

Political Science 2306  
Texas Government  
Fall 2020  
Web Based Course

**Instructor Information:**

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Office Hours: *contact via email*

**Course Description:**

This course is a survey of the principles and practice of the political system in Texas. In addition to examining the state constitution and the institutions that it empowers, a wider look is taken to consider local governments, the political system, and the actors in the political system.

You will not be taught *what* to think about political issues. You will be provided the knowledge base to determine *how* to think about political issues for *yourself*.

**Learning Objectives:**

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.

**Required Text:**

ISBN: 9781544316260

Collier, Ken, Steven Galatas, and Julie Harrelson-Stephens. *Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation in Texas*, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. Washington, DC: Sage, 2019.

**Format:**

This course is fully online. It is accessible by logging into D2L Brightspace via your MyLeo account. Each week there will be recorded lectures and a class discussion over the assigned readings.

## Assignments and Grades:

1. Examinations: There will be three examinations for a total of 300 points.

**If you miss an exam, you will receive a 0 for that exam.** If you have a legitimate reason for missing an exam (illness, family emergency, etc), you may request a make-up exam upon providing supporting documentation. You are **not** guaranteed a make-up exam. You should email me as soon as you know an exam may be missed. *Make-up exams are permitted at the sole discretion of the instructor.* If you are on a school related activity that requires you to be away for a significant period, please email ahead of time so your exam can be rescheduled.

Each exam will consist of 50 multiple choice and fill in the blank questions. You will be given 60 minutes to complete the exam in D2L. If you experience technical issues, email me immediately with as much information and documentation as possible. Please refer to the *Technology Support* section for information on how to contact D2L Brightspace.

2. Discussions: 140 points.

Due to meeting online, discussions will be considered your participation and should replicate what we would experience as if we were meeting face to face. You will provide your thoughts, opinions, and facts over topics presented in each chapter. If you miss more than **four** *original* discussion posts during the semester, you may be dropped from the class.

Discussion topics will be available on D2L beginning at **8:00 AM CT on Monday** and you will have through **11:45 PM CT on Sunday**. There will be no make-up opportunities for any missed discussion posts. The deadline will be strictly enforced. Students who consistently wait until the end of each time frame may receive a deduction in their overall grade.

- Minimum Requirements:

- One original post each week – There is a *minimum* of two hundred words.
  - **Original posts are due by 11:45 PM CT on Thursday.**
- Two replies to other students – There is a *minimum* of four sentences. A simple “I agree” does not constitute enough effort to warrant credit.

3. Weekly worksheets: 140 points.

Each week you will be required to submit one worksheet per chapter. There are two sections. *Section One:* At the beginning of each chapter, you will find a list of chapter objectives. Briefly explain three of the objectives. The expected length is three to five sentences. *Section Two:* Define four key terms from the chapter. A blank template will provided to you on D2L Brightspace.

4. Project: 70 points.

**This is not a group project.** 2020 is an election year. There will be several key policy issues presented during the Presidential debates. In a PowerPoint presentation, you will offer the following regarding one of those key issues: why you chose that issue, why it is important to the country, and you will analyze it from the perspective of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. More information regarding the assignment will be posted in D2L.

**Extra Credit Policy:** There will not be any individual opportunities for extra credit. Should *any* extra credit be available, it will be available only upon a class-wide basis.

The scale used in calculating final grades is as follows:

A: 585-650 points

B: 520-584 points

C: 455-519 points

D: 390-454 points

F: 000-389 points

**Syllabus Change Policy:** As your instructor, I reserve the right to amend, modify, or adjust this syllabus as needed. Circumstances and events may make changes necessary. Any adjustment(s) will be announced on D2L Brightspace and/or via email.

**Email Policy:** The first place to check for answers to any questions regarding class is this syllabus. Class policies and the calendar are clearly outlined. If you email me a question and the answer can be found in this syllabus, you will not receive a response. I attempt to respond to emails *Monday through Friday* within one business day. If I do not respond to you within **two** business days, please send a follow-up email as I may not have received your initial contact.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Any student who is caught committing any kind of academic dishonesty will receive an “F” in this course and will be reported to the University administration. “Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one’s own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), signing the attendance sheet for a student who is absent (or asking another student to sign you in when you are absent), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material” (Texas A&M University-Commerce Procedures A13.12). If you have any doubt as to what may constitute academic dishonesty, please consult with me *prior* to submitting any assignments.

