



EAST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

PSCI 2306.A1E, A2E, A3E (22680) (22934) (22863) Texas Government COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2026 BA 256

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. I F-J A. von Neuhaus

Office Location: Social Science # 130

Office Hours: before/after class or...

Dept. Phone: (903) 886.5317

Office Fax: (903) 886.5318

University Email Address Frank.vonNeuhaus@etamu.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

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, Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, presentation & 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 before 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	25%
Papers (online) 2 papers	25%
Miscellaneous (online (Daily)	25%
Photo Essay (online)	25%
Total	100%

Late work: Usually unacceptable; however, points will be deducted.

Grading Policy

Grades are based on seven quizzes, two papers, misc. assignments and a photo essay project. Deadlines are deadlines, so make them. **The instructor has the discretion of final grades.**

Quizzes – (25%) seven quizzes, 3.57% each. The quizzes will be multiple-choice/true/false, 50 questions each; they are taken online. Several questions can be based strictly on classroom lectures, videos, etc. not covered in the study guides on each quiz. You need access to a computer and a flash drive.

***Papers-** (25%) Two papers, 12.5% each. Topics will be assigned. —There will be specific due dates. Stay with the instructions. Please contact a Reference and Learning Librarian for help at 903.886.5714.

Miscellaneous assignments (25%) (Daily) assignments of various themes.

Project / Photo Essay (25%) (Solo or Group Project). Choose a Texas theme.

- ❖ Some suggestions for the Photo Essay. 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 Party or Texas Democrat Party, 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 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 for 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.** You will summarize your topic in 500 to 750 words (2-3 pages (slides) in paragraph form.
- ❖ *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 presentation format, e.g., by PowerPoint, lecture, debate, panel discussion, or mock trial... Each group member will be assigned a specific task, and the group will decide that. 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 is working in groups (teamwork). If you join a group, and become deadweight, your group can expel you from the group, as you are no use to them*

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the my Leo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are the 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@etamu.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all coursework promptly and satisfactorily. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include having a backup PC at home or work, temporarily using a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, the East Texas A&M University campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Please contact your instructor if you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material.

Technical Support

If you have 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.eetamu.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>

East Texas A&M University Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy, please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).
<http://www.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

East Texas A&M University students 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.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Plagiarism Statement

Many think plagiarism is 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, .

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. 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@etamu.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.etamu.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom and 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 based on 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 carrying a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and possess 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 University Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

Please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus document and/or consult your event organizer for a list of locations.

Web url: <http://www.etamu.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 University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M University Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, located in the Halliday Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connections to student community resources. 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.etamu.edu/counsel

Department or Accrediting Agency Required Content Departmental Specific Procedures

Student Grievance Procedure

Students with concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor 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

To measure compliance with the accreditation, throughout the semester, I may collect some of the ungraded texts you produce solely for an assessment of program effectiveness, which 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 accessing missed content or completing missed assignments.

Important Dates:

12 January first class day
19 January, MLK, Jr. Holiday
09-13 März, Spring Break
01 May, Last Class Day
01 May, all missing work is due
04-08 May, Spring Finals Week 3-7 May

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR