

GOVT 2306.002: State and Local Government

Spring 2021 MWF 10:00 - 10:50 am

Class Room: Online via MS Teams

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Office Hours:	In-Person: MW 9:00 - 9:50 am Online: TuTh 1:00 - 2:00 pm	Online: F 9:00 - 11:00 am; 4:00 - 4:00 pm
Office:	GR 3.826	

Course Modality

Instructional Mode

This course is presented as a remote/virtual modality, which involves synchronous online learning at the day and time of the class. The instructor delivers the instruction from home or the office. Students complete the course at a distance.

Course Platform

This course will utilize MS Teams to broadcast lectures synchronously and MS Stream to access lectures asynchronously. Assignments will be submitted through appropriate sections on eLearning.

Course Description

This course serves as an introduction to the study of politics and political institutions in state and local government. It includes the origin and development of the Texas Constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and intergovernmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas. The goal is for you to think critically and logically about the functions of local governments and how they impact your lives.

Required Materials

- TopHat Classroom Subscription (978-0-9866151-0-8) **NOTE: you must sign up using your UTD email address in the abc111000@utdallas.edu format**
- Governing Texas (ISBN: 978-0-393-68012-6) 4th edition by Champagne, Harpham, & Casellas; **You do NOT need to purchase InQuizitive**
- Additional readings are required and will be provided by the professor and posted in eLearning. It is also important that students remain up to date on current political events

in the US. Current events should be monitored using major newspapers and television news sources.

Course Objectives

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 in Texas.

Grading Criteria

Components

There are THREE major graded components for this course:

1. 3 Exams (20% each; 60% total)
2. Quizzes: highest 10 of 12 total (3% each; 30% total)
3. Active Participation (10%)

Grading Policy

A: 94-100	A-: 90-93	
B+: 87-89	B: 84-86	B-: 80-83
C+: 77-79	C: 74-76	C-: 70-73
D+: 67-69	D: 64-66	D-: 60-63
F: 00-59		

NOTE: Point values are final. Final calculations of grades will be rounded following normal rounding rules. However, final grades will not be "bumped" even if a student is one (1) point away from the next grade level.

Exams

The three exams will be given on the dates noted in the course calendar below and will be accessible via eLearning. The test will be available for the full 24 hours of the day it is scheduled. Each test will have a 75 minute time limit and must be completed in one sitting. If you save and close your exam, your timer will continue to run. A portion of the questions for the exam will come directly from the chapter reading assignments and the remainder will come from lecture notes, so class attendance is vital to your success. The three exams are open book and open note and will cover the material from each unit only (not comprehensive). The exams are to be completed independently from other students and the questions are randomized so there is no advantage to collaborating.

The only makeup exam for this course is the Final Exam. If you miss an exam for any reason you will take the final exam during the time period assigned by the University. The final exam may only replace one missed exam. If you miss more than one, the others will be graded as 0. The final exam may NOT be taken to raise the grade of another exam. The final exam will be comprehensive of the course and significantly longer. Plan your semester accordingly.

Quizzes

Quizzes will be taken via eLearning and are due by 11:59PM on the date listed in the course calendar below. Each quiz will open approximately three days before it is due to provide ample time to complete. Each quiz will also have a one hour time limit once it has been started. Please ensure you plan enough time to complete each quiz.

There are no makeup for missed quizzes. If you miss one it will be graded as a 0. I will drop your two lowest quiz grades, but if you miss more than two your grade for each subsequent missed quiz will remain graded as 0. Even though each quiz is only 3% of your grade, it is important to take them seriously as a significant portion of your exam questions comes directly from them. They also work as an excellent review for the exams.

Active Participation

Regular class participation is expected regardless of course modality. Students who fail to participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. A portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class. It also includes engaging in group or other activities during class that solicit your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures (and/or labs). Class participation is documented by faculty. Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to University requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Active participation in the course will be tracked using a variety of methods to accommodate both synchronous and asynchronous students. I am able to see the number of times you access each lecture recording and how long you spend watching each one. Additionally, discussion questions or discussion boards will be presented in class during lectures from time to time. These questions or boards will be presented in the TopHat Classroom app and are answered there as well. Synchronous students (both in-person and remote) will answer during that time.

