

GOVT 2306.005
State and Local Government
Fall 2021
MW 10:00 – 11:15pm • ECSW 1.315

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Office Hours: M 4:00pm – 5:00pm, T 10:00am-12:00pm, & by appointment
Other Information: Best means to reach me is email. *No email response Friday night or Saturday.*

Teaching Assistant

Name: Pyung Kim
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Office Location: TBA
Office Hours: TBA

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, & other restrictions	There are no prerequisites for this course other than an eagerness to learn and a commitment to active engagement in class.
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Course Description	This course will provide students with an introduction to state and local politics. The course covers topics that relate to state governmental institutions, political behavior, and public policy. We will explore topics including the Texas Constitution, the structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and inter-governmental relations, political participation, and the election process. The goal of this course is to have students critically examine their own political beliefs and the beliefs of others, and to provide students with an understanding of the methods in which they can get involved in politics.
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Learning Outcomes	By the end of the course, a student who has mastered the course material will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate the role of interest groups, political parties, and public opinion in shaping Texas politics and policies• Analyze and think critically about contemporary developments in Texas politics given historical background and theoretical concepts• Identify, describe, and evaluate electoral and institutional processes• Recognize and understand historical trends in the development of state institutions and the Texas constitution• Meaningfully relate course topics to living in Texas
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Required Texts & Materials

- (1) **TopHat Subscription (\$70)**, which includes:
 - Textbook subscription (\$40)
 - TopHat subscription (\$30)
 - **Course Join Code: 295708**
 - <https://app.tophat.com/e/295708>
 - This will take you directly to the course. *Purchasing direct is less expensive than buying an access code from the bookstore.*
- (2) Textbook subscription: Thomas Brunell, Robert Lowery, Banks Miller, and Thomas Gray. 2021. **Introduction to State and Local Government**. (ebook via Top Hat) ISBN #TBA
 - Aka “Reader”

Supplementary Texts, Readings, & Materials

Additional readings may be posted on the course’s eLearning page. Reading political news in either print or electronic media is encouraged.

COURSE POLICIES

Grading Criteria

Assignment weighting:

Exam 1:	25%	[22 September, 2021]
Exam 2:	25%	[22 October, 2021]
Exam 3:	25%	[6 December, 2021]
Final Exam:		[Optional: date pending University publication]
Reader:	30%	[Varies. See course schedule.]
Total:	105%	

University standard grading scale:

A+ (97%+), A (94-97%), A- (90-94%), B+ (87-90%), B (84-87%), B- (80-83%), C+ (77-79), C (74-76%), C- (70-73%), D+ (67-69%), D (64-66%), D- (60-63%), F (<60%)

Grades will not be changed unless I make a computational error. Similarly, the extra 5% you may earn by successfully completing the reading assignments means that course grades will *not* be rounded up. An 86.9%, for example, would be considered a B, not a B+. A 94.0 is an A, a 93.999an A-; upper bounds are inclusive, lower exclusive.

If you have trouble meeting your expectations grade-wise, I encourage you to seek assistance from the Teaching Assistant or me as soon as possible. We will be happy to work with you to develop a plan for success in the course. If you wait until the very end of the course, there will be little than can be done to help you earn the grade you wish to earn in the course.

Grade disputes

Any and all grade disputes must be addressed with the instructor within 7 days of receiving the grade. You should email me (a) a clear explanation of the basis for the dispute, (b) what grade is more representative and why, and (c) a reference that supports your objection. From there we will schedule a meeting to discuss. Grade disputes raised after 7 days will not be addressed. It is your responsibility to keep up with assignments and monitoring assignment scores.

Grade Components

Exams

- We will use the TopHat application to administer exams. Exams will be proctored remotely.
- Use either a phone, tablet, or laptop that will run TopHat. It is your responsibility to make sure that these items are charged completely.
- During the exam, you will be locked into the TopHat application and will not be able to switch to anything else or use any other function of the device until the exam has been submitted.
- Exams will be taken individually. You **WILL** be able to use your notes. However, please be sure to prepare for the exam. It **WILL** be timed.
- Each student will receive a unique exam insofar as question and answer order will vary *per student*.

