

Course: Government 2306, Texas Government

Instructor: Bob Bilodeau

Office: Reese Center, Building 3, Room 316 C

Office Phone: 894-9611 Ext. 2464

E-Mail: Blackboard e-mail system. I will try to respond to student inquiries as soon as possible and within 24 hours.

**Statement of the SPC Social Science Department's
Government/Political Science Division for
GOVT 2306 Common Course Syllabus**

*(As required by the Texas Legislature and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
and approved by Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and SPC)*

Department: Social Sciences

Discipline: Government

Course Number: GOVERNMENT 2306

Course Title: Texas Government (Texas Constitution and Topics)

Credit: 3 Lecture, 0 Lab

Satisfies a core curriculum requirement? Yes, Social Science and ALL Undergraduate Degrees

Prerequisites: TSI compliance in Reading

Available Formats: Conventional, INET, ITV

Campus: Levelland, Reese, ATC, Plainview

Textbook: Varies according to instructor Refer to each instructor's instructions for textbook requirements.

Course Specific Instructions: Each instructor will attach his/her course with specific instructions.

Course Description: This course is a study of the functions performed in the American system of state governments, with special reference to the development of governance in Texas and its Constitutions. This course satisfies the Legislative requirements for teacher certification.

Course Purpose: Government 2306, as taught at South Plains College, is a reading intensive course designed to acquaint the learner with 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. This course meets the statutory requirements as set forth by the state of Texas.

Approval Number: 45.1002.51 25

Course Requirements: To maximize a student's potential to complete this course, he/she should attend all class meetings, complete all homework assignments and examinations in a timely manner, and complete all other projects or papers as assigned in the instructor's specific instructions.

Course Evaluation: See the instructor's course information sheet for specific items used in evaluating student performance.

Attendance Policy: Whenever absences become excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course. Each instructor will have additional information about attendance on his/her course information sheet.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students who have completed this course will:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas Constitution.
2. Demonstrate and understanding of 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. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.

Fundamental Component Areas (FCA):

Students will be expected to perform satisfactorily in four FCA.

1. Critical Thinking Skills – to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information by:
 - a. Generating and communicating ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information,
 - b. Gathering and assessing information relevant to a question,
 - c. Analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information.
2. Communication – to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral or visual communication by:

Developing, interpreting, and expressing ideas through written, oral, or visual communication.
3. Social Responsibility Skills – to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively I regional, national, and global communities by:
 - a. Demonstrating intercultural competence,
 - b. Identifying civic responsibility,
 - c. Engaging in regional, national, and global communities.
4. Personal Responsibility – to include the ability to connect choices, action, and consequences to ethical decision-making by:
 - a. Reading, understanding and affirming agreement and acceptance of principles, guidelines and requirements set forth in the “Statement of Personal Responsibility of Students” (Attached)

- b. Evaluating choices and actions and relating consequences to personal decision-making
- c. Accepting personal responsibility for decisions and actions taken or not taken

Government 2306 Online Course Syllabus

Read carefully the entire syllabus below. When you have completed reading the syllabus send me an e-mail (through the course Blackboard e-mail) stating, "I have read the entire syllabus and agree to follow all of its requirements." Then state your name at the bottom of the e-mail. By sending me an e-mail, you will be held to all the requirements stated in the syllabus. The syllabus agreement is essential for me to know that you understand the rules of this course.

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Text: Cal Jillson, *Texas Politics: Governing the Lone Star State, 6th Edition*.

Purpose: The object of this course is to give the student a better understanding of Texas government. This course will focus on Texas in the federal system, the Texas Constitution, voting and elections, political parties, the Texas legislature, the Texas governor and the executive branch, the Texas judiciary, law and due process, public policy, and local government.

Nondiscrimination Policy: It is the policy of South Plains College and this instructor not to discriminate on the basis of age, race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.

Students with Disabilities: If a student believes that he or she has a disability that requires special accommodations, that student should contact the Special Services Coordinator.

Course Methodology

This is a reading intensive course. All of your tests and assignments will involve reading comprehension. Before you begin a test, I encourage you to read the required material very carefully. Many students believe reading includes only the physical act of looking at the words on the page. In reading, they believe that they can skim the material in the quickest possible fashion and still retain all of the information covered in the material. **I highly discourage this practice! It will lead to your failure in this course!**

Instead, I encourage you to read each chapter at least **twice** before taking a chapter test. In addition, I suggest that you read the material slowly, for comprehension, and outline the material as you complete the reading. After a more careful reading of the material, you will have a better understanding of the material and be better prepared to complete the chapter tests.

Exams and Grading

1. **Exams:** You will have 9 chapter tests. The best 8 scores will be counted towards your grade (your lowest test score will be dropped). Each test will have 25 multiple choice and true/false questions worth 4 points a piece, for a total of 100 points. Check your Test Schedule for the assigned test dates. You must take the test by 11:59 PM on the assigned date. Otherwise, you will receive a **zero** for the test. All tests will be timed, just as if you were in class, so make sure you know the material before you take the test. You will not have time to look for the correct answer in the book. Tests will last 25 minutes.

Note carefully: once you click on “Begin” you must complete the test in its entirety. Please be sure to click on the save button after you answer each question. Otherwise, your answer will not be saved, and you will receive no credit for that question. If the test is not completed within the allotted time, you will receive a zero for that grade. Please do not wait until the last second to click “Save and Submit” for the test. Students, who have tried this, have found that the computer will not accept their test.

Computer malfunctions happen. If you have a computer malfunction during a test, it is considered an incomplete test, and I will use your one drop for that test. **There are no make-up exams.**

All tests are available on the first day of class. Any test may be taken before the scheduled test date, but no test may be taken after the scheduled test date.

2. **Grading:**

- a. You will have 9 tests each worth 100 points.
- b. Your grade will be an average of the best 8 tests.
- c. Grading scale: A = 100-90, B = 89-80, C = 79-70, D = 69-60 & F = below 60
- d. Exams will not be curved.
- e. There will be no extra credit points to improve a score on a test or a final grade.

Chapters for Reading Tests: You will take a test on the following 9 chapters. See your Test Schedule for the test dates. **Test may be taken before the assigned test date, but not after.** Anyone failing to take a test by the assigned date will receive a **zero** for that test score.

Chapter 1 – Texas and the Texans: Then and Now

Chapter 2 – The Texas Constitution and American Federalism

Chapter 3 – Political Participation in Texas: Voters, Campaigns and Elections

Chapter 5 – Political Parties in Texas

Chapter 6 – The Texas Legislature

Chapter 7 – The Governor and the Executive Branch

Chapter 8 – The Judicial System in Texas

Chapter 9 – Local Government in Texas

Chapter 10 – Financing State Government: Budgets, Revenues, and Expenses

For technical support contact: blackboard@southplainscollege.edu or call 806-716-2180
(They are much better than I am at solving computer problems.)

Student Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student to make sure all tests have been completed by their due date. Any test not completed by the due date automatically receives a zero. Computer problems or mechanical failures will not be accepted as an excuse for late tests or assignments. You are highly encouraged not to wait until the last minute to complete tests. Technical and personal problems are not considered acceptable excuses for late tests, since you are able to take your tests well in advance of the final test date.