



COURSE SYLLABUS
Texas Government

PSCI 2306 02E
FALL 2025

August 25 through December 12, 2025
Monday/Wednesday/Friday 10-10.50am
Location: Ferguson Social Science Building, Room 150

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Barbara Laubenthal
Office Location: SS-162
Phone number: (903) 886-5317
Office Hours: Wednesday 2-4pm and by appointment. Please send me an email if you would like to make an appointment.
Email: Barbara.Laubenthal@etamu.edu
The best way to contact me is via email.

COURSE INFORMATION

TEXTBOOK:

GOVERNING TEXAS

Authors: CHAMPAGNE, HARPHAM, CASELLAS

Edition: 7TH

Published Date: 2025

ISBN (for digital version of book): 978-1-324-08571-3

Publisher: NORTON

The book (ebook or hardcopy) is available at the ETAMU bookstore and at other (online) bookstores.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course addresses the origin and development of the Texas Constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and inter-governmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas

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.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSIGNMENTS

- I. Three tests (multiple choice/true-false questions per test) on content from textbook and Powerpoint slides. Tests will be taken in class. A review sheet for each test will be handed out one week prior to the exam.
- II. Weekly chapter response: 100-150 words comment on a chapter of the textbook, due as a hard copy on the Wednesday after we talked about the chapter in class. You will receive a prompt for the chapter response or you can make a suggestion for your topic.
- III. Short research paper, 1200 words +/- 10%, on a research question that you will develop in class.
- IV. Weekly reading question on D2L discussion board: you will be asked to post a question or an observation on the topic/chapter that we are addressing that week. Your question is due on the Sunday before at 11:59pm.

- Project presentation “The future of Texas”: 10-minute group Powerpoint presentation, topic will be developed in class based on chapter 15 “Governing a changing Texas” of the textbook.

GRADING

Grading scale

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

Your grade will be comprised of:

- A) Three tests: 30%. Each test will make up 10% of your grade.
- B) Weekly chapter response: 20%
- C) Short research paper: 20%
- D) Weekly reading question/statement on D2L discussion board: 10%
- E) Presentation “The future of Texas”: 10%
- F) Participation: 10%
 - Participation grade profiles: A (98) volunteers frequently and is always well-prepared; B (89) volunteers sometimes and is often prepared; C (79) does not usually volunteer but is moderately prepared; D (69) does not volunteer and is generally poorly prepared; F (0) is consistently unprepared.

Attendance

Class attendance is required. You have three unexcused absences; each unexcused absence after the third will result in a two-point deduction in your participation grade. Excused absences require documentation.

Communication with the class

I will sometimes send you information through the D2L email. Please make sure to regularly check the email address that is connected to your D2L account.

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material or have other issues that you would like to discuss, please contact me. I am here to help!

Test policy

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 week after the exam. 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.

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 instructor's evaluation of your request and any supporting documentation.

WORK PLAN AND SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic	Readings (due each Monday)	Assignment
Week 1	8/25-8/31	Intro to the course Texas political culture		
Week 2	9/1-9/7 <i>9/1 Labor day, no class</i>	Texas in the federal system	Chapter 3	<i>Chapter question to be posted every Sunday by 11:59pm. Chapter response due every week on Wednesday in class.</i>
Week 3	9/8-9/14	The Texas Constitution	Chapter 2	
Week 4	9/15-9/21	Voting and elections	Chapter 6	
Week 5	9/22-9/28	How to write a research paper Test 1	Lecture BL	Test 1
Week 6	9/29-10/5	The Texas Legislature	Chapter 8	
Week 7	10/6-10/12	The Executive branch	Chapter 9	
Week 8	10/13-10/19	The Texas Judiciary	Chapter 10	
Week 9	10/20-10/26	Local government in Texas	Chapter 11	
Week 10	10/27-11/2	Interest groups in Texas	Chapter 7	Test 2
Week 11	11/3-11/9	Media and public opinion	Chapter 4	

Week 12	11/10–11/16	Criminal justice policies in Texas	Chapter 14	
Week 13	11/17-11/23	Other policy fields	Will be selected in class	
Week 14	11/24–11/30 <i>Thanksgiving, 11/28 no class.</i>	Governing a changing Texas	Chapter 15	Presentation “The future of Texas”
Week 15	12/1–12/7	Governing a changing Texas II Recap for test 3		Presentation “The future of Texas” Research paper due
Finals week				Test 3

TECHNOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Activities in this course will require the use of D2L Brightspace.
- Minimal Technology Required.
- PLEASE 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

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.

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>

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.

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

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.

AI Policy in this course

East Texas A&M University 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.

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 instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

For this course, students are prohibited from using AI to complete all assignments. Any use will result in a 0 for said assignment.

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.

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

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/campusservices/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 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/rulesProcedure/s/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.