Final Exam (optional)

- The final exam will be cumulative and optional. It will replace your lowest examscore if you score better on the final.
- If you do not perform as well on the final as you had on the three previous exams, the final exam grade will be dropped.
- You are expected to remain available for final exam week if you wish to take it. The University schedules these dates and faculty must be able to assume that you will be present. We cannot make exceptions for students who have decided to leave for home earlier than the final exam date. If you're unsure about whether or not you would like to take the final exam, *do not schedule a flight before the exam date*.

Make-up Exams

Make up exams will be given for University excused absences with documentation *only*. Should a student miss an exam without a University excused absence, that student should plan to take the optional cumulative final exam. If you have a University excused absence, you must speak with me *before* the exam.

Reader Assignments

Assignments based on the assigned readings in *Introduction to State and Local Government* will be available in TopHat at least one week prior to the due date. All assignments will be due by 11:59pm on the Friday of the week that they are due.

Students will be given multiple attempts to complete these assignments prior to the due date. The highest score will be recorded. Assignments will no longer be available for credit once the due date has passed, and may not be made up regardless of the reason, technical difficulties included. It is your responsibility to complete the assignment within the time frame allotted. Do not rely on eLearning or TopHat to prompt you to complete the assignment(s). You should note the due dates and set reminders if necessary.

Additionally, there is a **syllabus quiz** which will also be located on TopHat. This assignment will be included as a grade in Reader Assignment component of the course. The syllabus quiz will also be used to verify participation in the course prior to the census deadline. Failure to complete the syllabus quiz may result in difficulties with financial aid and/or other enrollment issues.

Overall reader grade will be calculated as *points earned/total points*. Staying on top of these assignments is the best way to be successful.

TopHat TopHat is an online learning platform we will be using this semester. It offers both an integrated textbook with in-text comprehension questions and also the ability to conduct anonymous in-class polling. Please sign up with TopHat using your university email address. If you're new to Top Hat, follow the instructions in the following link to get set up and familiarize yourself with the app: [Top Hat Success Center](#). You'll need to register for our specific course, which you can do by visiting our course website: <https://app.tophat.com/e/295708>

If you have another course that uses TopHat, you ***DO NOT*** have to pay the \$30 join-fee again. The fee for the textbook integration, however, is separate.

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, please contact their SupportTeam directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in-app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491. They will be able to help with technical trouble and help you if you have any questions.

Late Work No late work will be accepted.

Class Attendance **Expected**, but no grade is assigned. Attendance will be necessary for success in this course, as some material presented in class may not be presented in the text. Furthermore, attending classes is a responsibility that goes along with enrollment. Each of us has plenty of other responsibilities, but it is our job to be sure to give the appropriate time to each of those. Attendance not only benefits each student individually, but also contributes to a classroom atmosphere that will benefit all.

Course Conduct

Classroom Citizenship

Laptops or other electronic devices may be used to take notes in class and are required for engagement with in-class TopHat polling. Under no circumstances, however, will electronic devices be allowed to be a distraction to other students.

Active and civil participation in class is expected.

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.”

In short: Academic integrity will be taken seriously and violations will be reported according to University policy. Don't cheat. Students are advised to review the policies established in the UTD Student Code of Conduct (<https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdsp5003>).

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 <https://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

Email & Communication

Students are expected to either check their UTD email or to make arrangements so that their UTD mail is delivered to an inbox that is checked. All course communication will be either through eLearning or UTD email. It is the student's responsibility to be sure they receive course communications.

While in-person contact is preferred for substantive questions relating to the class, if you email the instructor, please observe the following email requirements. Emails which do not meet these requirements will not be answered.

- Include your name, course number, course section, appropriate salutation, and a direct question. I teach multiple courses and sections (roughly 1,000 students per semester), and need to know who you are, what course you're in, and how to respond. "In your government course" doesn't help since I am teaching multiple "government" courses. Please include course number and section.
- Check the syllabus for an answer to your question. If the question is directly addressed by the syllabus, I will not respond. If you see your question is addressed but you need clarification, please indicate that and I will be happy to help.
- Do not use texting language. This is a matter of clarity and professionalism.
- If you do not receive a response in a reasonable amount of time (and you've checked to be sure your email doesn't fall into one of the above categories), please follow up. I intend to respond to all emails within 24-48 hours and it is possible that yours has been accidentally overlooked.

