

Government 2306

State and Local Politics: Texas

Fall 2015

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972-883-6729

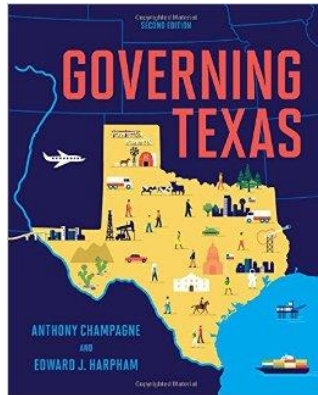
harpham@utdallas.edu

GC 2.204

Class time: MW 8:30-9:45

Location: GC 1.208b

Office Hours: M 11:00-12:00 and by appointment



Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions: none. This is a Collegium V Honors Course and requires permission of the instructor to enroll.

Course Description: This honors readings course will involve an in-depth study of politics and government in Texas. It meets one portion of the core state requirement in government.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes: Upon completing the class, students will be able to

- 1) Explain the role that the Texas Constitution plays in shaping governmental institutions and politics.
- 2) Explain and assess the place of Texas in the federal system of government in the United States.
- 3) Describe the way in which the legislative, executive and judicial branches work and affect public policy in Texas
- 4) Identify the demographic and economic challenges that face state and local government in Texas today and suggest solutions to these problems

The course will address the following core objectives through class meetings, assignments, and exams:

- **Critical Thinking Skills** - including creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
- **Communication Skills** - including effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
- **Social Responsibility**: including intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
- **Personal Responsibility** – including the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

Required Textbooks and Materials:

Anthony Champagne and Edward J. Harpham, *Governing Texas: An Introduction to Texas Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2012.

Other reading will be available through elearning. Note that electronic readings do not need to be printed, just read online.

Other Recommended Readings:

Texas Almanac 2014-2015: in CV lounge.

Texas Almanac 1857-2013: <http://www.texasalmanac.com/>

Texas Tribune: <https://www.texastribune.org/>

Dallas Morning News: <http://www.dallasnews.com/>

Houston Chronicle: <http://www.chron.com/>

Austin American Statesman: <http://www.statesman.com/>

Texas Observer: <http://www.texasobserver.org/>

Texas Monthly: <http://www.texasmonthly.com/>

The Handbook of Texas online: <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook>

Texas Legislative Budget Board: <http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/>

Texas Constitution: <http://www.constitution.legis.state.tx.us/>

Amendments to the Texas Constitution:

<http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/pubsconamend/constamend1876.pdf>

Texas Statutes: <http://www.constitution.legis.state.tx.us/>

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Background

August 24: Introduction to the Study of Texas politics and government

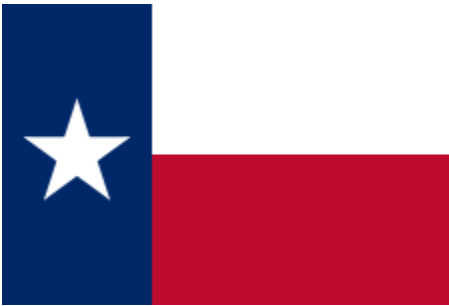
The Capitol Building: <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ccc01>



The State Capitol (1886)
The Goddess of Liberty (1886)



The State Capitol (2014)



The Lone Star Flag: originally adopted January 25, 1839.



The State Seal

Seal obverse: The Seal of the State shall be a star of five points, encircled by olive and live oak branches, and the words, "The State of Texas." (Constitutional provision)

Reverse side: [T]he design for the reverse side of the Great Seal of Texas shall consist of a shield, the lower half of which is divided into two parts; on the shield's lower left is a depiction of the cannon of the Battle of Gonzales; on the shield's lower right is a depiction of Vince's Bridge; on the upper half of the shield is a depiction of the Alamo; the shield is circled by live oak and olive branches, and the unfurled flags of the Kingdom of France, the Kingdom of Spain, the United Mexican States, the Republic of Texas, the Confederate States of America, and the United States of America; above the shield is emblazoned the motto, "REMEMBER THE ALAMO", and beneath the shield are the words, "TEXAS ONE AND INDIVISIBLE"; over the entire shield, centered between the flags, is a white five-pointed star. (Statutory provision)

Culture, Demographics and Economy in the Lone Star State

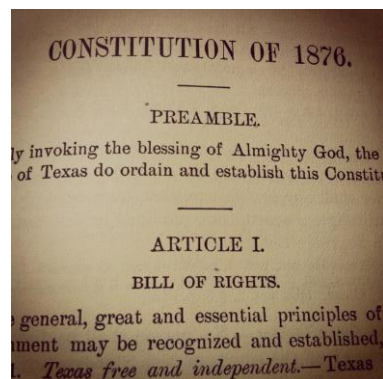
August 26 and 31:

Read:

- 1) Champagne and Harpham: Chapter 1
- 2) *Fiscal Sizeup* (elearning), pp. 48-68

Constitutionalism

September 2, 9 and 14: The Constitutions. No class on September 7.



Read:

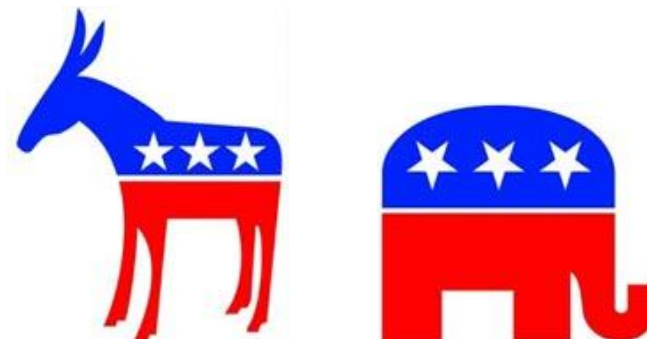
- 1) Champagne and Harpham Chapter 2
 - 2) Champagne and Harpham Appendix
 - 3) Texas Constitution:
<http://www.constitution.legis.state.tx.us/>
 - 4) Amendments to the Texas Constitution:
<http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/pubsconamend/constamend1876.pdf>
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September 16: Texas and the Federal System

- 1) Champagne and Harpham Chapter 3

Politics

September 21 and 23: Political Parties in Texas



Read:

- 1) Champagne and Harpham Chapter 4
- 2) Republican state platform

3) Democratic state platform

Websites:

Republican Party Website: <http://www.texasgop.org/>

History: <http://www.texasgop.org/about-the-party/overview-and-history/>

Platform: <http://www.texasgop.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/2014-Platform-Final.pdf>

Democratic Party Website: <http://www.txdemocrats.org/>

Platform: <http://txdemocrats.bytrilogy.com/pdf/2014-Platform.pdf>

Third Parties:

Libertarian Party: <https://www.lptexas.org/>

Platform: <https://www.lptexas.org/state-platform>

September 28: Elections in Texas Part I



Read: Champagne and Harpham Chapter 5

Websites:

Texas Secretary of State:

<http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/index.shtml>

Elections Results:

<http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/historical/index.shtml>

September 30: Guest Speaker

October 5: Interest Groups in Texas

Read: Champagne and Harpham Chapter 6



October 7: REVIEW AND CATCHUP

October 14: First exam



The Institutions of Texas Government

October 12 and 19: The Texas Legislature



State House of Representatives (2014)



State Senate (2014)

Read:

- 1) Champagne and Harpham Chapter 7**
- 2) Texas Constitution Article 3 elearning**
- 3) The Senate Rules (1845) elearning**
- 4) The Senate Rules (2013) elearning**
- 5) The House Rules (1845) elearning**
- 6) The House Rules (2013) elearning**

- 7) Texas Legislature online: <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>**

October 21 and 26: The Plural Executive



Read: Champagne and Harpham Chapter 8

October 28: The Texas Judiciary





Read Champagne and Harpham Chapter 9

November 2: Local Government in Texas

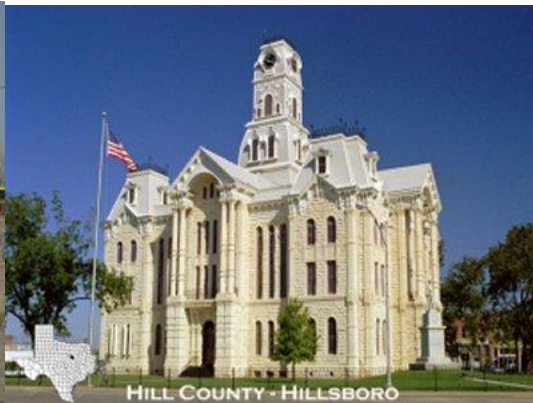


Read Champagne and Harpham Chapter 10

November 4: Local Government (again)



Loving County

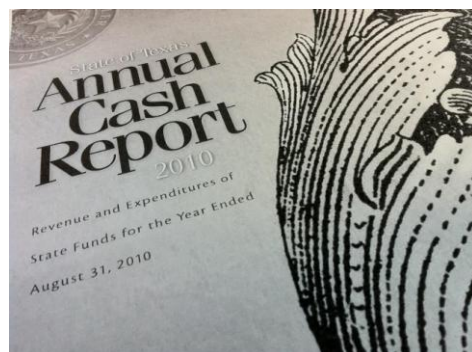


Hill County

November 9: Guest Speaker

Taxes and Public Policy in Texas

November 11: Public Finance in Texas

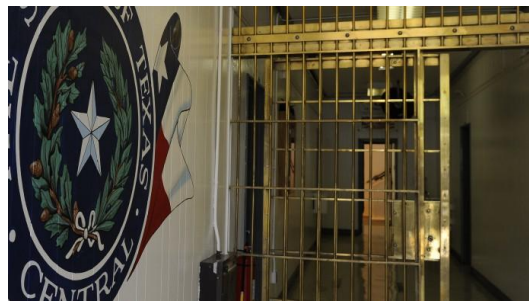


Read Champagne and Harpham Chapter 11
Read *Fiscal Sizeup* (elearning), pp. 1-48

November 16: Crime and Corrections Policy in Texas



Texas Rangers Company B (1880)



Texas Corrections Institution

Read:

- 1) Champagne and Harpham Chapter 13**
- 2) *Fiscal Sizeup*: (elearning), pp. 357-400**

November 18: Education Policy and Welfare Policy

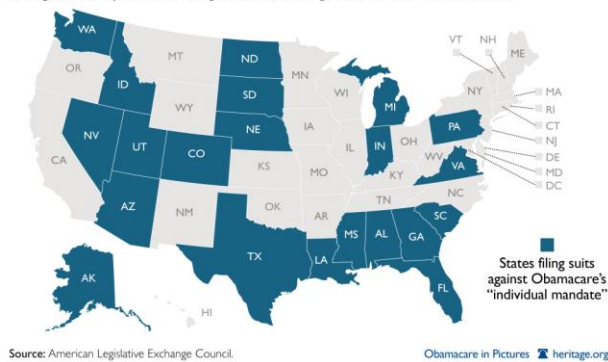


Read: Champagne and Harpham Chapter 14, pp. 384-402
***Fiscal Sizeup* (elearning), pp. 227-32 pp. 222-25**

November 30: Healthcare Policy and Water Policy

States: Obamacare is unconstitutional

The Attorneys General of 21 states have filed suits to protect their citizens from being forced by the federal government to purchase health insurance.



Read Champagne and Harpham Chapter 14, pp. 403-421
***Fiscal Sizeup*, pp. 161-169; 211-221; 458-466.**

December 2: Review



December 7: Second exam



Grading Policy:

Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material. There are a total of 200 points that can be earned over the semester:

- In-class participation is worth 20 points of the final grade. Students receive 0.5 points for every class attended for a total of 12 points. They will also receive up to 5 points for contributions to class and 3 points for contributions to “guest classes”.
- Students are allowed one unexcused absence and are expected to make up material missed in the course. Missing classes will result in a 2 point penalty after the first unexcused absence.
- There will be 2 in-class exams, each worth 80 points, for a total of 160 points.

- Periodic quizzes will be conducted at the beginning of select classes for a total of 20 points. 2 of these quizzes will on the speakers visiting our classes.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.