



**COURSE SYLLABUS
Texas Government
PSCI 2306.06W**

WEB BASED CLASS
FALL 2020

Monday, **August 24** through Friday, **December 11**, 2020

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Robert G. Rodríguez
Associate Professor, Political Science
Coordinator, Latin American & U.S. Latino Studies Minor

Office Location: Ferguson Social Science Building 149
NOT APPLICABLE DURING FALL 2020 SEMESTER

Office Hours:
NOT APPLICABLE DURING FALL 2020 SEMESTER
The ONLY way to contact me is via email; I will normally respond within 24 hours (48 hours maximum). A video chat using the YouSeeU-Virtual Classroom feature on D2L may be arranged upon request.

Office Phone: None. Please send me an email if you would like to contact me.
YouSeeU-Virtual Classroom Video Chats may be arranged upon request.

University Email Address: robert.rodriguez@tamuc.edu

Check the Syllabus to see if your question is answered FIRST.

Preferred Form of Communication: The ONLY way to contact me is via email.

****CHECK YOUR EMAIL AND D2L FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS DAILY****

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Book

There is **ONE** required book for this course. Since this course is 100% online, I highly encourage purchasing the digital version of the book. (This will avoid potentially lengthy delivery times and is also the least expensive option.) **MAKE SURE TO PURCHASE THE CORRECT EDITION** of the book:

GOVERNING TEXAS

Authors: CHAMPAGNE, HARPHAM, CASELLAS

Edition: 4TH

Published Date: 2019

ISBN (for digital version of book): 9780393680140

Publisher: NORTON

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.

Format:

This is a FULLY ONLINE course that is ONLY accessible by logging in through **D2L Brightspace** on your **MyLEO** account. The course is instructor-led, with a schedule that is organized into four learning modules (Units). Learning materials and activities include **YouSeeU-Virtual Classroom video lectures for each unit, PowerPoint slides, YouSeeU-Virtual Classroom video discussions, exams, and a writing assignment.** The course materials are divided into FOUR units:

- **Unit 1: The Political Culture, People and Economy of Texas; The Texas Constitution (August 24-September 18)**
 - *Student Statement of Personal Responsibility DUE September 9*
 - *UNIT 1 Exam September 17-18*

- **Unit 2: Texas in the Federal System; Political Parties (September 21-October 16)**
 - *UNIT 2 Exam October 15-16*

- **Unit 3: Campaigns and Elections; The 2020 Elections (October 19-November 13)**
 - *UNIT 3 Exam November 12-13*
- **Unit 4: The Legislature; The Judiciary (November 16-December 4)**
 - *UNIT 4 Exam December 3-December 4*
- **Finals Week-Writing Assignment (December 7-December 11)**
 - *Writing Assignment Due December 7-December 8*

Student Learning Outcomes for the Core Curriculum:

1. **Critical Thinking:** Students will be able to analyze, evaluate, or solve problems when given a set of circumstances, data, texts, or art.
2. **Communication:** In written, oral, and/or visual communication, A&M-Commerce students will communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion, with an evident message and organizational structure.
3. **Personal Responsibility:** Students will understand and practice academic honesty.
4. **Social Responsibility:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of societal and/or civic issues.

THCB Required Learning Outcomes: Students will master 8 THCB Required Learning Outcomes

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 REQUIREMENTS & ASSIGNMENTS

Minimal Technology Required

USE CHROME OR FIREFOX BROWSERS WITH D2L—DO NOT USE Microsoft EXPLORER or EDGE as these tend to have bugs when using this learning platform

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Using the learning management system, using Microsoft Word and uploading digital images.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This course is divided into four units. Each unit contains a video overview and PowerPoint slides for each chapter covered (8 total). There will be four examinations, one for each unit. A short writing assignment will be required during Finals Week. Several optional class video discussions using YouSeeU video chat on D2L will be scheduled throughout the semester.

Your grade will be comprised of:

- A) Four Examinations (worth 24% each, 96% total),**
- B) One Writing Assignment (4%) during Finals Week, and**
- C) Your submitted Student Statement of Personal Responsibility (1% Extra Credit-- IF submitted to me by the deadline).**

Each element of your grade is described below.

A) Examinations: In this course, **all students are required to take FOUR exams**, each of which will consist of 30 questions in a multiple-choice format. Exams are “open book,” **HOWEVER, you MUST NOT RECEIVE ASSISTANCE IN ANY WAY FROM ANYONE WHILE COMPLETING THE EXAM**. You will have 50 minutes to complete each exam online. Together, these exams will comprise **96%** of your grade (each exam is worth 24%). The exams are **NOT** comprehensive. There is NOT a final exam in this course, but you will have to complete a writing assignment during Finals Week.

You will have a 48-hour window to complete each exam. **If you do not complete an exam during the designated 48-hour period, you will receive 0% for that exam.**

If you have a **legitimate reason** for not completing an exam during the designated period (e.g. severe illness or injury *requiring professional medical care*, emergencies in your *immediate* family, participation in *official* university activities, legal *obligations*) **AND** you have **supporting documentation** for your inability to take the exam, then you may **request** an extension of the period to take the exam.

Requests for taking the make-up exam must be **submitted in writing VIA EMAIL and include SCANNED documentation** explaining and substantiating why your inability to take the exam during the designated period was legitimate. An approval to extend the period for you to complete the exam **will be based solely upon the professor's evaluation of your request and any supporting documentation.**

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 needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.*

IF YOU HAVE A TECHNOLOGICAL PROBLEM DURING AN EXAM YOU MUST FOLLOW THE PROCEDURES LISTED HERE!!

