

East Texas A&M University

PSCI 2306.04W Texas Government
SPRING 2026 - ONLINE

Instructor Information

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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.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

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.

Additionally, students will develop the following skills and responsibilities:

1. Critical Thinking—Students will be able to differentiate between fact and opinion.
2. Communications—Student Communication will be clear, purposeful, and make appropriate use of evidence, data and technology as applicable.
3. Personal Responsibility—Students will be able to understand their role in their own education.
4. Social Responsibility—Students will demonstrate awareness of societal and/or civic issues.

Required Textbooks and Materials

The required text for this course is: *Governing Texas Seventh Edition (2025)* by Harpham, Champagne, Casellas. ISBN: 978-1-324-08564-5 with InQuizitive Access Code (Required). While there are earlier editions of these texts available, this is the officially required edition. If you would like an alternative option to purchasing a hardcopy of the textbook, online ebooks can be purchased from the publisher's website. The ebooks can be purchased at <https://wwnorton.com/books/9781324085645>. The ISBN for the ebook is: *Governing Texas Seventh Edition (2025)* by Harpham, Champagne, Casellas. ISBN: 978-1-324-08571-3
The InQuizitive Access Code is required. If your book does not include an access code, you can purchase one through the publisher's website.

Course Requirements

All students are required to meet the following expectations:

1. Students are expected to complete all course readings as assigned for each section of the class. The assigned reading schedule is attached below and will be posted in the weekly schedule found on the course homepage through D2L.
2. Students are expected to access the course on a regular basis. You are responsible for checking the course for any announcements, updates, and changes that may be made throughout the semester.
3. Students are expected to complete all of the elements listed under **Grading and Evaluation** including Midterm Exams, Discussions, and Assignments.
4. Students are expected to be active on discussion boards and are required to participate.
5. Students are to be respectful in any and all correspondence for the course. Please use courtesy and respect when posting in any areas of the course such as the Discussion Boards and Student Lounge. Please refer to the Student Guidebook for more information on this subject.
6. Students are expected to use academic honesty and maintain the highest level of personal responsibility. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated! Please see the **Student Conduct & Discipline section** below for a detailed description on this subject and what is considered as academic dishonesty in this class. ***Any acts of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for that assignment and cannot be made up.

Grading and Evaluation

Examinations: 300 points. There will be three required midterm exams. All exams may include material from the textbook and other resources provided within the course. The scheduled dates for the exams will be posted within the course. Each exam will be worth 100 points. Details of each exam will be provided to you prior to taking the exam.

InQuizitive Assignments: 150 points. Students will be required to participate in external learning assignments on a weekly basis. Students will complete one InQuizitive Assignment per chapter for a total of 15 InQuizitive Assignments. Instructor will provide links for each of these assignments in the weekly module. Students must use the link provided in the course to access the assignments to ensure grades are transported to the course gradebook. InQuizitive is an adaptive quizzing tool that combines interactive question types with game-like elements to engage students. These assignments will focus on content and material related to the week's assigned reading. The due date for the InQuizitive Assignments will be posted in the course. Students are given ample time to complete these assignments and therefore there will be no make-up opportunities if for any reason the student fails to participate. No credit will be given for assignments submitted after the deadline.

Writing Assignments: 200 points. There will be one writing assignment that students will be required to complete. This assignment will be assigned within the course and will have a specific due date which will be made available to you in advance. Writing assignments must be submitted via the course Dropbox and must be submitted in a word compatible document. GoogleDocs and other document links are not allowed. All writing submissions will be submitted to Turnitin to check for plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to make certain the document is word compatible, if the instructor is unable to open the assignment, or if Turnitin cannot generate an originality score, the paper will not be graded and will result in a zero. Late assignments will only be accepted under extreme, verifiable circumstances and may be subject to penalty at the discretion of the instructor. The assignments will be posted, and instructions will be provided to you. Please do not ask for the assignments in advance.

Quizzes: 150 Points. Students will be required to take weekly quizzes. The quizzes will cover material from the chapter assigned for each week and may only be taken in the unit for which the chapter is assigned. If you miss a quiz, it cannot be made up. The quiz may only be taken once and must be completed at the time it is started, it may not be saved and resumed later.

