

South Plains College

GOVT 2306

SUMMER I 2024

## **Texas Government**

Traditional Course, rooms SS 101 and LDC 1010

Professor Drew Landry

[dlandry@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:dlandry@southplainscollege.edu)

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:** GOVT 2306

**Course Title:** Texas Government

**Credit:** 3 Lecture, 0 Lab

**This course partially satisfies a core curriculum requirement:** Government/Political Science Foundational Component Area (070)

**Available Formats:** Conventional (Fully Face to Face), Fully Online, Hybrid, ITV

**Campus:** Levelland, Downtown 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:** 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.

**Course Objectives addressed:**

1. **critical thinking:** to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
2. **communication:** to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
3. **social responsibility:** to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
4. **personal responsibility:** to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students who have completed this course will:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.
2. Describe 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. Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas.

**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.

**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.

**Dropping a Course:** Students may drop courses through Texan Connect, the Admissions and Records Office, or Advising and Testing Center through the late registration period.

After late registration has closed, a student must complete the online [Student Initiated Drop Request](#) to drop a course.

Students may also drop courses in person at any campus location by completing a Student Initiated Drop Form. Complete a [Student Initiated Drop Form](#) and return the signed form to the Levelland Admissions and Records Office, the Student Support Center at the Lubbock Downtown Center, the Lubbock Career and Technical Center, or Plainview Center. You must have a picture ID to complete the drop.

A mark of “W” will be given for student-initiated drops that occur prior to and through the last day to drop as indicated in the online Academic Calendar found here:

<https://www.southplainscollege.edu/academiccalendar/index.php>.

**Syllabus Statements:** For information about Artificial Intelligence, Disabilities, Non-Discrimination, Intellectual Exchange, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) Team, Campus Concealed Carry, and COVID-19, please use this link: <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/>.

### **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. In this course, students will learn about 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.

### **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**

#### **Comes with class as e-book**

Jones, M.P., Maxwell, W.E., & Crain, E. (2023). *Texas Politics Today*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning

### **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**

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**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 (06/27/2024), 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, illegal entry or unauthorized presence in an office are examples of cheating. This includes the use of artificial intelligence (AI) assistance on any assigned materials.

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 or from AI assistance, 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.

**Intellectual Property:** All material on the course’s Blackboard page, including quizzes, are the intellectual property of the professor and at no time may a student screenshot a question or post any exam or quiz material online. If a student does this, he/she will be warned on the first offense. If the instance repeats, the student will be disciplined accordingly. This is a form of stealing from me and it will not be tolerated.

## **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 allow students to use tablets and laptops, but no student may take a picture of the notes unless given special permission to do so.

It is strongly advised not to use cellular/mobile phones while in the classroom. Texting is a neat method of communicating but it is obvious when a student is texting and/or using mobile devices. Please understand you are in an educational setting and people are around you. If you would rather watch social media than come to class, that is your choice but watching social media while in class is rude to me and your classmates. It is asked of students to be respectful of me and other students while attending class.

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

## **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.

## **Statements on Intellectual Exchange, Disabilities, Nondiscrimination, Title IX, C.A.R.E., and Campus Carry**

Please visit <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/> for the aforementioned information.

## **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.

## **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 27 – Last Day to Drop Classes!

Thursday, July 4 – Independence Day, NO CLASS

Friday, July 5 – Final Exam