



EAST TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY

PSCI 2306.A1E,A2E,A3E (22680) (22934) (22863)

Texas Government
COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2025

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Under construction

Instructor: I F-J A. von Neuhaus
Office Location: Social Science # 130
Office Hours: by appointment
Dept. Phone: (903) 886.5317
Office Fax: (903) 886.5318
University Email Address: Frank.vonNeuhaus@tamuc.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: by e-mail
Communication Response Time: within 24 hours
Non-Emergencies (903) 886.5868

COURSE INFORMATION

Reading Materials will be provided

Materials — Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings
Textbook(s)
Software Required
Optional Texts and/or Materials: N/A

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.

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 the separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the 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.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Using the learning management system, using Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, using presentation and graphics programs, etc.

Instructional Methods

The class will be a mix of lectures, debates, and group activities. An outline of the reading schedule is provided in this syllabus. Students are required to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned materials. In addition to the assigned readings, we may also discuss current political events, since developments in Texas politics occur on a daily basis.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Have the chapter notes read prior to class time.

GRADING

Final grades in this course are based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below Assessments

Quizzes (online) 7 quizzes	50%
Comprehensive Final (online)	00%
Papers (online) 2 papers	15%
Miscellaneous (online (Daily)	15%
Photo Essay (online)	20%
Pop quizzes	00%
Total	100%

Late work: Usually unacceptable; however, points will be deducted. **There will be a limit on how many late assignments that will be accepted. “Lion Court,” more on this later.**

Grading Policy

Grades are based on seven quizzes, ~~a comprehensive final~~, two papers, & misc. assignments and a photo essay project.

Deadlines are deadlines, so make them. **The instructor has the discretion of final grades.**

Quizzes – (50%) seven quizzes 7.14% each. The quizzes will be multiple choice/true and false questions, 50 questions, the quizzes are taken online. On each quiz, several questions can be based strictly on classroom lectures, videos, etc. not covered in the study guides. You need access to a computer and a flash drive

~~Comprehensive final~~ (10%) 100 multiple-choice, true, and false questions over the 14 chapters. —Each chapter will have roughly 7 questions.—

***Papers-** (15%) Two papers 7.5% each. Topics will be assigned.—there will be specific due dates. Stay with the instruction. Please contact a Reference and Learning Librarian for help at 903.886.5714.

Project / Photo Essay (20%) **(Solo or Group Project)** If possible, do this in a group. Choose a Texas theme. Some suggestions: Texas stereotypes, a film about Texas, a Texas musician, Texas music, Texas Capitol, a battle, a political leader, a military leader, a Texas hero, Texas Native Americans, Texas Folklore, a county, a city, a region, a river, cattle, a mineral (oil and gas industry), state parks, forts, wildlife, ethnic group, Texas Republican or Texas Democrat Parties, sports, such as football, a university; or a choice approved by the professor. This project is divided into two parts. In **Part one**, in ten slides or more, you will tell your story in primarily images (based on your topic) with some script. Your images should present your theme. Have a beginning, a middle, an arc, and an end. In other words, you are using your images—a kind of rhetoric—to tell a story about your theme. It is like a trailer to a movie, building an interest in your theme. This showcase piece takes effort, time, especially planning, and critical thinking about the concept/Theme. What is your message? Remember – be creative. **Part II.** In 500 to 750 words, (2-3 pages (slides) in paragraph form you will summarize your topic.

If you decided to be a part of a group. If time permits, volunteers will present their findings to the class. Each volunteer(s) will decide the format of the presentation, e.g., by power point, by lecture, by debate, by panel discussion, by a mock trial... Each member of the group will be assigned a specific task, and that will be decided by the group itself. Each group will need a (1) group leader, (2) researchers, (3) presenters, (4) organizer, (Find out who does what BEST. Part of the objective of this assignment is group interaction; the objective, working in groups (team work). If you join a group, and become deadweight, your group can expel you from the group, as you are no use to them

Miscellaneous assignments (15%) many (Daily) assignments of various themes.