React, Reflect, Review Assignments: 300 Points. This is a reading intensive course and you are expected to read each of the assigned chapters. In addition to reading, you will be required to submit three React, Reflect, and Review assignments, which will consist of ten entries each. You will be allowed to choose the topic for each entry, but each topic should come from one of the chapters assigned for the respective assignment. Specific information regarding the chapters assigned for each assignment will be posted in the course. Each entry should be at least 120 words, but you may find that your entries are longer and that is okay. You are encouraged to research material outside of the textbook to develop a deeper understanding of your topic. Each entry should be in your own words, paraphrasing is allowed, but you may not copy directly from any source. Works cited is not necessary. All assignments must be submitted to the assigned link within the course and must be submitted in a word compatible document. GoogleDocs and other document links are not allowed. Each submission will be submitted to Turnitin to check for plagiarism, this will happen automatically once the document has been uploaded. It is the student's responsibility to make certain the document is word compatible. If the instructor is unable to open the assignment, or if Turnitin cannot generate an originality score, the journal will not be graded and will result in a zero. If a blank document is submitted, it will be treated as a late assignment and will result in a zero. Late assignments will only be accepted under extreme, verifiable circumstances and may be subject to penalty at the discretion of the instructor. The assignments will be posted, and instructions will be provided to you. Please do not ask for the assignments in advance.

Module assignments: 300 Points. Throughout the course, students will engage in a diverse range of graded assignments designed to enhance their understanding and application of course material. Each assignment type is designed to develop different skills, from critical thinking and research to communication and collaboration. The grading criteria will be clearly outlined for each assignment, ensuring that students understand the expectations and can strive to meet them effectively. These assignments may include, but are not limited to the following:

Discussions: Active participation in class discussions is crucial. Students will be expected to contribute thoughtfully to online forums or in-class debates, demonstrating their grasp of the topics and their ability to engage with peers constructively.

Short Essays: These assignments will require students to articulate their thoughts clearly and concisely on specific topics. Essays should reflect critical thinking, coherent argumentation, and proper use of evidence to support claims.

Case Studies: Students will analyze real-world scenarios related to the course content. These assignments will involve identifying key issues, evaluating different perspectives, and proposing well-reasoned solutions.

Government Inquiry Assignments: These tasks will involve researching and analyzing government policies, legislative processes, or public administration issues. Students will be expected to present their findings in a structured format, demonstrating their ability to conduct thorough research and provide insightful analysis.

Introduction Discussion: 10 Bonus Points. Students are required to post a self-introduction post by the end of the second week of class.

Grading Schedule

Final grades will be based on a 980-point scale, using the following conversion.

A: 1260-1400 B: 1120-1259 C: 980-1119 D: 840-979 F: 0-839

Midterm Exams

Students are required to take three midterm exams. These exams will be taken on-line and will have a 60-minute time limit. Each exam will be open for **48 hours** and can only be accessed once. Exams will open at midnight on Friday and will close at 11:59 p.m. on Saturday during the week that the exam is scheduled.

- Midterm Exam One –
 - will cover Chapters 1, 2, 7, 8, 9

- Midterm Exam Two –
 - will cover Chapters 3, 10, 4, 5, 6

- Midterm Exam Three – ○ will cover Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

- Comprehensive Final –The Comprehensive is not required for all students. If you miss an exam, you are required to take the comprehensive final to replace the zero for the missed exam. If a student has taken all three midterms, the student has the option to take the comprehensive final to replace their lowest test grade. If the comprehensive final is taken as option, it will only count if it improves the student's grade.

Technical Issues

Students are required to take three midterm exams, which will be accessed through the course page. Students are responsible for testing the compatibility of their own computers and software prior to starting the exam and must be sure to have a high-speed internet connection to eliminate the chance of technical problems. Exams are timed and can only be accessed once. Exams cannot be paused once it has begun even if there is a sudden disconnection. Students are given the option to “Save Answers” and should do so frequently. Students should not click the “Submit Test” button until the exam has been completed. Once the student clicks the “Submit Test” the exam will be closed and cannot be re-entered. Any technical problems that occur while taking the exam should be immediately referred to the help desk. Students who encounter technical problems as a result of failing to comply with these guidelines will not be given an opportunity re-take or re-access an exam.

