



Course Syllabus

GOVT 2306 – TEXAS GOVERNMENT

Catalog Description: 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.

Prerequisites: None

Semester Credit Hours: 3

Lecture Hours per Week: 3

Lab Hours per Week: 0

Contact Hours per Semester: 48

State Approval Code: 45.1002.51 25

Class Section Meeting Time:

Core Components and Related College Student Learning Outcomes

This course counts as part of the academic requirements of the Panola College Core Curriculum and an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree. Yes No: If no, skip to Instructional Goals.

The items below marked with an X reflect the state-mandated outcomes for this course **IF this is a CORE course:**

- Critical Thinking Skills – to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry and analysis, evaluation and syntheses of information
 - CT1: Generate and communicate ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information
 - CT2: Gather and assess information relevant to a question
 - CT3: Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information
- Communication Skills – to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
 - CS1: Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written communication
 - CS2: Develop, interpret, and express ideas through oral communication
 - CS3: Develop, interpret, and express ideas through visual communication
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills – to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
 - EQS1: Manipulate and analyze numerical data and arrive at an informed conclusion
 - EQS2: Manipulate and analyze observable facts and arrive at an informed conclusion
- Teamwork – to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
 - TW1: Integrate different viewpoints as a member of a team
 - TW2: Work with others to support and accomplish a shared goal

- Personal Responsibility – to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making
 - PR1: Evaluate choices and actions and relate consequences to decision-making
- Social Responsibility – to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
 - SR1: Demonstrate intercultural competence
 - SR2: Identify civic responsibility
 - SR3: Engage in regional, national, and global communities

Instructional Goals and Purposes:

The purpose of this course is to serve as an introduction into the Texas political system.

Learning Outcomes: [from the ACGM catalog]

After studying all materials and resources presented in the course, the student will be able to:

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.

Course Content:

A general description of lecture/discussion topics included in this course are listed in the Learning Objectives section of this syllabus.

Students in all sections of this course will learn the following content:

1. Introduction to Texas Government
2. The Texas Constitution
3. The Texas Legislature
4. Legislative Organization and Process
5. Texas Governors
6. The Plural Executive and Bureaucracy in Texas
7. Texas Judicial System
8. Texas Justice
9. Campaigns and Elections in Texas
10. Political Parties
11. Interest Groups
12. Local Government in Texas
13. Fiscal Policy
14. Education and Social Policy
15. Energy, Environment, Transportation, and Immigration

Methods of Instruction/Course Format/Delivery:

This class will convey the course material through lectures, discussions, primary/secondary documents, guest speakers, instructional videos and PowerPoint presentations. Reciprocally, students are expected to take notes, listen proactively, ask questions, conduct service learning, and read the textbook.

Major Assignments / Assessments:

The following items will be assigned and assessed during the semester and used to calculate the student's final grade.

Assignments

1. Unit exams will be administered over textbook chapters, assigned readings, and lecture material. The number and style of the exams may vary based upon the instructor and the length of the course. The exams will measure the students' comprehension of the course material.
2. Service learning will constitute a main portion of the class grade. The purpose of service learning is to bring practical application of the course material into daily life. The full extent of service learning assignments may be determined by the instructor and vary based upon the length of the course.
3. Weekly assignments will be administered during the semester. The assignments will cover the textbook chapters, assigned readings, and lecture material. The number and style of assignments will vary based upon the length of the semester and the individual instructor. Collectively, the assignments make up a main portion of the final grade as they ensure students are engaging the material and preparing for the exams.
4. The attendance of all students will be recorded and used in the determination of the final class grade. Attendance records will measure a student's for completing the course material.

Assessment(s):

1. Students must demonstrate their dedication to being responsible citizens by passing a comprehensive exam on the essentials of Texas government.
2. Students must demonstrate their ability to think critically about government participating in a class discussion on a modern political issue.
3. Students must demonstrate their ability to reasonably communicate ideas about current political issues by writing a letter to an elected official.
4. Students must demonstrate their personal responsibility by regularly attending class throughout the semester.

Assessment and Assignment Rules

1. **Academic Freedom and Instructor Discretion:** The government department recognizes the necessity of academic freedom. As such, each instructor maintains the right to stipulate rules in addition to this syllabus concerning assignments, make-up work, grading rubrics, classroom recordings, attendance policies, extra credit, and any other matters within the individual class offerings. All of the supplemental rules must be made available to the students at the start of the semester or in advance of the completion of individual assignments.
2. **Academic Freedom and Code of Etiquette:** The government department recognizes the right of the instructor and the students to address controversial subjects. This right to academic freedom is recognized as the principle by which truth may be pursued. Consequently, the department firmly upholds the right of instructors and students to appropriately express in writing or conversation their understanding, opinions, and knowledge on controversial subjects. No student's grade shall be diminished because of an appropriately expressed political opinion. However, the freedom of speech does not act as an excuse for inappropriate language or behavior as it is possible to freely discuss controversial issues without being obscene. Obscenity consists of language and behavior that lacks academic value, is repugnant to the standards of classroom etiquette, and/or contains libel or slander. Moreover, the freedom of speech does not act as an excuse for violating standards of academic honesty or poor performance on assignments. The instructor and the college reserve the right to remove students from the class and hold disciplinary actions in accord with college policy for obscene language or behavior.
3. **Academic Honesty:** The central theme of education is the enlightenment of the mind. This can only be achieved by hard, honest work. Consequently, cheating and plagiarism are strictly prohibited in the course. A student must not receive from or give to any other student information, answers, or help during an exam. A student must not "steal" answers from an unsuspecting student during an exam. A student must not use any sources for answers during an exam (including, but not limited to notes, books, or electronic devices) without prior authorization from the professor. A student must not obtain exam questions illegally, tamper with the exam questions, nor change the results of an exam after it has been graded. Moreover, students are prohibited from plagiarizing any assignments. Plagiarism consists in the taking of another person's ideas, words, or information and claiming those properties as one's own. Properly quoting and citing borrowed information is NOT

plagiarism. However, since academic integrity is based on the originality of a student's work, no student may submit an assignment that contains an excessive amount of properly cited material. The standards and violations of academic honesty shall be further defined by the individual instructor (in accord with college policy). Individual instructors reserve the right to employ any ample means for proving academic dishonesty. Students have the right to contest a plagiarism or cheating claim through the college appeals process.

Course Grade:

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

- Exams – 70%
- Service Learning – 15%
- Weekly Assignments – 15%
- Attendance (all students are required to attend/complete 80% of the class to receive a passing grade)

Grade Distribution

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 59 or below

Texts, Materials, and Supplies:

- K. Collier, S. Galatas, and J. Harrelson-Stephens, *Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation in Texas*, 5th Edition. CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1506373621
- Other Reading Articles may be distributed at the instructor's discretion

Required Readings:

- The textbook

Recommended Readings:

- The Texas Constitution (1876)
- The Texas Declaration of Independence

Other:

- For current texts and materials, use the following link to access bookstore listings: <http://www.panolacollegestore.com>
- For testing services, use the following link: <http://www.panola.edu/elearning/testing.html>
- If any student in this class has special classroom or testing needs because of a physical learning or emotional condition, please contact the ADA Student Coordinator in Support Services located in the Administration Building or go to <http://www.panola.edu/student-success/disability-support-services/> for more information.
- Withdrawing from a course is the student's responsibility. Students who do not attend class and who do not withdraw will receive the grade earned for the course.
- Student Handbook, *The Pathfinder*: <http://www.panola.edu/student-success/documents/pathfinder.pdf>