



EAST TEXAS A&M

UNIVERSITY

TEXAS GOVERNMENT PSCI 2306-04E Spring 2026

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Ferguson Social Sciences 148
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**Office Hours: T-Th 9.30 am-11.00 am
2.00 pm-3.00 pm
and by appointment**

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.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Jason P. Casellas, Anthony Champagne, Edward J. Harpham. 2023. *Governing Texas*, 6th Edition. W. W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 978-1324035107.

CLASSROOM RULES

- **Unless we assign a day to use technology as part of the learning process, use of personal electronic devices (cell phones, laptops, ipads, ipods, smartwatches, etc.) in class at any time is strictly forbidden. Use of electronic devices during class time will result in point deductions from your attendance grade.**
- **Except for group activities, speaking with people around you is not allowed.**
- **Coming to class late is not allowed. You will be considered absent if you arrive late more than 10 minutes after our class time.**
- **If you disrupt class or violate any of the classroom rules, you may be directed to leave the classroom immediately.**

FORMAT OF THE COURSE

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 daily.

Unit Name

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

Attendance & In-Class Activities: Attendance will be taken regularly. If you're found absent more than 3 times without an excuse, your final grade will automatically drop by "5 points" (e.g., if you earned 82 out of 100 in the end of the semester, your final grade would drop to 77). In-class activities are part of your final grade and will be offered in class randomly throughout the semester. Sleeping in class, side-talk with your neighbors, coming to class late, use of personal electronic devices and any other class disruptions (refer to classroom rules please) will result in significant deduction of points from your attendance/participation grade.

Quizzes: There will be 5 quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will consist of multiple-choice questions. Study guides will be available. Quiz dates can be found on the course schedule.

Final Exam: Final exam will be administered during the finals week. It will consist of multiple-choice questions and will be cumulative.

Debates: Throughout the semester, we will have two in-class debates based on topics related Texas politics. Debate topics will be posted on D2L at least two weeks before the debate date. Everyone will receive a performance grade for each debate based on participation. This will require a) being present in class during the debate; b) participate in the discussion with thoughtful comments. If you miss the class on a debate day, your performance grade will automatically be "0". Debate dates can be found on the course schedule.

Group Research Project: To complete this assignment, students will work in groups and identify a problem/issue related to Texas Government. A detailed guidelines and grading rubric for this assignment can be found on D2L. Students will do brief periodic presentations in class throughout the semester to demonstrate their progress and get feedback on their project. Final group presentations will take place during the last two weeks of the semester.

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GRADING

Course Requirements	Weight
Attendance	10%
In-Class Activities	10%
Quizzes	25% (5% each)
Debate Performance	15%
Group Research Project	30% (10% short presentations; 20% Final Presentation)
Final Exam	10%
Total	100%

GRADE SCALE

90-100 = A
80-90 = B
70-80 = C
60-70 = D
Below 60 =F

MAKE-UP POLICY

Make-ups are allowed under special circumstances such as medical or family emergencies. You are required to request your make-up prior to the deadline. Documentary proof for your request might be required based on the circumstances. Post-deadline late extension requests will not be granted. Post-deadline submission of assignments without an excuse will lead to loss of points.

CIVILITY AND RESPECT

All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. I expect everyone to be respectful of each other's perspectives and opinions during class discussions. Any behavior that disrupts the class or impedes other students' ability to fully engage with the course will not be tolerated.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student is required to be responsible for purposefully pursuing and honestly submitting research and work that is original and is the sole work of the individual. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism occurs when a student purposefully or unintentionally takes information directly from a source without proper citation. If you are unclear about the ethics of an academic action, please consult with me during my office hours.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

East Texas A&M 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 discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

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DISABILITY STATEMENT

The American 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 Gee Library Room 132 Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148 StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

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 34.06.02R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

- 1/13** Introduction to the course/Overview of the syllabus
- 1/15** The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas Governing Texas Ch 1

Week 2

- 1/20** The Texas Constitution Governing Texas Ch 2
- 1/22** The Texas Constitution (continued)

Week 3

- 1/27** Texas in the Federal System Governing Texas Ch 3
- 1/29** **Quiz 1**

Week 4

- 2/3** Political Parties Governing Texas Ch 4
- 2/5** **1st Group Presentations**

Week 5

- 2/10** Campaigns and Elections Governing Texas Ch 5
- 2/12** Campaigns and Elections (continued)

Week 6

- 2/17** **Debate 1**
- 2/19** **Quiz 2**

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Week 7

2/24 The Legislature Governing Texas Ch 7

2/26 The Legislature (continued)

Week 8

3/3 The Executive Branch Governing Texas Ch 8

3/5 **Quiz 3**

Week 9

Spring Break

Week 10

3/17 The Judiciary Governing Texas Ch 9

3/19 **2nd Group Presentations**

Week 11

3/24 **Debate 2**

3/26 **Quiz 4**

Week 11

3/31 Local Government Governing Texas Ch 10

4/2 **3rd Group Presentations**

Week 12

4/7 Local Government (continued)

4/9 **4th Group Presentations**

Week 13

4/14 Public Finance Governing Texas Ch 11

4/16 **Quiz 5**

Week 14

4/21 **Final Presentations**

4/23 **Final Presentations**

Week 15

4/28 **Final Presentations**

4/30 **Final Presentations**

Week 16

Finals Week

Final Exam Date TBA

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