



COURSE SYLLABUS
Texas Government

PSCI 2306-02W
SPRING 2026

January 12 to May 8, 2026
Dr. Barbara Laubenthal

THIS COURSE IS ONLINE

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

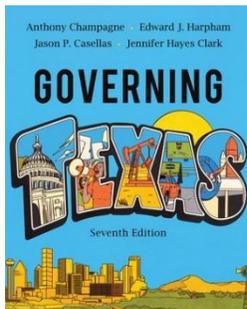
Instructor: Dr. Barbara Laubenthal

Office Hours: On zoom, Monday to Friday by appointment. Please send me an email if you would like to make an appointment.

Email: Barbara.Laubenthal@etamu.edu

COURSE INFORMATION

TEXTBOOK:



GOVERNING TEXAS

Authors: CHAMPAGNE, HARPHAM, CASELLAS

Edition: 7TH

Published Date: 2025

Publisher: NORTON

Recommended: You can buy the ebook with the InQuizitive feature that we will need here:

<https://digital.wwnorton.com/govtexas7>

(180 days access)

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 will use Announcements on D2L to post all relevant information for you, including deadlines. Please make sure to regularly check the announcements.

You can find each week's materials, tasks and assignments in the corresponding module on D2L.

Each week you will complete assigned readings, a short chapter response, a quiz, and you will complete periodic project milestones.

A detailed rubric for each assignment will be uploaded to D2L.

- I. **Three tests** (twenty multiple choice/true-false questions per test) A review sheet for each test will be posted one week prior to the exam. **Each test=10%.**

For schedule of tests see workplan. Each test will be open for one week, from Monday 8am to Sunday 11.59pm.

- II. **Weekly chapter response:** 150-200 words comment on a chapter of the textbook. You will receive a prompt for the chapter response. **15%**
The chapter response is due each week by Sunday 11:59pm.
- III. **Weekly quiz (InQuizitive) 15%**
- IV. **2 Current issue response papers** (300–500 words). **Each response=10%**
You will pick a “hot button” Texas issue (for example property taxes, redistricting, immigration enforcement, grid reliability) and explain what the state government is doing, what they think should happen, and what opponents are saying, with at least two cited sources.
- V. **Federalism brief.** This is your final paper for this course.
A 1000 words (+/- 10%) brief on Texas in the federal system, comparing, for example, the Texas Legislature and U.S. Congress, or the Texas and U.S. constitutions, or focusing on a policy issue and how federalism impacts it. Three sources, at least two from scholarly publications. **20%**

GRADING

Grading scale

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

Communication with the class

Please pay attention to my announcements on D2L and my emails to you through D2L. 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

Tests are open for 10 days. Makeup tests are possible in exceptional cases, and you will have to submit medical or other official documentation.

WORK PLAN AND SCHEDULE

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignment
Week 1	Texas political culture	Chapter 1	Each week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chapter response</i> • <i>Inquizitive Quiz</i>
Week 2	Texas in the federal system	Chapter 3	
Week 3	The Texas Constitution	Chapter 2	

Week 4	Voting and elections	Chapter 6	
Week 5	The Texas Legislature	Chapter 8	Test 1
Week 6	The Executive branch	Chapter 9	
Week 7	The Texas Judiciary	Chapter 10	Current issue paper 1 due
Week 8	Local government in Texas	Chapter 11	
Week 9	Political parties	Chapter 5	Test 2
Week 10	Interest groups	Chapter 7	
Week 11	Public Policy I	Chapter 13	
Week 12	Public Policy II	Chapter 13	
Week 13	Crime, Corrections and Public Safety	Chapter 14	Current Issue paper 2 due
Week 14	Media and public opinion	Chapter 4	
Week 15	Public finance	Chapter 12	Federalism brief due
Week 16	Governing a changing Texas	Chapter 15	
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.

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)

<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)

<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/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 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.