Miscellaneous

Religious Observances

I will make accommodations for religious holidays and observances that conflict with course assignments and due dates. It will be the student's responsibility to bring any conflict to my attention so we can discuss the accommodation. Must be notified prior to conflict.

Sexual Discrimination Policy

Students considering sharing personal information in email, in person, or within assignments or exams should be aware that faculty members and teaching associates/assistants and graduate/research assistants are required by UT Dallas policy to report information about sexual misconduct to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Per university policy, Sexual Misconduct Policy - [UTDBP3102](#), faculty have been informed that they must identify the student to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Students who wish to have confidential discussions of incidents related to sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should contact the Student Counseling Center (972- 883-2575 or the 24/7 Crisis Hotline at 972-UTD-TALK or 972-883-8255), the, a health care provider in the Student Health Center (972-883-2747), a clergyperson (or other legally recognized religious advisor) of their choice, or an off-campus resource (e.g., rape crisis center, doctor, psychologist). Students who are sexually assaulted, harassed, or are victims of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, or stalking, are encouraged to directly report these incidents to the UT Dallas Police Department at 972-883-2222 or to the Title IX Coordinator at 972-883-5202.

Incidents in or out of class may be reported here: <http://www.utdallas.edu/oiec/complaints/>

Additional information and resources may be found at: <https://www.utdallas.edu/institutional-initiatives/title-ix/resources/>.

ADA Compliance

The course follows policies and procedures articulated by UT Dallas with respect to ADA compliance. (Policy [UTDBP3100](#))

It is the policy and practice of UT Dallas to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need academic accommodations for this class, you are encouraged to register with the Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA). Some aspects of the course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is typically taught may be accommodated to facilitate your participation and progress. OSA will assist you in determining academic accommodations that are appropriate for your situation. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. To avoid any delay, please contact OSA as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and disability accommodations cannot be provided until an OSA Letter of Accommodation has been given to the instructor. Students who have questions about receiving accommodations, or those who have, or think they may have, a disability (mobility, sensory, health, psychological, learning, etc.) are invited to contact OSA for a confidential discussion. OSA is located in the Administration Building, AD 2.224 They can be reached by phone at 972-883-2098, or by email at studentaccess@utdallas.edu.

Mental Health

Students who feel anxious, overburdened, or otherwise in need of support, should be aware of the resources UT Dallas offers with respect to mental health. The Student Counseling Center provides services and programs to assist students in achieving emotional well-being and to help manage personal demands that may get in the one of your academic success. They provide counselling, learning disability assessments, and a variety of other services. Please see their website for more information: <http://www.utdallas.edu/counseling/>

Academic Support Resources

For help with a research assignment, such as finding journal articles or using a database, try CHAT at [McDermott Library](#).

The [Comet Cupboard](#) is a UT Dallas food pantry initiative dedicated to helping students in need. The Comet Cupboard is located in MC 1.604, on the first floor of the McDermott Library, and can be contacted by calling 972-883-2709.

[Comet Cents](#) provides financial literacy to students with the peer-to-peer model. This money management center provides one-on-one appointments and workshops throughout the semester. Comet Cents works to help students improve their financial situation with topics such budgeting, credit card debit, investing and other personal finance areas.

[Intercultural Programs](#) provides a host of transition programs for international students and intercultural competency trainings for all students. They are located in SSB 3.6, on the third floor of the Student Services Building. Their phone number is 972-883-4528.

The [Student Counseling Center](#) offers confidential services to students either for individual appointments or as part of groups. Initial appointments must be made in person in the Student Counseling Center, which is located in SSB 4.600, on the fourth floor of the Student Services Building. Their main number is 972-883-2575 and the 24/7 Crisis Hotline is 972-883-8255 (972-UTD-TALK).

The [Testing Center](https://ets.utdallas.edu/testing-center), run by the Education Technology Services, offers a 300-seat computer lab, providing UT Dallas students access to a comfortable and secure test environment for online/paper exams, quizzes, instructional testing, and assessments. The Testing Center is located in Room 11.175, the first floor of the Synergy Park North 2 (SP2) building and can be contacted by calling 972-883-5498. See <https://ets.utdallas.edu/testing-center>.

If you experience issues taking an exam in eLearning, please contact the UTD eLearning Helpdesk: <https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning/helpdesk>.

