



**EAST TEXAS A&M**  
UNIVERSITY

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Texas Government**

**PSCI 2306**

**SPRING 2025**

**January 13 through May 7, 2025**

**ONLINE**

**Location: Ferguson Social Science Building 312**

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

**Instructor: Dr. Robert G. Rodríguez**

Professor, Political Science

Coordinator, Latin American & U.S. Latino Studies Minor

Office Location: **Ferguson Social Science Building Room 149**

Office Hours:

**Tu/Th 9:15am-9:30am; 12:15pm-2:30pm** (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: **903-886-5317** (Political Science Department Office)

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 (6<sup>th</sup> 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:**

This is a fully ONLINE course. Exams and assignments are ONLY accessible by logging in through D2L Brightspace on your MyLEO account. Lectures and PowerPoint slides are also on D2L. Class discussions for each unit will be announced and held on Zoom.

### **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 (January 14-February 13)**
  - *Student Statement of Personal Responsibility DUE on D2L ONLY by Thursday, January 23 (ONLINE)*
  - *UNIT 1 Exam February 11 (ONLINE)*
- **Unit 2: Texas in the Federal System; Political Parties (February 13-March 6)**
  - *UNIT 2 Exam March 6 (ONLINE)*

**Spring Break: Week of March 11-15**

- **Unit 3: Campaigns and Elections (March 18-April 15)**
  - *UNIT 3 Exam April 15 (ONLINE)*
- **Unit 4: ; The Legislature The Judiciary (April 17-May 1)**
  - *UNIT 4 Exam May 1 (ONLINE)*

- **Finals Week-Writing Assignment (May 7)**
  - *Writing Assignment Due May 7 by 11:59pm (ONLINE)*

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSIGNMENTS**

Your grade will be comprised of:

- A) Four ONLINE Examinations (worth 24% each, 96% total),**
- B) One Writing Assignment (4%) due ONLINE** during Finals Week, and
- C) 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 exams**, each of which will consist of 30 questions in a multiple-choice format. Exams are “open book,” **HOWEVER, you MUST NOT RECEIVE ASSISTANCE IN ANY WAY FROM ANYONE WHILE COMPLETING THE EXAM**. You will have **30 minutes** to complete each exam online. Together, these exams will comprise **96%** of your grade (each exam is worth 24%). The exams are **NOT** comprehensive. There is **NOT** a final exam in this course, but you will have to complete a writing assignment during the Final day of class.

You will have a 24-hour window to complete each exam. **If you do not complete an exam during the designated 24-hour period, you will receive 0% for that exam.**

If you have a **legitimate reason** for not completing an exam during the designated period (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** an extension of the period to take the exam.

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 period was legitimate. An approval to extend the period for you to complete the exam **will be based solely upon the professor’s evaluation of your request and any supporting documentation.**

**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.*

**IF YOU HAVE A TECHNOLOGICAL PROBLEM DURING AN EXAM YOU MUST FOLLOW THE PROCEDURES LISTED HERE!!**

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

**Students must report the problem BOTH to the help desk AND to your professor. 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 making up an exam. Only Brightspace-based problems are potentially legitimate reasons to get an extension to complete your exam.

**IF YOU RECEIVE ASSISTANCE ON THE EXAM FROM ANYONE IN ANY WAY, THIS CONSTITUTES ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND YOU WILL RECEIVE AN AUTOMATIC “F” IN THIS COURSE AND POTENTIALLY FACE FURTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTION. (SEE “POLICIES” SECTION IN THIS SYLLABUS)**

#### **EXAM DATES:**

- *UNIT 1 Exam February 11*
- *UNIT 2 Exam March 6*
- *UNIT 3 Exam April 15*
- *UNIT 4 Exam May 1*

**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 (WEDNESDAY, May 7 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 ETAMU 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: **May 7 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:

4. **FIRST** Contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 AND <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>
5. **SECOND** Send me an email **IMMEDIATELY** to advise me of the specific problem.
6. 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, January 23, 2025 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, January 23, by 11:59pm **ONLINE***

**Grading**

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

Exam 1:	24%
Exam 2:	24%
Exam 3:	24%
Exam 4:	24%
Writing Assignment:	<u>4%</u>
TOTAL:	100%

*Submit Statement of Personal Responsibility on D2L:1% extra credit if submitted on or before Thursday, January 23 by 11:59pm.*

**A 90-100%; B 80-89.9%; C 70-79.9%; D 60-69.9%; F Below 60%**

**COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR**

**January 14-February 13**

**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, January 23**)
- Take **UNIT 1 Exam** online on **TUESDAY, February 11**

## **February 13-March 6**

### **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 online on THURSDAY, March 6*

## **SPRING BREAK March 11-15**

## **March 18-April 15**

### **Unit 3: Campaigns and Elections**

Required Reading:

Assigned videos on D2L Brightspace March 18 & 20  
Governing Texas, CHAPTER 5

Required Activities:

- *Take UNIT 3 Exam online on TUESDAY, April 15*

## **April 17-May 1**

### **Unit 4: Legislature; The Judiciary**

Required Reading:

Governing Texas, CHAPTER 7  
Governing Texas, CHAPTER 9

Required Activities:

- *Take UNIT 4 Exam online on Thursday, May 1*

## **Finals Week: May 7 Writing Assignment DUE ONLINE**

Required Activities:

- *Submit your Writing Assignment on D2L by 11:59pm on WEDNESDAY, MAY 7 (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, East Texas A&M 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.

### ETAMU 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

East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University 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.***

### **ETAMU COVID-19 Statement**

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

### **ETAMU Counseling Center Statement**

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, 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).

### **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**

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library- Room 162

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

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto: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 East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M 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 East Texas A&M 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 East Texas A&M University 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)

## **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.

## **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>