



PSCI 2306.01W 23217  
Texas Government  
Spring 2024  
January 10th - May 10th

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](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel).

Instructor: Rebecca Lynch  
Office Location: Ferguson SS 135  
Office Hours: TBA Virtual Office Hours Only  
Virtual Meetings via Zoom available by appt.  
University Email Address: [Rebecca.lynch@tamuc.edu](mailto:Rebecca.lynch@tamuc.edu)  
Preferred Form of Communication: Email  
Communication Response Time: 24 Hours **excluding weekends**

**Course Description:** This course is a survey of the institutions and policies of the American  
**COURSE INFORMATION**

Required Textbook: Governing Texas 6th Edition (physical or ebook is acceptable and you will NOT need the access codes)  
ISBN: 978-1-324-03510-7

**Course Description:** This course is a survey of the institutions and policies of the Texas governing bodies. You will learn about formal and informal institutions of the state government and how they play into the creation and implementation of public policy. Topics considered include the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, bureaucracies, public policies (formulation and implementation), global forces that continue to shape our understanding of the relationship between the people and government of Texas.

- Please note that you will not be taught what to think about political issues in this course. Rather, you will be provided with the knowledge to determine how to think about political issues for yourself.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Critical Thinking: Students will be able to differentiate between fact and opinion.

2. Communication: Student communication will be clear, purposeful, and make appropriate use of evidence, data, and technology as applicable. In written, oral, and/or visual communication, A&M Commerce students will communicate in a manner appropriate to the audience and occasion, with an evident message and organization structure.
3. Personal Responsibility: Students will be able to understand their role in their own education.
4. Social Responsibility: Students will demonstrate awareness of societal and/or civic issues.
5. Explain the origin and development of the Texas Constitution
6. Describe state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.
7. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.
9. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.
10. Analyze the state and local election process.
11. Identify rights and responsibilities of citizens.
12. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS Minimal Technical Skills Needed**

Students will need to be familiar with the University learning management system (D2L/Brightspace), know how to use a personal computer, navigate the internet, and use basic word processing software such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint.

### **Instructional Methods**

Each week module will consist of and involve quizzes, and discussion boards over the assigned readings and any other supplemental readings the instructor wishes to add. You will regularly be asked to contribute your opinions and answer questions about the readings.

### **Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course**

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and engage in class discussions/writing assignments. Complete all assignments. Be prepared to discuss the topics presented in class. Be courteous to and respectful of your fellow students and instructors.

**GRADING: A = 90%-100% B = 80%-89% C = 70%-79% D = 60%-69% F = 59% or Below**

**This following is the breakdown for grades and points in class based on a 1000 point scale:**

**Topic Paper: 150 Points Total**

**(Proposal & rough draft: 50 points, final draft submission: 100 points)**

**Quizzes: 225 Points Total (15 @ 15 points each)**

**Current Event Writing Assignments: 75 Points Total (3 @ 25 points each)**

**Exams: 400 Points Total (4 @ 100 points each)**

**Final Exam: 150 Points Total**

Course Calendar

\*\*\*Subject to Change\*\*\*

For the assigned readings please follow along according to the chapter titles. My copy of the book is slightly different from the essentials edition and the ebook and physical copies sometimes differ as well. Please email me if you have questions. This semester we will be using a four week module schedule. Assignments will open every four weeks and be due at the end of that four weeks. This will allow you to work at your own pace within that time frame. **Each module will open on Mondays at 8:00am and close on Sundays at 11:59pm.**

<b>Module 1: January 10th - February 4th (assignments close 11:59pm) 4 Quizzes 1 Exam 1 Introduction Post (Extra Points) Topic/Research Paper Opens, Proposal Due</b>		
Week 1: January 10th - January 14th	Chapter 1 - The Political Culture, People and Economy of Texas	Chapter 1 Quiz Introduction Post Research/Topic Paper Opens
Week 2: January 15th - January 21st	Chapter 2 - The Texas Constitution	Chapter 2 Quiz
Week 3: January 22nd - January 28th	Chapter 3 - Texas in the Federal System	Chapter 3 Quiz
Week 4: January 29th - February 4th	Chapter 13 - Crime, Corrections, and Public Safety	Chapter 13 Quiz Exam 1 Paper Proposal Due

<b>Module 2: February 5th (assignments open 8:00am) - March 3rd (assignments close 11:59pm) 4 Quizzes 1 Exam 1 Current Event Rough Draft Due</b>		
Week 5: February 5th - February 11th	Chapter 9 - The Judiciary	Chapter 9 Quiz Current Event 1
Week 6: February 12th - February 18th	Chapter 8 - The Executive	Chapter 8 Quiz
Week 7: February 19th - February 25th	Chapter 7 - The Legislature	Chapter 7 Quiz
Week 8: February 26th - March 3rd	Chapter 10 - Local Government	Chapter 10 Quiz Exam 1 Rough Draft Due

**Module 3: March 4th (assignments open 8:00am) - April 7th (assignments close 11:59pm)  
4 Quizzes 1 Current Event 1 Exam Working on Final Paper**

Week 9: March 4th - March 10th	Chapter 4 - Political Parties	Chapter 4 Quiz Current Event 2
Week 10: March 18th - March 24th	Chapter 5 - Campaigns and Elections	Chapter 5 Quiz
Week 11: March 25th - March 31st	Chapter 6 - Interest Groups and Lobbying	Chapter 6 Quiz
Week 12: April 1st - April 7th	Chapter 11 - Public Finance	Chapter 11 Quiz Exam 3

**Module 4: April 8th (assignments open 8:00am) - May 3rd (assignments close 11:59pm)  
3 Quizzes 1 Current Event 1 Exam - FINAL PAPER DUE!**

Week 13: April 8th - April 14th	Chapter 12 - Public Policy	Chapter 12 Quiz Current Event 3
Week 14: April 15th - April 21st	Chapter 14 - Building the Future: Public Policies for a Changing Texas Pt. 1	Chapter 14 Quiz
Week 15: April 22nd - April 28th	Chapter 14 - Building the Future: Public Policies for a Changing Texas Pt. 2	Chapter 14 Quiz Exam 4
Week 16: April 29th - May 3rd	Finalize Paper!	Final Paper Due!

