

TEXAS GOVERNMENT
PSCI 2306-03W
Fall 2023

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a survey of the underlying ideas, principles, and participatory practices of constitutional government in Texas. Topics considered include political culture, ideology, parties, institutions, and demography.

FORMAT OF THE COURSE

This is a fully online class. You're required to follow the announcements and course requirements on D2L on a regular and timely basis. Study guides, lecture notes and PowerPoints can be found on D2L.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.
- Describe state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.
- Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.
- Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.
- Analyze the state and local election process.
- Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
- Analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Jason P. Casellas, Anthony Champagne, Edward J. Harpham. 2021. *Governing Texas*, 4th or 5th Edition. W. W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 978-0393539226.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Weekly Discussions: Every week, there will be a discussion forum on D2L on a topic relevant to that week's reading material. Your contributions to the weekly discussion forum are due every Sunday, 11.59 pm. Discussion posts must be about 250-300 words, concise, and to the point. You must make relevant connections to class material within your post. You won't get full credit if you use fillers (irrelevant statements) in your posts just to reach the required word count.

Exams: You will have 5 exams. Each exam will be composed of 30 multiple-choice questions. You will be able to take the exams online through D2L. Exams won't be cumulative; they will be timed and must be completed in one sitting. Study guides will be provided. Exam dates can be found on the course schedule.

Critical Op-ed: The "op-ed", or opinion paper, is a classic form of essay which is meant to express well-informed, well-articulated opinions for publication in the editorial pages of newspapers. Op-eds are subjective pieces and reflect the author's personal opinion on a particular topic, but the author is responsible for backing his/her opinions with facts and evidence. A well-written op-ed must be concise while still being comprehensive.

To complete the op-ed assignment, students are required to write a critical opinion piece on a topic of their choice which must be relevant to Texas Government and Politics. Op-eds are expected to be 750-1000 words in length, double-spaced, written with Times New Roman, 12-point font. The deadline for submitting the op-ed is **December 14, 11.59 pm** on D2L. Detailed guidelines and grading rubric for the op-ed assignment can be found on D2L.

GRADING

Course Requirements	Weight
Weekly Discussions	20%
Exams	12% (each)
Critical Op-ed	20%
Total	100%

GRADE SCALE

90-100 = A
80-90 = B
70-80 = C
60-70 = D
Below 60 =F

MAKE-UP POLICY

Make-ups are allowed under special circumstances such as medical or family emergencies. Please request your make-up prior to the deadline. Documentary proof for your request might be required based on the circumstances. Post-deadline submission of assignments without an excuse will lead to loss of points.

CIVILITY AND RESPECT

All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. I expect everyone to be respectful of each other's perspectives and opinions while posting comments to discussion forums. Offensive/disrespectful comments will not be tolerated.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student is required to be responsible for honestly submitting research and work that is original and is the sole work of the individual. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism occurs when a student purposefully or unintentionally takes information directly from a source without proper citation. If you are unclear about the ethics of an academic action, please consult me through email or make an appointment for a zoom meeting.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

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 discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

The American 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 132 Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148 StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

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

34.06.02R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 August 28-September 3

The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas Governing Texas Ch 1

Week 2 September 4-10

The Texas Constitution Governing Texas Ch 2

Week 3 September 11-17

Texas in the Federal System Governing Texas Ch 3

Exam 1

Week 4 September 18-24

Political Parties Governing Texas Ch 4

Week 5 September 25-October 1

Campaigns and Elections Governing Texas Ch 5

Week 6 October 2-8

Interest Groups and Lobbying Governing Texas Ch 6

Exam 2

Week 7 October 9-15

The Legislature Governing Texas Ch 7

Week 8 October 16-22

The Executive Branch Governing Texas Ch 8

Week 9 October 23-29

The Judiciary Governing Texas Ch 9

Exam 3

Week 10 October 30-November 5

Local Government Governing Texas Ch 10

Week 11 November 6-12

Public Finance Governing Texas Ch 11

Week 12 November 13-19

Public Policy Governing Texas Ch 12

Exam 4

Week 13 November 20-26

Crime, Corrections and Public Safety Governing Texas Ch 13

Week 14 November 27-December 3

Building the Future: Public Policies for a Changing Texas Governing Texas Ch 14

Week 15 December 4-10

Exam 5

Week 16 December 11-15

Finals Week

Opinion Paper due December 14, 11.59 pm