**Campus Carry:** Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf> (and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

**Non-Discrimination Notice:** A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

**Code of Student Conduct:** “All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” (See Student’s Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct) Faculty have the authority to request students who exhibit inappropriate behavior to leave the class and may refer serious offenses to the University Police Department and/or the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. Failure to comply with the Code of Student Conduct and commonsensical directions listed above may result in a verbal request to cease inappropriate behavior, your immediate removal from the class, being immediately dropped from the class, and/or a review by an appropriate university disciplinary agency.

**A&M-Commerce requires the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories. Exceptions may be made by faculty where warranted. Faculty have management over their classrooms. Students not using face-coverings can be required to leave class. Repetitive refusal to comply can be reported to the Office of Students’ Rights and Responsibilities as a violation of the student Code of Conduct.**

**Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support the student getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.**

**Students with Disabilities:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

*Office of Student Disability Resources and Services*  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library, Room 162  
Phone: (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax: (903) 468-8148  
Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

**Student Statement of Understanding:**

I have read the syllabus and understand the guidelines and policies therein. I recognize that this contract is a condition of the course. I understand that if I do not sign and return this contract to Ms. Todd by the due date that I will be dropped from the class or receive an “F” as my final grade. Furthermore, I am aware of my obligation to adhere to the guidelines and policies contained in the syllabus and that failure to do so could result in my being dropped from the course or receiving a final grade of an “F.”

**You must send me an email acknowledging you have read and agree to the Student Statement of Understanding by 11:45 PM CT on Friday, September 4 or you may be dropped from this course.**

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### *Student Responsibilities*

- Students are expected to regularly check the course site for announcements and updates.
- Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and to engage in class discussions.
- Students are expected to complete all assignments including exams and weekly worksheets.
- Students are expected to respect their fellow classmates and instructor.
- Students will comply with any and all D2L technical requirements in terms of training, computer access, and internet access.

### *Access and Navigation*

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course via MyLeo. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903-468-6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student should have a backup plan to deal with any potential problems. This may include using an alternate computer at home, at the university, or borrowing a friend's lap.

### *Minimal Technical Skills Needed*

Students will need to be familiar with the University learning management system (eCollege), know how to use a personal computer, navigate the internet, and use basic word processing software such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint.

### *Technology Requirements*

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements:

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

[https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser\\_support.htm](https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm)

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

### *Technical Support*

If you are having technical difficulties with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace technical support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

### *Browser Information*

Google Chrome or Firefox are the best browsers to use for D2L Brightspace. There have been noted issues when using this platform on Microsoft Explorer or Edge.

## Course Calendar

(All dates and content are subject to change.)

- MODULE ONE:
  - Chapter 1: Introduction
    - August 24 – August 30
  - Chapter 2: Texas Constitution
    - August 31 – September 6
  - Chapter 3: Texas Legislature
    - September 7 – September 13
  - Chapter 4: Texas Governor
    - September 14 – September 20
  - Chapter 5: The Plural Executive and Bureaucracy in Texas
    - September 21 – September 27
  - **Exam One will be available from 8:00 AM CT September 24 through 11:45 PM CT September 26.**
- MODULE TWO:
  - Chapter 6: Texas Judicial System
    - September 28 – October 4
  - Chapter 7: Texas-Sized Justice
    - October 5 – October 11
  - Chapter 8: Campaigns and Elections, Texas Style
    - October 12 – October 18
  - Chapter 9: Political Parties
    - October 19 – October 25
  - Chapter 10: Organized Interests
    - October 26 – November 1
  - **Exam Two will be available from 8:00 AM CT October 29 through 11:45 PM CT October 31.**
- MODULE THREE:
  - Chapter 11: Local Government in Texas
    - November 2 – November 8
  - Chapter 12: Fiscal Policy
    - November 9 – November 15
  - Chapter 13: Energy, Environment, Transportation, and Trade Policies: Transforming Texas
    - November 16 – November 22
  - **November 23 – November 29: THANKSGIVING BREAK**
  - Chapter 14: Social Policy: Education, Health, and Immigration
    - November 30 – December 6
  - **Exam Three will be available from 8:00 AM CT December 8 through 11:45 PM CT December 10.**