

South Plains College

GOVT 2306

SUMMER I 2023

Texas Government

Traditional Course, rooms SS 101 and LDC 1010

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and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course.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

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Course Requirements/Expectations

No late work will be accepted without a note from a medical doctor.

Please no cell phone, pager, iPod, earbuds, headphones, etc. usage during class. This is rude to me and distracting to your classmates. Please be respectful of others and power down your cellular devices, pagers, iPods, etc. and remove your earbuds or headphones prior to the start of class.

Students may not use a laptop computer during unless given specific permission by the professor to do so. Also, no student is allowed to take a picture of notes unless given specific permission to do so.

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 class. We cover a great deal of material so it is critical that you attend class regularly, take careful notes, keep abreast of the readings, and participate fully in class discussions. If you feel you need extra help in managing the course materials, contact me and I will help you.

Recommended Textbook

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

MindTap will not be utilized. If any student wants it to be utilized, the accommodation will be met.

Communication

In the event students need to get in contact with Professor Landry, please send all communications to his South Plains College email. In doing so, please put the class in which you are enrolled in the subject line so it is known how to specifically help you remedy the issue. Also, please follow the guidelines put forth in the Academic English portion of the syllabus when submitting an email.

Coursework

Students will be given four (4) exams throughout the semester. The exams are aimed to evaluate student progress in the class. If discrepancies exist, notify me immediately. There are no makeups except in the case of an emergency and with the display of a doctor's note.

Also, students will be given one (1) writing assignment. The writing assignment will be turned in through turnitin.com via Blackboard. Students will receive a written explanation on what is expected one (1) week before the assignment is due. For every day late – including weekends – the paper will succumb to a five (5) point deduction on its final grade.

There will be content quizzes throughout the semester. These are conducted through the class' Blackboard site and will be about five (5) to ten (10) questions covering the material from class to class. There are no makeups for these quizzes.

Last, and certainly not least, is class participation. Students are required to participate in class. A significant amount of class points lies in participating and if a student is absent, she/he cannot participate in class. If students are late and/or arbitrarily leave class for a significant amount of time, uses cell phone during class, etc., their participation grade will suffer. If an emergency occurs, that is a different situation and I should be notified.

Exam Day Conduct

When taking exams, students need a pencil and an eraser. Cellular devices, tablets, iPods, earbuds, headphones, pagers, etc., need to be either turned off, removed, or silenced – **not on vibrate** – and stowed away in a backpack, purse, bag, or any other packaging device. All backpacks, purses, bags, etc., need to be placed on the floor and in the front of the classroom and all course material need to be inside it and closed. If any student chooses to ignore this directive and unsilenced phone goes off during an exam, every student in the class will have ten (10) points automatically deducted. Also, all hats are to be removed upon taking an in – class exam. In short, do not be a jerk.

Yawning

If any student feels the need to yawn during class, it is expected to do so silently while covering his/her mouth. Failure to follow such a simplistic social norm may result in the professor responding to such action.

Grades

Rounding

Students are ingrained to think a percentage ending in “.5” will be rounded to the nearest whole number. I only round to the nearest whole number if a student has at least a “.9.” This is my practice and I have done this for numerous years. I have no intention of changing it. If you desire a better grade, earn it.

In calculating grades, I keep it very simple. I take the total points a student accumulated and divide that number into the total points possible and multiply by one hundred (100). The result from this basic math is your class percentage. A scale of what percentage constitutes a letter grade is below.

Grading Breakdown

Four Exams (Two worth 110 points; One worth 101 points; One worth 100 points) =	421
One Writing Assignment is an exam	
Five Quizzes (Four worth 30 points; One worth 25 points) =	145
Participation (worth 75 points) =	75

Total Points = 641

Grading Scale

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

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class but is optional. You are an adult and are capable of making the necessary decisions that are best for you.

If any student accumulates excessive absences after the last day to drop classes (06/29/2023), he/she will earn an “X” for the course.

For further information on SPC’s attendance policy, please seek the student handbook and college 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.