Should you encounter D2L Brightspace based problems while submitting exams, the following procedure must be followed:

Students must report the problem BOTH to the help desk AND to your professor. You may reach the helpdesk at 1-866-656-5511. Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please. Other support options can be found here:

1. FIRST Contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 AND <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>
2. SECOND Send me an email IMMEDIATELY to advise me of the specific problem.
3. I will confirm your problem and follow up with you on how to proceed.

PLEASE NOTE: Your personal computer and internet access problems are **not** legitimate excuses for making up an exam. Only Brightspace-based problems are potentially legitimate reasons to get an extension to complete your exam.

IF YOU RECEIVE ASSISTANCE ON THE EXAM FROM ANYONE IN ANY WAY, THIS CONSTITUTES ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND YOU WILL RECEIVE AN AUTOMATIC "F" IN THIS COURSE AND POTENTIALLY FACE FURTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTION. (SEE "POLICIES" SECTION IN THIS SYLLABUS)

EXAM DUE DATES:

- UNIT 1 Exam September 17-18
- UNIT 2 Exam October 15-16
- UNIT 3 Exam November 12-13
- UNIT 4 Exam December 3-December 4

B) Writing Assignment: You will have **ONE** required writing assignment that is worth a total of **4%** of your grade. The writing assignment will take place during **FINALS WEEK** (Dec. 7-8) and requires you to write about issues that address **your awareness of societal and/or civic issues, critical thinking, and communication** skills within a 48-hour period. Detailed instructions on how to complete the writing assignment will be provided to the class **NOTE: Since the Writing Assignment is due during Finals Week, if you do not submit it by the deadline, you will receive 0% and only be allowed to make it up in the most extraordinary of circumstances, with a legitimate reason AND supporting documentation (same policy for making up missed exams).**

**** DO NOT EMAIL ME YOUR WRITING ASSIGNMENT- IT WILL ONLY BE ACCEPTED THROUGH D2L ****

WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:

- *Writing Assignment Due FINALS WEEK December 7-December 8*

C) STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY:

YOU MUST SUBMIT A STATEMENT ON D2L ACKNOWLEDGING YOU HAVE READ AND AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY BY WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2020 by 11:59 p.m. This is a requirement to remain enrolled in this course and **1% extra credit** will be added to your total grade in this course **IF** you submit it to me by the deadline.

****DO NOT EMAIL YOUR STATEMENT TO ME- IT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. I WILL PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CLASS ON HOW TO SUBMIT A FILE ON D2L ****

Statement: I have read the syllabus in its entirety, and understand the guidelines and agree to the policies detailed therein as a condition of being enrolled in this course. I understand my obligation to adhere to these guidelines and policies in this course, and that failure to do so may result in serious consequences, including (but not limited to) being dropped from the course, and/or receiving a grade of "F" in the course.

STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY DUE DATE:

- *Wednesday, September 9, by 11:59pm*

Grading

Your grade in this course will be determined by the following scale and criteria:

Exam 1:	24%
Exam 2:	24%
Exam 3:	24%
Exam 4:	24%
Writing Assignment:	<u>4%</u>
TOTAL:	100%

Submit Statement of Personal Responsibility on D2L: 1% extra credit if submitted on or before Wednesday, September 9 by 11:59pm.

A 90-100%; B 80-89.9%; C 70-79.9%; D 60-69.9%; F Below 60%

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

August 24-September 18

Unit 1: The Political Culture, People and Economy of Texas; The Texas Constitution

Required Reading:

Governing Texas, CHAPTER 1
Governing Texas, CHAPTER 2

Required Activities:

- Watch Unit Overview Video on D2L
- Follow along with PowerPoint Slides for each chapter
- **Purchase** your required book (digital version preferred)
- **Submit acknowledgment ON D2L** that you have read and agree to the Student Statement of Personal Responsibility (By 11:59pm, **Wednesday, September 9**)
- **Take UNIT 1 Exam on D2L September 17-18**

September 21-October 16

Unit 2: Texas in the Federal System; Political Parties

Required Reading:

Governing Texas, CHAPTER 3

Governing Texas, CHAPTER 4

Required Activities:

- Watch Unit Overview Video on D2L
- Follow along with PowerPoint Slides for each chapter
- *Take UNIT 2 Exam on D2L October 15-16*

October 19-November 13

Unit 3: Campaigns and Elections; The 2020 Election

Required Reading:

Governing Texas, CHAPTER 5

****Additional Readings on the 2020 Elections will be assigned through D2L****

Required Activities:

- Watch Unit Overview Video on D2L
- Follow along with PowerPoint Slides for each chapter
- Carefully follow the results of the 2020 Elections on November 3
- *Take UNIT 2 Exam on D2L November 12-13 (This exam will cover Chapter 5 and all other assigned readings about the 2020 Elections)*

November 16-December 4

Unit 4: The Legislature; The Judiciary

Required Reading:

Governing Texas, CHAPTER 7
Governing Texas, CHAPTER 9

Required Activities:

- Watch Unit Overview Video on D2L
- Follow along with PowerPoint Slides for each chapter
- *Take UNIT 4 Exam on D2L December 3-December 4*

Finals Week: December 7-December 8

Writing Assignment

Required Activities:

- *Submit your Writing Assignment on D2L December 7-December 8*

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

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

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

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

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. 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.

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 needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty 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>

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

Email

Before you ask me a question in an email, check to see if the syllabus answers your question FIRST. I generally reply to emails within 24 hours, Monday-Friday. Emails sent to me over weekends will be replied to on Mondays. I do not reply to emails that ask questions about items covered in the syllabus, such as what chapters are covered on an exam or what the assigned readings are for a given class session.

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

If you have any doubt as to what may constitute academic dishonesty, please consult with me prior to submitting any assignments.

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

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

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-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.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

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 the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

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.

TAMUC Pandemic Response Statements

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.