Finals Week: May 6th-10th	Finals Week	Final Exam Due May 10th by 5pm
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**\*\*\*\*Your professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus at any point during the semester and will inform students of alterations.\*\*\*\***

**Assessments**

**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.**

***Participation:*** With this being an online course, you will need to login to D2L and access this course regularly throughout the week and/or modules. Not logging in and keeping up with due dates and weekly readings and assignments will have a detrimental effect on your grade.

***Current Events:*** To be civically engaged, it is important to have an idea of what is going on in the world, country, state, and local areas. You will have a current event assignment for modules 2-4. Further instructions and expectations will be posted in D2L.

***Exams:*** There will be four exams given during the semester in addition to a final exam to be administered during finals week. They comprise a significant portion of your grade, so it would be beneficial to be prepared for your exams. **Since there is a multi-day window for exams, makeup exams will not be given.** If you have an athletic or academic reason as to why you are not able to take the exam during the window it is open, you must email me IMMEDIATELY so that other arrangements can be made. This means emailing me **BEFORE/DURING** the exam window, not after the window has closed.

***Quizzes:*** Quizzes will be given weekly and can be over the subject matter or **current topics/events**. Questions for the quizzes will come from the week's lectures, assigned readings and any breaking news (political, sports, or pop culture related). Quizzes will be given every week during the semester. **Quizzes cannot be made up if they are missed.**

***Research/Topic Paper:*** A research paper will be assigned/open during the first module of the semester. Your paper will include a rough draft that will be due at the end of module two and a final draft submitted during the last week of regular classes. The dates listed in the course calendar are hard deadlines with no wiggle room due to the academic calendar set by the university. You will have nearly the whole semester to complete this paper. The final paper should be 5-6 pages double spaced in Times New Roman with 12 pt. font (not including the cover page or reference page(s)). APSA formatting will be used unless otherwise discussed with me. Your paper will need to have a minimum of five academic or scholarly cited sources. If you are unsure what an academic source is, please ask. Points will be deducted for not using appropriate sources. Formatting will be a part of the grade so please make sure you are adhering to them so you do not lose points. **The final paper is due May 3rd by 11:59 pm.**

***Extra Credit:*** Extra credit will be given at the instructor's discretion. I will NOT create extra credit for any student at any time because they "need to get" a certain grade or because they have chosen not to do the original assignments assigned. I do not "give" grades rather you EARN your grade. I cannot stress this enough: keep up with your assignments and your grade in the gradebook throughout the whole semester and not just at the end.

***Submitting Assignments & Late Assignments:*** **Late work will not be accepted.** Each assignment is given with enough time to complete it. You are responsible for attaching the correct assignment to the correct folder in D2L Brightspace. Once you submit your assignment

you should always click on the document to guarantee that it has been submitted correctly, or no document is counted as failure to complete the assignment on time. Poor internet connection, dead laptop batteries, etc. are not valid reasons for an assignment not being completed. If for some reason you are having difficulty uploading your assignment please email me a PDF version before the deadline and explain the situation, but please only use this as a last option.

## **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](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](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor. I am here to help, but cannot help if I do not know what is going on. Communication is key!

### **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>

### **Interaction with Instructor Statement:**

Student emails will be responded to within 24 hours except for on weekends. Weekly assignments will regularly be graded and inputted into the grade book. Any student wishing to discuss a grade or assignment should email me or request to schedule a video conference and will receive a response within 24-36 hours.

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **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 in advance.

## **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>

## **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>

**AI Statement** A&M-Commerce has adopted the following statement for inclusion on faculty syllabi: Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructor's guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources. In the context of this class, DO NOT USE AI. Programs that save you all the trouble of reading, thinking, and presenting your thoughts and ideas are antithetical to university education. If it is apparent that you used AI in writing any assignment in this course, you will receive a 0 on that assignment with no opportunity to make it up.

## **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](mailto: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.

### **Withdrawals**

**Dropping the Class:** If you need to adjust your schedule by dropping this course, please contact your Academic Coach. Please be aware that dropping your course may impact your financial aid, veterans and military benefits, three peat, 45-hour, and 30-hour rules. It is the student's responsibility to drop the course. If you fail to officially drop the class, a failing grade shall be assigned.



*Student Withdrawal:* A student wishing to withdraw from all courses before the end of a term for which he/she is registered must clear his or her record by filing an application for voluntary withdrawal. Please contact your Academic Coach. This action must be taken by the date stated in the Academic Calendar as the last day to drop a class or withdraw. Any student who withdraws from the university is subject to the conditions outlined in the section regarding Scholastic Probation or Suspension in the university catalog. It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from classes if he or she does not plan to attend during the semester in which he/she has enrolled. A student has one year from the first day of a semester to appeal a withdrawal refund. Courses withdrawn are counted as attempted hours and count towards the three-peat, 45-hour and 30-hour rules and financial aid and veterans and military benefits.

*Instructor Withdrawal:* Your instructor of record reserves the right to withdraw a student from his or her course based on inadequate performance and progress in the course materials, and or behavior.

**All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.**

*Your instructor reserves the right to alter or change the syllabus at any time during the semester and will inform students of any changes.*