Technology Policy

The following is Professor Landry's policy on the usage of laptop computers, iPads, earbuds, headphones, and other mobile tablets in the classroom. Professor Landry will not allow students to use them and no student may take a picture of the notes unless given special permission to do so.

The use of cellular/mobile phones is prohibited in the classroom. If caught, the professor will ask you to stow it away. If a phone rings in class, Professor Landry reserves the right to answer the phone for you, politely inform the caller that you cannot answer the phone, and keep the phone until the end of class.

Texting is a neat method of communicating but will not be tolerated in the classroom. It is obvious when a student is texting and if/when a student is spotted, he/she will be asked to stow it away. If a student is caught a second time, the phone will be confiscated until the end of class. If you are expecting a call or have children in daycare, notify me immediately and I will make an exception for you.

Please remove all earbuds/headphones prior to the start of class. The class works well enough without background music.

I do not desire to be the “bad guy” but have no problem playing that role. If you do not want an uncomfortable classroom setting, then please do not update social media or text during class. That can wait until class is over.

Blackboard and Technology Use in Class

Supplementary class materials may be found on our class’ Blackboard webpage. Any additions will be announced in class in hopes to stem any confusion.

There may be times when YouTube is utilized in class to illustrate a point made either by the professor or the textbook or both. When it is, closed captioned options will be used for the hearing impaired.

There will be no videos posted on the class’ Blackboard website.

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, take home essays, or emails.

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).

Tobacco Use

Students are to follow SPC’s rules and regulations on cigarette and electronic cigarette use. Also, students are not to use smokeless tobacco in class. This includes but not limited to: snuff, dip, chew, packets, etc. It is rude and distracting to do this during class and any violation will be dealt with accordingly.

Campus Concealed Carry

“Constitutional Carry” Law

Governor Abbott recently signed into law the Texas Firearm Carry Act of 2021, which has been commonly referred to as the “Constitutional Carry Law.” As a result, effective Sept. 1, 2021, persons 21 or older to carry a holstered handgun in public without a handgun permit or license to carry.

Affects to South Plains College

It is important to clarify, that this new law, does not remove the requirement to possess a valid Texas License to Carry to lawfully carry a concealed firearm into a South Plains College building, and it does not allow for the open carry of a firearm into an SPC building by anyone other than a Texas Peace officer in commission of duties and South Plains College Security Guards in Commission of duties.

Again, you still must possess a valid Texas License to Carry (LTC) to carry a concealed handgun into an SPC building and still cannot open carry at any time in any SPC building.

Public Places

Please be aware that business may still restrict open and concealed carry on their premises. With the signing of Constitutional Carry, they may now display 30.05 signs in addition to or instead of 30.06 and 30.07 signs. 30.05 signs notify patrons that it is a criminal trespass for any person not otherwise prohibited from entering the premises with a firearm. 30.06 signs provide notification to LTC holders that they may not enter with a concealed firearm and 30.07 signs provide notification to LTC holders that they may not enter with an openly carried firearm.

License to Carry Considerations

You may still want to maintain a current LTC or obtain a new one for various purposes. LTCs allow for the following:

- Lawful concealed carry into college buildings
- Reciprocity for carrying in other states that recognize Texas LTC.
- Training and firearm knowledge
- Additional legal protect for carrying into restricted places when leaving upon notice
- Simplification of firearm purchase

Additional Information

For additional information regarding SPC firearm policies and laws and regulations please visit:
<http://www.southplainscollege.edu/campuscarry.php>

At the above webpage you can also access a calendar of restricted zones and events in which the possession of a firearm is prohibited as well as a link to information regarding LTC reciprocity between Texas and other states.

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.

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.

COVID-19

If you are not feeling well, please do not attend class. The same will go for me.

Course Outline

Week 1: Introduction; Texas Culture and Diversity; Texas Constitution and Federalism;

First Exam

Week 2: Political Parties; Voting and Elections

Second Exam

Week 3: Texas Legislature

Third Exam

Week 4: Texas Governors

Final Exam

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.

Dates to Remember

Thursday, June 29 – *Last Day to Drop Classes!*

Tuesday, July 4 – Independence Day, NO CLASS

Friday, July 7 – *Final Exam*