Pop quizzes Be prepared for each class meeting, so you need notebook paper and pencils/pens.

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 coursework 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>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Preferred Form of Communication: by e-mail

Communication Response Time: within 24 hours

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Late work: Usually unacceptable; however, if accepted your grade will be in the 70 range. Missed exams can be made up.

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>

Plagiarism Statement

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means

1. to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
2. to use (another's production) without crediting the source
3. to commit literary theft
4. to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

But can words and ideas be stolen?

According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

1. turning in someone else's work as your own
2. copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
3. failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
4. providing incorrect information about the source of a quotation
5. changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
6. copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules)

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that specific material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism. If you have retained the essential idea of a source, and have not cited it, then no matter how drastically you may have altered its context or presentation, you have still plagiarized." (www.plagiarism.org)

If you plagiarize, you will receive a ZERO for the assignment in question. I also reserve the right to give you an F in the course. The matter will be referred to the Office of the Dean of the College of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Arts.

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

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.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halliday Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connections 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

Department or Accrediting Agency Required Content

Departmental-Specific Procedures

Student Grievance Procedure

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in-person, by email, by telephone, or by another communication medium, should then schedule an appointment with the Department Head or Assistant Department Head by completing a Student Grievance Form (available in the main office, HL 141). In the event that the instructor is the Department Head, the student should schedule a meeting with the Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities after following the steps outlined above; if the instructor is the Assistant Department Head, students should schedule a meeting with the Department Head. Where applicable, students should also consult [University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 \("Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation"\)](#).

Collection of Data for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness

In order to measure the level of compliance with the accreditation, throughout the semester I may collect some of the ungraded texts you produce solely for an assessment of program effectiveness that in no way affects students' course grades or GPAs.

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 in getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.

Important Dates:

13 January, first class day

20 January, MLK, Jr. Holiday

10-14 März, Spring Break

02 May, Last Class Day

02 May, All missing work is 2 due

03--09 May, Spring Finals Week

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week1

01/13 Course overview
[Miscellaneous 1](#)

Week 2

01/20 [MLK, Jr. Day Holiday](#)
Political Culture (Ch. 1)
[Miscellaneous 2](#)

Week 3

1/27 Texas Constitution (Ch. 2)
[Quiz 1 is due \(take online\) by Sunday, 02 February/11:59 pm](#)

Week 4

02/3 Texas/Federalism (Ch. 3)
[Miscellaneous 3](#)

Week 5

02/10 Political Parties (Ch. 4)
[Quiz 2 is due \(take online\) by Sunday, 16 February/11:59 pm](#)

Week 6

02/17 Campaigns & Elections (Ch. 5) & Interest Groups (Ch. 6)
[Quiz 3 is due \(take online\) by Sunday, 23 February/11:59 pm](#)

Week 7

02/24 The Legislature (Ch. 7)
[Miscellaneous 4](#)

Week 8

03/3

The Executive (Ch. 8)

Quiz 4 is due (take online) by Sunday, Marz 9/11:59 pm

Week 9

03/10

Spring Break**Week 10**

03/17

Paper 1**Week 11**

03/24

Ch. 9 The Judiciary

[Miscellaneous 5](#)**Week 12**

3/31

Ch. 10 Local Government

Quiz 5 is due (take online) by Sunday, 6 April/11:59 pm

Week 13

04/7

Ch. 11 Public Finance

[Miscellaneous 6](#)**Week 14**

04/14

h. 12 Public Policy

Quiz 6 is due (take online) by Sunday, 23 Marz//11:59 pm

Week 15

04/21

Ch. 13 Crime & Corrections Policy & Ch. 14 The Future

Quiz 7 is due (take online) by Sunday, 27 April/11:59 pm

Week 16

04/28

Paper 2**Week 17**

5/3-5/7

Final Project Due (online)