Asynchronous students will have until Friday at 11:59 pm to respond to all questions presented each week.

Course Calendar

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. This schedule below should be viewed as the key concepts you should grasp after each week, and also as a study guide before each exam, and at the end of the semester. Each exam will test on the material that was taught up until the exam. Concepts tend to build on each other throughout the semester though, so it is still important to at least review earlier concepts throughout the semester.

Week 01, 01/18 - 01/22: Introduction to course

- 1/20 Syllabus review
- 1/22 Governing Texas CH1 - The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas

Week 02, 01/25 - 01/29:

- 1/25 Governing Texas CH1 - The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas
- 1/27 Governing Texas CH1 - The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas
- 1/29 Governing Texas CH1 - The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas
 - Quiz 1 due

Week 03, 02/01 - 02/05:

- 2/1 Governing Texas CH2 - The Texas Constitution
- 2/3 Governing Texas CH2 - The Texas Constitution
- 2/5 Governing Texas CH2 - The Texas Constitution
 - Quiz 2 due

Week 04, 02/08 - 02/12:

- 2/8 Governing Texas CH3 - Texas in the Federal System
- 2/10 Governing Texas CH3 - Texas in the Federal System
- 2/12 US v Lopez decision
 - Quiz 3 due

Week 05, 02/15 - 02/19:

- 2/15 Governing Texas CH 11 - Public Finance
- 2/17 Governing Texas CH 11 - Public Finance
 - Quiz 4 due
- 2/19 Exam 1

Week 06, 02/22 - 02/26:

- 2/22 Governing Texas CH7 - The Legislature
- 2/24 Governing Texas CH7 - The Legislature
- 2/26 Governing Texas CH7 - The Legislature
 - Quiz 5 due

Week 07, 03/01 - 03/05:

- 3/1 Governing Texas CH 8 - The Executive Branch
- 3/3 Governing Texas CH 8 - The Executive Branch
- 3/5 Governing Texas CH 8 - The Executive Branch
 - Quiz 6 due

Week 08, 03/08 - 03/12:

- 3/8 Governing Texas CH 9 - The Judiciary
- 3/10 Governing Texas CH 9 - The Judiciary
- 3/12 Governing Texas CH 9 - The Judiciary
 - Quiz 7 due

Week 09, 03/15 - 03/19:

- Spring Break

Week 10, 03/22 - 03/26:

- 3/22 Governing Texas CH 10 - Local Government
- 3/24 Governing Texas CH 10 - Local Government
- 3/26 Governing Texas CH 10 - Local Government
 - Quiz 8 due

Week 11, 03/29 - 04/02:

- 3/29 Redistricting Game
- 3/31 Redistricting Game
- 4/2 Exam 2

Week 12, 04/05 - 04/09:

- 4/5 Governing Texas CH 4 - Political Parties
- 4/7 Governing Texas CH 4 - Political Parties
- 4/9 Governing Texas CH 4 - Political Parties
 - Quiz 9 due

Week 13, 04/12 - 04/16:

- 4/12 Governing Texas CH 5 - Campaigns and Elections
- 4/14 Governing Texas CH 5 - Campaigns and Elections
- 4/16 Governing Texas CH 5 - Campaigns and Elections
 - Quiz 10 due

Week 14, 04/19 - 04/23:

- 4/19 Governing Texas CH 6 - Interest Groups
- 4/21 Governing Texas CH 6 - Interest Groups
- 4/23 Citizens United v FEC decision
 - Quiz 11 due

Week 15, 04/26 - 04/30:

- 4/26 Governing Texas Ch 12 - Public Policy
- 4/28 Governing Texas Ch 12 - Public Policy
- 4/30 Governing Texas Ch 12 - Public Policy
 - Quiz 12 due

Week 16, 05/03 - 05/07:

- 5/3 NO CLASS
- 5/5 Catch up/Review Day
- 5/7 Exam 3

Week 17, 05/10 - 05/14:

- TBD Final Exam

Course Policies

Student Responsibility

You have already made the decision to go to college; now the follow-up decisions on whether to commit to doing the work could very well determine whether you end up working at a good paying job in a field you enjoy or working at minimum wage for the rest of your life. Education involves a partnership that requires both students and instructors to do their parts. By entering into this partnership, you have a responsibility to show up for class, do the assigned readings before class, be engaged and pay attention in class, follow directions, and put your best effort into it. You will get out of your experience here exactly what you put into it - nothing more and nothing less.

Attendance

Academic success is closely associated with regular classroom attendance and course participation. All successful students, whether on campus or online, are expected to be self-motivated. Class attendance is expected and required, although I do not take roll. You are responsible for any announcements made or information given during class. Asynchronous students are expected to keep up with all material and announcements via eLearning and MS Stream.

Late Assignments

Sufficient time has been allotted for each of the assignments in this course. As such, late assignments are not accepted in this course. Do not fail to plan your time appropriately and expect me to make exceptions.

Extra Credit

There is NO extra credit for this course. Note the grading criteria and plan accordingly. However, there are potential bonus points based on participation and leadership roles offered throughout the semester. These will be equally available to synchronous and asynchronous students.

Class Recordings

The instructor may record meetings of this course. Any recordings will be available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. If the instructor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Class Materials

The Instructor may provide class materials that will be made available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. These materials may be downloaded during the course, however, these materials are for registered students' use only. Classroom materials may not be reproduced or shared with those not in class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

eLearning

In addition to a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable a successful learning experience. Please review the important technical requirements at <https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning/students/current/getting-started>.

UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The eLearning Support Center (<https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning/helpdesk>) includes a toll-free telephone number for immediate assistance (1-866-588-3192), email request service, and an online chat service.

University Policies

Asynchronous Guidelines

You may choose to access the course in an asynchronous manner. If you choose to participate in this way there are a few key things you should be aware of. First, the course is not self-paced. You are expected to complete all assignments in accordance with the posted due dates. Second, you are responsible for checking your email and Blackboard for important updates or announcements regarding the course. Finally, you are still required to actively participate. Lectures will be uploaded to MS Stream and may be viewed at any time other than the prescribed course times. However, the lectures may also include discussion questions that require student responses. In addition, you may switch between synchronous and asynchronous at anytime during the semester. You only need to send me an email stating your desire to change. You may go to <https://covid.utdallas.edu/response/faq/#asynchronous> for more information on asynchronous learning.

Distance Learning Student Resources

Online students have access to resources including the McDermott Library, Academic Advising, the Office of Student AccessAbility, and many others. Please see the eLearning Current Students webpage (<https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning/students/current>) for more information.

Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties

The University is committed to providing a reliable learning management system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which

prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and also contact <https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning/helpdesk>. The instructor and the eLearning Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

Academic Integrity and Honesty

The faculty expects from its students a high-level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. See <https://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/integrity/>.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty can occur in relation to any type of work submitted for academic credit or as a requirement for a class. It can include individual work or a group project. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and collaboration/collusion. In order to avoid academic dishonesty, it is important for students to fully understand the expectations of their professors. This is best accomplished through asking clarifying questions if an individual does not completely understand the requirements of an assignment.

Additional information related to academic dishonesty and tips on how to avoid dishonesty may be found here: <https://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/dishonesty/>

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same: "As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."

COVID-19 Guidelines and Resources

The information contained in the following link lists the University's COVID-19 resources for students and instructors of record. Please see <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>.

Academic Support Resources

The information contained in the following link lists the University's academic support resources for all students. Please see <http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources>.

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.

Instructor's Rights

The instructor has the right to add, delete, or revise this course syllabus.