Additional Course & Instructor Policies

Make-up exams/Assignments: No individual make-up examinations will be given if a student fails to take the exam during the time it is scheduled. If a student misses an exam, that student will receive a grade of 0 for the exam. If a student misses an exam, they would be required to take the Comprehensive Final to make up that grade. Late assignments will not be accepted if a student fails to submit by the assigned due date. If a student misses an assignment deadline that student will receive a grade of 0 for the assignment. A student may be allowed to take an exam or submit an assignment after the date only under extreme, verifiable circumstances and may be subject to penalty at the discretion of the instructor. Any request for a make-up exam or late

assignment submission must be submitted via email and must include documentation explaining why the missed exam/assignment was legitimate. Such a request must be received within 3 calendar days of the missed exam date or assignment due date, unless the student is physically unable to submit such a request. Legitimate reasons may include illness severe enough to require professional treatment, death in the immediate family, participation in official University activities and legal obligations. *Please note, these reasons do not guarantee that a make-up exam will be given.*

Extra Credit: There is no extra credit in this class so please do not ask about it. At times, you may be given the opportunity to receive extra points on exams. These will be given at the instructor's discretion and are not a guarantee.

University Policy Regarding COVID-19

Please refer to the following website for the university's Fall 2022 COVID-19 Management and Guidance Plans.

<https://www.tamuc.edu/campusrec/covid-19-guide/>

Additional information regarding student health services can be found on the following website.

<https://www.tamuc.edu/student-health-services/?source=universalmenu>

Student Conduct & Discipline

The University has rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of business. It is the responsibility of each student to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the student handbook.

I expect all students to maintain the highest level of personal responsibility and academic honesty which is discussed in East Texas A&M University Procedures A13.12 Academic Honesty. "Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material."

Academic dishonesty affects all individuals at the University and accordingly will not be tolerated. For this class, academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic work. Any attempts to pass off work as your own that was written by another individual, without proper citation or attribution, on any assignment or exam in this course will be considered an act of plagiarism. Any and all instances of academic dishonesty will be referred to the appropriate offices on campus and may result in significant penalties.

All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

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. Any use of such software

must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

The use of artificial intelligence tools, including but not limited to ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, and any other generative AI programs is strictly prohibited in this course. All assignments, exams, discussions, and written work must reflect your own original thinking, analysis, and writing. Submitting work generated in whole or in part by AI tools will be considered a violation of academic integrity and may result in penalties as outlined in the course syllabus and institutional policy. Students are expected to complete all coursework independently and without the assistance of AI-generated content.

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 University 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 following Carrying Concealed Handguns on Campus document and/or consult your event organizer.

<https://inside.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 University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Students with Disabilities

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

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu

Non-Discrimination Notice:

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 from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Technology:

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

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

In addition to reliable web service on a daily basis for your online sessions, you also need access to Microsoft Word or to word processing software that you can save files in “Microsoft Word” compatible style. You also need a reliable place to save and keep copies of your coursework files for storage and reference. You also need the following to use technology successfully in this course.

- Internet access/connection – high speed recommended (not dial-up)
- Internet browser software (Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox work best)
- Word Processor (MS Word)

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

This course uses D2L Brightspace, the Learning Management System used by East Texas A&M University. To get started with the course, go to:

<https://leoportal.tamuc.edu/uPortal/f/welcome/normal/render.uP> You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Email is the very best way to reach me. In every email, please make sure to provide your full name at the end, which course you are enrolled in, and a description of your request. I will communicate with you through the email address you have on file in MyLeo (make sure yours is up to date and working throughout the semester) and D2L announcements. In all forms of class communication including all online forums, students are expected and required to maintain a respectful tone and use semiformal to formal language.

MyLeo Student Technical Support

East Texas A&M University provides students technical support in the use of MyLeo. The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Chat Support: Click on '*Live Support*' on the tool bar within your course to chat with a MyLeo Representative.

Phone: 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with MyLeo Technical Support Representative.

Email: helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with MyLeo Technical Support Representative.

Help: Click on the *'Help'* button on the toolbar for information regarding working with MyLeo

Technological Failure:

If at any time you experience technical problems (e.g., you can't log in to the course, you can't see certain material, etc.) please contact the D2L HelpDesk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The HelpDesk can be reached by clicking on the HelpDesk link in the Help pages as described above, or by sending an email directly to helpdesk@online.tamuc.org. You may also reach the HelpDesk by calling (toll-free) 1-866-656-5511.” This information is also available through the “Technical Support” tab on the course main menu. Course instructors are not responsible for technical failures and should only be notified in cases of repeated failure or lack of response by the HelpDesk.

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to change any part of this syllabus as needed over the course of the semester. Any and all changes will be announced.