties, Elections, and Public Policy

Makeup Exam: If you are unable to complete an exam because of a technical issue (your internet went out, the exam auto-submitted, etc.) or if you have a valid excuse for missing the exam (as determined by the professor) then you may take the makeup exam located in the “Makeup Exam” folder. You must receive permission to take the makeup exam BEFORE you take it. The makeup exam will be similar to the standard exam but in addition to multiple choice questions you will also be required to complete short answer and/or essay responses.

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.

Extra Credit: There will likely be no opportunities for extra credit. If extra credit is available it will be available to the entire class. Do not ask for extra credit opportunities.

Final Grades: Final grades will be posted by Friday, December 11, 2020. You may view your grade in Blackboard or through Campus Connect.

Gradebook: You will be able to view your graded assignments and exams in the Gradebook link in Blackboard.

Attendance Policy: You are required to regularly attend class. I will record and grade attendance. Your attendance will be worth five percent of your total grade. The attendance grade will be calculated by dividing the number of days you have attended by the number of class days we have met. You are excused from class if you are attending a SPC-sponsored event but you must inform me of this prior to your absence. If you are sick please stay home. Your absence will be excused if you are ill. If you are absent because of illness you may be required to submit proof from a doctor if your absences are deemed excessive.

Classroom Discussions: Although this class is primarily lecture-based, you will be encouraged to contribute to classroom discussions on the topic of the day or other relevant political topics which may arise. 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 but you must be respectful in both your tone and delivery.

Diversity Statement: In this class I 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 can be.

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 the 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. URL:

<http://www.southplainscollege.edu/health/disabilityservices.php>

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.

Electronic Devices: use of electronic devices for academic purposes is welcome in this class. You may use your laptop or tablet to take notes during class. Abuse of electronic devices for non-academic purposes will result in the banning of electronic devices. Do not use your phone during class. No video or audio recording devices may be used without the consent of the instructor or unless part of a disability accommodation.

Classroom Expectations: The following activities are prohibited in class. This list is not meant to be exhaustive of all prohibited behaviors.

1. Texting, emailing or other correspondence
2. Social media activity or other web browsing
3. Answering or initiating phone calls
4. Watching movies or other videos
5. Smoking, vaping, or chewing tobacco or other illicit substances

Emails: Every email must include your name, course, day and time the class meets. I am teaching multiple courses and sections and most of your other professors are as well. Therefore, it is imperative that you always include this information so we know which class you are in so that we know where you are coming from and can quickly respond to your concerns.

If you do not receive a response to an email within 48 hours please re-send your email.

Class Schedule: Please note that this class schedule is subject to changes as necessary.

If SPC is forced to close due to COVID-19 we will transition into a fully online course. Fortunately this will not result in too many changes based on how the course is structured. I will make necessary changes in the event we transition fully online and you will be informed of those changes.

The course schedule for each class is listed on the following pages.

Fall 2020 Flex Schedule: **Monday Group**

Week	Class Day	Topic	Individual Work	Exams
1	Monday, August 24	Syllabus and Introduction to Texas Government	Read Chapter 1 and lecture video	Complete Exam 1 before 11:59PM Monday, September 14
2	Monday, August 31	Federalism and State Power	Read Chapter 3 and lecture video	
3	Monday, September 7	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY	Read Chapter 2 and lecture video	
4	Monday, September 14	Texas Constitutions and Exam 1 Review	Study for Exam 1	
5	Monday, September 21	Texas Legislature	Read Chapter 7 and lecture video	Complete Exam 2 before 11:59PM on Monday, October 5
6	Monday, September 28	Texas Plural Executive	Read Chapter 8 and lecture video	
7	Monday, October 5	Exam 2 Review	Study for Exam 2	
8	Monday, October 12	Texas Judiciary	Read Chapter 9 and 13 and lecture video	Complete Exam 3 before 11:59PM on Monday, November 2
9	Monday, October 19	Local Governments	Read Chapter 10 and lecture video	
10	Monday, October 26	Interest Groups and Public Opinion	Read Chapter 6	
11	Monday, November 2	Exam 3 Review	Study for Exam 3	
12	Monday, November 9	Parties	Read Chapter 4 and lecture video	Complete the Final Exam before 11:59PM on Wednesday, December 9th
13	Monday, November 16	Elections	Read Chapter 5 and lecture video	
14	Monday, November 23	Public Policy	Read Chapter 11 and 12 and lecture video	
15	Monday, November 30	Final Exam Review	Study for Final Exam	

Fall 2020 Flex Schedule: **Wednesday Group**

Week	Class Day	Topic	Individual Work	Exams
1	Wednesday, August 26	Syllabus and Introduction to Texas Government	Read Chapter 1 and lecture video	Complete Exam 1 before 11:59PM
2	Wednesday, September 2	Federalism and State Power	Read Chapter 3 and lecture video	Wednesday, September 16
3	Wednesday, September 9	Texas Constitutions	Read Chapter 2 and lecture video	
4	Wednesday, September 16	Exam 1 Review	Study for Exam 1	
5	Wednesday, September 23	Texas Legislature	Read Chapter 7 and lecture video	Complete Exam 2 before 11:59PM on Wednesday, October 7
6	Wednesday, September 30	Texas Plural Executive	Read Chapter 8 and lecture video	Complete Exam 3 before 11:59PM on Wednesday, November 4
7	Wednesday, October 7	Exam 2 Review	Study for Exam 2	
8	Wednesday, October 14	Texas Judiciary	Read Chapter 9 and 13 and lecture video	
9	Wednesday, October 21	Local Governments	Read Chapter 10 and lecture video	Complete the Final Exam before 11:59PM on Wednesday, December 9th
10	Wednesday, October 28	Interest Groups and Public Opinion	Read Chapter 6	
11	Wednesday, November 4	Exam 3 Review	Study for Exam 3	
12	Wednesday, November 11	Parties	Read Chapter 4 and lecture video	
13	Wednesday, November 18	Elections	Read Chapter 5 and lecture video	
14	Wednesday, November 25	No Class – Thanksgiving Break	Read Chapter 11 and 12 and lecture video	
15	Wednesday, December 2	Public Policy and Final Exam Review	Study for Final Exam	

Fall 2020 Flex Schedule: ***Tuesday Group***

Week	Class Day	Topic	Individual Work	Exams
1	Tuesday, August 25	Syllabus and Introduction to Texas Government	Read Chapter 1 and lecture video	Complete Exam 1 before 11:59PM Tuesday, September 15
2	Tuesday, September 1	Federalism and State Power	Read Chapter 3 and lecture video	
3	Tuesday, September 8	Texas Constitutions	Read Chapter 2 and lecture video	
4	Tuesday, September 15	Exam 1 Review	Study for Exam 1	
5	Tuesday, September 22	Texas Legislature	Read Chapter 7 and lecture video	Complete Exam 2 before 11:59PM on Tuesday, October 6
6	Tuesday, September 29	Texas Plural Executive	Read Chapter 8 and lecture video	
7	Tuesday, October 6	Exam 2 Review	Study for Exam 2	
8	Tuesday, October 13	Texas Judiciary	Read Chapter 9 and 13 and lecture video	Complete Exam 3 before 11:59PM on Tuesday, November 3
9	Tuesday, October 20	Local Governments	Read Chapter 10 and lecture video	
10	Tuesday, October 27	Interest Groups and Public Opinion	Read Chapter 6	
11	Tuesday, November 3	Exam 3 Review	Study for Exam 3	
12	Tuesday, November 10	Parties	Read Chapter 4 and lecture video	Complete the Final Exam before 11:59PM on Thursday, December 10
13	Tuesday, November 17	Elections	Read Chapter 5 and lecture video	
14	Tuesday, November 24	Public Policy	Read Chapter 11 and 12 and lecture video	
15	Tuesday, December 1	Final Exam Review	Study for Final Exam	

Fall 2020 Flex Schedule: ***Thursday Group***

Week	Class Day	Topic	Individual Work	Exams
1	Thursday, August 27	Syllabus and Introduction to Texas Government	Read Chapter 1 and lecture video	Complete Exam 1 before 11:59PM Thursday, September 17
2	Thursday, September 3	Federalism and State Power	Read Chapter 3 and lecture video	
3	Thursday, September 10	Texas Constitutions	Read Chapter 2 and lecture video	
4	Thursday, September 17	Exam 1 Review	Study for Exam 1	
5	Thursday, September 24	Texas Legislature	Read Chapter 7 and lecture video	Complete Exam 2 before 11:59PM on Thursday, October 8
6	Thursday, October 1	Texas Plural Executive	Read Chapter 8 and lecture video	
7	Thursday, October 8	Exam 2 Review	Study for Exam 2	
8	Thursday, October 15	Texas Judiciary	Read Chapter 9 and 13 and lecture video	Complete Exam 3 before 11:59PM on Thursday, November 5
9	Thursday, October 22	Local Governments	Read Chapter 10 and lecture video	
10	Thursday, October 29	Interest Groups and Public Opinion	Read Chapter 6	
11	Thursday, November 5	Exam 3 Review	Study for Exam 3	
12	Thursday, November 12	Parties	Read Chapter 4 and lecture video	Complete the Final Exam before 11:59PM on Thursday, December 10
13	Thursday, November 19	Elections	Read Chapter 5 and lecture video	
14	Thursday, November 26	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK	Read Chapter 11 and 12 and lecture video	
15	Thursday, December 3	Public Policy and Final Exam Review	Study for Final Exam	