



**COURSE SYLLABUS
Texas Government
PSCI 2306.05E (80938)
FALL 2024**

**August 27 through December 12, 2024
Tuesday/Thursday 9:30am-10:45am
Location: Ferguson Social Science Building, Room 313**

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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

Office Location (Spring 2024): **Ferguson Social Science Building, Room 149**

Office Hours:

Tu/Th 12:15pm-2:00pm, (please send me an email in advance if you would like to meet at a specific time/date); **or by appointment** (in-person or zoom).

The BEST way to contact me is via email.

Office Phone: **None. Political Science Department Office: 903-886-5317**

University Email Address: **robert.rodriguez@tamuc.edu**

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

Preferred Form of Communication: Please send me an email if you would like to contact me.

****CHECK YOUR EMAIL FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS DAILY****

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Book

There is **ONE** required book for this course. You may purchase the e-book, loose leaf or paperback version of the book—this is completely up to you. (The e-book will avoid potentially lengthy delivery times and is also the least expensive option.) However, make sure to purchase the **CORRECT EDITION** of the book (6th edition):

GOVERNING TEXAS

Authors: CHAMPAGNE, HARPHAM, CASELLAS, HAYES CLARK

Edition: 6TH

Published Date: 2023

ISBN: 978-1324035107

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:

Lectures and discussions: Each class session will feature PowerPoint lectures and a discussion of current events in Texas politics. Note: You will *NOT* be told what to think in this course. Rather, you will be provided with the tools to make your own assessments about political issues.

Your **attendance and participation** in class lectures/discussions are very highly recommended and desirable, but ultimately, this is up to you. Attendance will be taken during each class session for record-keeping; however, **attendance will not count toward your grade**. These lectures/discussions will NOT be recorded nor streaming online. Likewise, PowerPoint slides will only be visible to those who attend class. *The only circumstances in which you must inform me of the reason for your absence is if you miss an exam, and/or if you will be absent for an extended period of time.*

ALL EXAMS will take place in-person in the classroom, however, a few specific assignments must be completed and/or submitted online. Please be aware that if you choose to attend class lectures and discussions, you **MUST** adhere to ALL of the following rules:

1. **Electronic devices** (such as cell phones, laptops, ipads, earbuds, smartwatches, etc.) of any kind are **NEVER** permitted during class. You will be directed to stop using these items and/or leave the classroom immediately if you have an electronic device visible.

2. **Disruptions of any kind** (as determined by your professor, such as side-conversations and ANY display of disrespect to anyone) are absolutely prohibited in a university classroom. You will be directed to cease this type of activity and/or leave the classroom immediately if you disrupt class in any way. Persistent disruptions will be reported to the Dean of Students office for further action and you will be prohibited from attending class until the Dean of Students has authorized your return.

3. **Be on time.** The class door will be closed and locked 5 minutes after class begins, and will not be opened for anyone until class is dismissed. If you know you will be arriving late or need to leave class early for any reason, you must inform your professor before class begins.

4. **Follow the 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. Faculty have the authority to direct students who exhibit inappropriate behavior to leave the classroom 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 dropped from the class, and/or a review by an appropriate university disciplinary agency. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook: http://www.tamuc.edu/student_guidebook/Student_Guidebook.pdf

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This course is divided into FOUR units. There will be four examinations, one for each unit. A short writing assignment will be required during Finals Week. Note: There is not a comprehensive final exam in this course.

- **Unit 1: The Political Culture, People and Economy of Texas; The Texas Constitution (August 27-September 24)**
 - *Student Statement of Personal Responsibility DUE on D2L ONLY by Thursday, September 5 (*ONLINE*)*
 - *Quiz, Thursday, September 12 (in-person)*
 - *UNIT 1 Exam Tuesday, September 24 (in-person)*
- **Unit 2: Texas in the Federal System; Political Parties (September 26-October 22)**
 - *UNIT 2 Exam Tuesday, October 22 (in-person)*
- **Unit 3: Campaigns and Elections; The Legislature (October 24-November 14)**
 - *UNIT 3 Exam Thursday, November 14 (in-person)*
- **Unit 4: The Judiciary (November 19-December 5)**
 - *UNIT 4 Exam Thursday, December 5 (in-person)*
- **Finals Week-Writing Assignment (December 12)**
 - *Writing Assignment Due December 12 by 11:59pm (*ONLINE*)*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSIGNMENTS

Your grade will be comprised of:

- A) Four in-person Examinations (worth 23% each, 92% total),**
- B) One in-person Quiz (worth 4%)**
- C) One Writing Assignment (4%) during Finals Week, and**
- D) 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 IN-PERSON exams**, each of which will consist of 30 questions in a multiple-choice format. **You MUST bring a GREEN OR BROWN SCANTRON AND A #2 PENCIL** to the classroom on exam days and will have the entire class period to complete each exam. Together, these exams will comprise **92%** of your grade (each exam is worth 23%). 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.

