

GOVT 2107

South Plains College

FALL 2020

Federal and Texas Constitutions

Online Course

Professor Drew Landry

dlandry@southplainscollege.edu

Levelland Campus

Student Services, rm 118

Office Number: (806) 716 – 4032

Office Hours: MW: 12:30 – 3:30pm; Friday: 9am – 12pm (noon); or by appointment

Course Description

Enrollment limited to students who have already completed a minimum of six (6) SCH of Government courses but have not satisfied the statutory requirement for study of the federal and state constitutions. This course serves as “bridge” for those students. To put plainly, this is a course for students who completed Government 2302 but not 2301. Instead of forcing students to complete two (2) new classes, they may complete this short class while enrolled either in Government 2305 or 2306. Finally, due to this course studying the United States and state constitutions, specifically Texas, it will last five (5) weeks.

Course Requirements/Expectations

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 complete the assignments.

While this course requires no prior knowledge of American politics, there is considerable reading related to a wide range of constitutional 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.

This course requires an internet connection and South Plains College recommends using Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, or Safari when completing the work. Internet Explorer, however, is not recommended for use.

Required Textbook

No Required Textbook but several online resources mentioned below.

Declaration of Independence

(http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html)

U.S. Constitution (<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/>)

History of U.S. Constitution

(http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_history.html and
<http://www.history.com/topics/constitution>)

Texas Constitution (<http://www.constitution.legis.state.tx.us/>)

History of Texas Constitutions (http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/7_2_0.html)

Syllabus Agreement

Every student will have three (3) days 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

Since this is a seven (7) week course crunched into a near three (3) week semester, all class sessions will be available to complete at students' pace. All assignments, however, have are due Monday, July 6, by 5pm. While students may work ahead on the assignments, they may not work backwards.

Quizzes and Exams

This course will be fairly straightforward. Students will read sections from one of the resources and will take five (5) quizzes and one (1) comprehensive exam. The comprehensive exam will consist of thirty – five (35) multiple choice questions from the material students already read and shall be worth three (3) points each.

Students may use the required resources to assist them on the quizzes but may not do so on the comprehensive exam. Please bear in mind that all quizzes and the exam are timed.

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 he/she has at least a “.9.” If a student has not attained a “.9,” then his grade will not be “rounded up.” If you want a better grade, you need to earn it.

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 states I will meet with you only by appointment 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 please email me immediately 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.

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 (0). You are highly encouraged not to wait until the last minute to complete assignments. Technical and personal problems are not considered acceptable excuses for late work, since you are able to complete them well in advance of the date.

COVID-19

Because of the ease with which COVID-19 can be spread in an indoor setting such as a classroom, we will be following strict classroom policies designed to reduce the risk that anyone in our class transmits or contracts COVID-19 while in the room. These rules are in place to keep you, your classmates, and me safe. If you ever have any questions or concerns about these policies, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

If you violate the classroom COVID-19 policies repeatedly (e.g. not wearing a face-covering, coming in while sick) or you are combative or argumentative when I ask you to comply with a COVID-19 policy, I may ask that you no longer attend the course in person.

If you are unwilling or unable to comply with any of these policies, I suggest you drop this course. SPC has made many online only sections available.

Masks

It is the policy of South Plains College for the Fall 2020 semester that as a condition of on-campus enrollment (or when on campus for whatever reason), all students are required to engage in safe behaviors to avoid the spread of COVID-19 in the SPC community. Such behaviors specifically include the requirement that all students properly wear CDC-compliant face coverings while in SPC buildings including in 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 Violation.

This pamphlet from Mayo Clinic provides a good visual list of acceptable and unacceptable face coverings: https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/-/media/national-files/documents/covid19/acceptablemasks_fly_final.pdf?la=en&rev=3bde35fbc2384808b271388f1177f297&hash=CC838FBC69D98EA4C8AB1C533F7437FC

The mask must cover your entire nostrils and mouth, and it must not have any vent to allow air out. The CDC has guidance here on how to properly wear a mask: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Tests and Assignments

You will never need to be in class to complete a test or other assignment. You will always be able to complete all work via Blackboard. I will never give any assignment that requires you to be physically present in the room.

If you are unable to access the class for an extended period of time due to personal illness or COVID-19 related quarantine, we can plan for you to make up any missed work.

Quarantine Triggers

I will self-initiate quarantine under the following conditions:

- If I develop any COVID-19 symptom, I will self-quarantine until I receive a negative COVID-19 test. This will likely take at least three (3) to five (5) days.
- If I am exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID-19, I will self-quarantine for at least fourteen (14) days from the time I last had contact with that person.

- If I test positive for COVID-19, I will follow the advice of my doctor regarding when it is safe for me to return to class in person.
- If anyone in the class tests positive for COVID-19, I will cancel in person classes until at least fourteen (14) days after that student's last date of attendance.

Contingency in Case of Instructor Quarantine

If at any time I am unable to physically attend class, I will make every effort to continue broadcasting lectures at our regularly scheduled class time. I have the necessary hardware and software at home to broadcast and record lectures. If for any reason I am unable to continue live streaming lectures, I or another SPC faculty member will contact you with instructions on how the class will proceed.

Makeup of assignment(s) and exam(s)

If a student misses an assignment(s) and/or exam(s) due to COVID-19 or any other illness, a doctor's note will be required in order to makeup the assignment and/or exam. The note must cover the dates you missed, which must coincide with your missing assignment(s) and/or exam(s).

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.

Course Schedule

Session One: Declaration of Independence

Reading: [Declaration of Independence](#)

Quiz due: September 4, 5:00pm

Session Two: Overview of the U.S. Constitution

Reading: [History of U.S. Constitution](#) and [More on U.S. Constitution](#)

Quiz due September 18, 5:00pm

Session Three: U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights

Reading: [First Amendment](#), [Texas v Johnson](#), and [Snyder v Phelps](#)

Quiz due: October 2, 5:00pm

Session Four: Overview of the Texas Constitution

Reading: [History of Texas Constitution - Chapter Two](#)

Quiz due: October 16, 5:00pm

Session Five: Amending the Texas Constitution

Reading: [Article XVII](#); [List of Proposed Amendments to the Texas Constitution](#)

Quiz due: October 30, 5:00pm

Session Six: Comparing and Contrasting the U.S. and Texas Constitutions

Reading: [U.S. Constitution](#); [Texas Constitution](#)

Quiz due: November 13, 5:00pm

Session Seven: Review

Final Exam Due: December 4, 5:00pm