

Political Science 2306
Texas Government
Spring 2022

Instructor Information:

Megan Todd

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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Office Location: Ferguson Social Sciences Building 135A

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.

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: 9781071808900

Collier, Ken, Steven Galatas, and Julie Harrelson-Stephens. Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation in Texas, **7th Ed.** Washington, DC: Sage, 2021.

Assignments and Grades:

1. Examinations: There will be four examinations for a total of 400 points.

Each exam will be available for three days on D2L Brightspace. **If you miss an exam, you will receive a 0 for that exam.** If you are participating in an activity relating to the university that requires you to be away for the duration of the exam, be sure contact your instructor **prior** to the exam so accommodations can be made. **If you have a legitimate reason for not being able to complete the exam (illness that requires professional treatment, family emergency, legal obligations, etc), you may request a make-up exam by emailing your instructor.** You will need to explain why the exam could not be completed and provide supporting documentation.

The exams will consist of multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions in D2L Brightspace. If you experience technical issues, contact your instructor and D2L Brightspace immediately with as much information and documentation (screenshots), as possible. Refer to the Technology Support section for information on how to contact D2L Brightspace.

2. Weekly Worksheets: 140 points.

You will be required to submit one worksheet per chapter in D2L Brightspace. Each worksheet is made up of two sections:

- **Chapter Objectives:** In your own words, explain three objectives found at the beginning of each chapter. If you quote or paraphrase the book or other resource, you **must** cite that source. You may use the citation style that you are most familiar with: APA, Chicago, MLA, etc. Refer to the Academic Dishonesty section.
- **Key Terms:** Using the definition in the book, write the definition of three key terms.

Once the assignment has closed on D2L Brightspace, you may request an extension by emailing your instructor within three calendar days of the missed assignment, unless you are physically unable to do so. Extensions will only be granted for legitimate, documented reasons.

3. Project: 75 points.

This is NOT a group project. Harold Lasswell defined politics as "Who Gets What, When, How." At the heart of politics is policy. You will be provided a list of policy issues on D2L Brightspace. In a PowerPoint presentation, you will offer the following regarding one of those key issues: why that issue was chosen, why that issue is important to the state, and how that issue is viewed from both the conservative and liberal perspective. More information regarding the assignment will be made available on D2L during the semester.

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, logging onto a computer at the university, borrowing a friend's laptop, utilizing a hot spot, connecting to Starbuck's WiFi, etc.

4. Attendance: 35 points.

Students are required to attend class and attendance will be taken during each class session via a sign-in sheet. **If you have another student sign in for you, there will be serious repercussions.** Refer to the Academic Dishonesty section.

You may miss up to three class sessions on non-exam days without penalty. **More than three absences will result in a reduction in your grade.** If you miss class due to a university related activity, that absence will not be held against you once the department involved emails the instructor. **If you are experiencing COVID symptoms or under quarantine, please email your instructor as soon as possible.** Documented absences that cannot be avoided may be excused at the instructor's discretion.

****If you arrive 10 minutes after class begins or leave before the class is over, you forfeit your attendance points for the day.****

Attendance Grade Scale

- 0 absences = add 10 points to your grade
- 1-3 absences = no penalty
- 4-6 absences = deduct 10 points from your grade
- 7-9 absences = deduct 17.5 points from your grade
- 10+ absences = deduct 35 points from your grade

The scale used in calculating final grades is as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| A: 582-650 points | D: 387-451 points |
| B: 517-581 points | F: 000-386 points |
| C: 452-516 points | |

Student Statement of Personal Responsibility:

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" in the course.

You must acknowledge that you have read the syllabus and agree to the Student Statement of Personal Responsibility by 11:45 PM CT on Wednesday, January 26 on D2L Brightspace.

Syllabus Change Policy: As your instructor, I reserve the right to amend, modify, or adjust this syllabus as needed. Circumstances and events may make it necessary to alter the indicated schedule. Any adjustment(s) will be announced in class, on D2L Brightspace, and/or via university 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. Example: if you email me at 5:30 PM on Friday, you should not expect a response email until Monday. 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 or speak with me the next class period.

Electronics Policy: Cellular telephones, tablets, laptops, and any other gadgets must be turned off and put away during class. Man lived without electronic devices for thousands of years. You will survive one class period. If you are caught using any electronic device that is not authorized by the Students with Disabilities office, including earbuds, you will receive one warning. If you are caught using an unauthorized device after that initial warning, you will be asked to leave class and lose your attendance credit for the day.

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.

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.

The immediate consequence for any form of academic dishonesty in this class is an immediate 0 on assignment. In the event that I choose to drop the lowest grade(s) for assignments such as quizzes, the 0 recorded due to academic dishonesty will **not** be dropped. Additionally, in accordance with university procedure [13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty](#), you will be reported to the academic dean of the college in which your major department is housed and the department head in your major department so that a record of your offense may be maintained for purposes of future disciplinary action should it be required. Repeated occurrences of academic dishonesty may result in your expulsion from the university.

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.

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.

COVID-19 Statement: A&M-Commerce recommends the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories.

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center’s crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel.

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Student Responsibilities

- Students are expected to attend class regularly.
- Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and to engage in class discussions.
- Students are expected to regularly check the course site for announcements and updates.
- Students are expected to complete all assignments including exams and worksheets in a timely fashion.
- Students are expected to respect their fellow classmates and instructor.
- Students will comply with any and all D2L Brightspace 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.

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

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
 - January 12 – January 21
 - **January 17: Martin Luther King Jr. Day – No Class**
 - Chapter 2: Texas Constitution
 - January 24 – January 31
 - Chapter 11: Local Government in Texas
 - February 2 – February 4
 - Chapter 3: Texas Legislature
 - February 7 – February 14
 - **Exam One will be available from 6:00 AM CT February 15 through 11:45 PM CT February 17.**
 - **Research Project due by 11:45 PM on February 18.**
- MODULE TWO:
 - Chapter 4: Texas Governors
 - February 16 – February 21
 - Chapter 5: The Plural Executive & Bureaucracy in Texas
 - February 23 – February 28
 - Chapter 6: Texas Judicial System
 - March 2 – March 7
 - Chapter 7: Texas-Sized Justice
 - March 9 – March 11
 - **March 14 – March 18: SPRING BREAK**
 - **Exam Two will be available from 6:00 AM CT March 21 through 11:45 PM CT March 23.**
- MODULE THREE:
 - Chapter 8: Campaigns and Elections, Texas Style
 - March 21 – March 25
 - Chapter 9: Political Parties
 - March 28 – April 1
 - Chapter 10: Organized Interests
 - April 4 – April 8
 - Chapter 12: Fiscal Policy
 - April 11 – April 15
 - Chapter 14: Social Policy: Education, Health, & Immigration
 - April 18 – April 25
 - **Exam Three will be available from 6:00 AM CT April 26 through 11:45 PM CT April 28.**
 - Comprehensive Review Day: April 29
 - **May 2 – May 6: Study Days for Finals Week**
 - **Comprehensive Final Exam will be available from 6:00 AM CT May 9 through 11:45 PM CT May 11.**