If you do not complete an exam during the designated class session, you will receive 0% for that exam.

If you have a **legitimate reason** for not completing an exam during the designated class session (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** taking a **make-up exam that will take place during the first Tuesday following the exam date immediately before or after class**. Requests for make-up exams MUST be made either in advance of the exam date (for example, if missing class to participate in a university activity) OR within 72 hours of missing an exam if the absence was caused by a legitimate unexpected reason.

NOTE: Forgetting to take an exam is NOT a legitimate reason for missing an exam and you will not be allowed to make it up.

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 class session was legitimate. An approval to allow you to take a make-up exam **will be based solely upon the professor's evaluation of your request and any supporting documentation**.

EXAM DATES:

- *UNIT 1 Exam September 24*
- *UNIT 2 Exam October 22*
- *UNIT 3 Exam November 12*
- *UNIT 4 Exam December 5*

B) Quiz: You will have ONE quiz in class on **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12**. This quiz will be graded and is worth **4%** of your grade in this course. The purpose of this quiz is to prepare you for Exam 1. **You MUST bring a GREEN OR BROWN SCANTRON AND A #2 PENCIL** to the classroom for this quiz. **Note: If you are absent on the day of this quiz, the same policy for missed exams will apply.**

- *Quiz September 12*

C) 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 (TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12 for this section)** and requires you to write about issues that address **your awareness of societal and/or civic issues, critical thinking, and communication** skills. 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).**

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.

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

WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE DATE:

- *Writing Assignment Due **ONLINE** during FINALS WEEK on the date of our scheduled final exam: Thursday, **December 12 by 11:59pm.***

IF YOU HAVE A TECHNOLOGICAL PROBLEM SUBMITTING YOUR WRITING ASSIGNMENT, YOU MUST FOLLOW THE PROCEDURES LISTED HERE!!

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

FIRST: SEND YOUR PROFESSOR AN EMAIL IMMEDIATELY, regardless of what time it is. If necessary, use your smartphone to send an email. **SECOND:** report the problem **BOTH** to the help desk. 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 turning in an assignment late. Only Brightspace-based problems are potentially legitimate reasons to get an extension to complete your assignment.

D) 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 **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5 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:

- *Thursday, September 5, by 11:59pm **ONLINE***

Grading

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

Quiz:	4%
Exam 1:	23%
Exam 2:	23%
Exam 3:	23%
Exam 4:	23%
Writing Assignment:	<u>4%</u>
TOTAL:	100%

Submit Statement of Personal Responsibility on D2L: 1% extra credit if submitted on or before Thursday, September 5 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 27-September 24

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:

- **Purchase** your required book
- **Submit acknowledgment ON D2L** that you have read and agree to the Student Statement of Personal Responsibility (By 11:59pm, **Thursday, September 5**)
- **Take QUIZ IN-PERSON on THURSDAY, September 12**
- **Take UNIT 1 Exam IN-PERSON on TUESDAY, September 24**

September 26-October 22

Unit 2: Texas in the Federal System; Political Parties

Required Reading:

Governing Texas, CHAPTER 3
Governing Texas, CHAPTER 4

Required Activities:

- **Take UNIT 2 Exam IN-PERSON on TUESDAY, October 22**

October 24-November 14

Unit 3: Campaigns and Elections; The Legislature

Required Reading:

Governing Texas, CHAPTER 5
Governing Texas, CHAPTER 7

Required Activities:

- **Take UNIT 3 Exam IN-PERSON on Thursday, November 14**

November 19-December 5

Unit 4: The Judiciary

Required Reading:

Governing Texas, CHAPTER 9

Required Activities:

- *Take UNIT 4 Exam IN-PERSON Thursday, December 5*

Finals Week: DECEMBER 12 Writing Assignment DUE ONLINE

Required Activities:

- *Submit your Writing Assignment on D2L by 11:59pm on Thursday, December 12 (the designated date for the final exam in this course)*

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.**

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.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

Syllabus Change Policy

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

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 University 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>

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.

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.

TAMUC COVID-19 Statement

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

TAMUC Counseling Center Statement

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-- 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

Velma K. Waters Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

<https://www.tamuc.edu/campuslife/campuservices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/default.aspx>

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.

Some activities in this course will require the use of accessing D2L Brightspace

TECHNOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technology Required

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

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

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

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

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.

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>