Graduation Help Desk

The [Graduation Help Desk](https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning/helpdesk) is a one-stop resource within the Office of Undergraduate Education designed to help undergraduate students overcome obstacles to a timely graduation. The Graduation Help Desk supports undergraduate students, faculty and staff to develop solutions to complex academic and non-academic issues. This resource is equipped to promote all undergraduate students' success by helping them at any point during their academic careers from their arrival at UT Dallas until their graduation. Contact the Graduation Help Desk at graduationhelpdesk@utdallas.edu or 972-883-3999.

Student Success Center

The [Student Success Center \(SSC\)](https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning/helpdesk) offers assistance to students in the areas of writing, mathematics, communication, multiple science fields, study skills, and other academic disciplines. These services are available through individual appointments, small group appointments, drop-in labs, workshops, and weekly reviews. All undergraduate students enrolled at UT Dallas are eligible to participate in these services. Not all courses will be supported by all services. Please check the website at the beginning of each semester to find out which courses are supported by which services.

The SSC is divided into six units and undergraduate students are able to use as fits their course needs each semester. All services are free of charge.

In **Academic Success Coaching (ASC)**, students can receive help with time management, goal setting, test preparation, and various other study techniques and strategies. Student coaches offer one-on-one appointments and workshops throughout the semester.

The **Communication Lab (CommLab)** offers one-on-one and group appointments where students can gain practical feedback for improving oral and group presentations.

The **Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL)** program provides an active, engaged learning experience for students enrolled in potentially difficult gateway courses. Students who register with PLTL will meet in small groups once a week and are expected to attend every session. Students who regularly attend sessions typically earn a half to a whole letter grade higher than students who do not participate in the PLTL program.

Peer Tutoring (PT) offers math and science tutoring assistance for many of the historically challenging undergraduate courses at UT Dallas. The sessions are designed to address students' individual questions and needs; however, the tutors do not provide answers for homework, quizzes, or exams. Peer Tutoring services include drop-in tutoring for most 1000 and 2000 level courses, one-on-one appointments for a limited number of 3000 and 4000 level courses, and weekly reviews the timings of which vary by semester.

Supplemental Instruction (SI) provides peer-facilitated weekly study sessions for students taking historically difficult courses. SI sessions encourage active, collaborative learning based on critical thinking and transferable study skills. SI Leaders attend lectures and take notes, just like the enrolled students. Students should check the SSC website for supported subjects and session times.

The **Writing Center (WC)** is a collaborative learning environment for students interested in developing stronger writing skills. One-on-one appointments are offered, as are weekly workshops. Scheduling an appointment is strongly recommended, but drop-in hours are also available.

The Student Success Center's main office is located in the McDermott Library Building on the first floor, MC 1.302, and can be contacted by calling 972-883-6707 or by sending an email to ssc@utdallas.edu.

Class Recordings

The instructor may record meetings of this course. These recordings will be made available to all students registered for this class if the intent is to supplement the classroom experience. 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.

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. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Copyright Notice

It is the policy of UT Dallas to adhere to the requirements of the United States Copyright Law of 1976, as amended, (*Title 17, United States Code*), including ensuring that the restrictions that apply to the reproduction of software are adhered to and that the bounds of copying permissible under the fair use doctrine are not exceeded. Copying, displaying, reproducing, or distributing copyrighted material may infringe upon the copyright owner's rights. Unauthorized distribution of copyrighted material, including unauthorized peer-to-peer file sharing, may subject students to appropriate disciplinary action as well as civil and criminal penalties. Usage of such material is only appropriate when that usage constitutes "fair use" under the Copyright Act. For more information about the fair use exemption, see <https://guides.lib.utexas.edu/fairuse/home>. As a UT Dallas student, you are required to follow UT Dallas' copyright policy (UTDPP1043 at <https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdpp1043>) and the UT System's policy, UTS107 at <https://www.utsystem.edu/board-of-regents/policy-library/policies/uts107-use-copyrighted-materials>.

COVID-19 GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES

Classroom Safety and COVID-19

To help preserve the University's in-person learning environment, UT Dallas recommends the following: Adhere to the University's [CDC Updated Guidelines](#) issued on July 30, 2021. ***All Comets are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings indoors regardless of vaccination status.*** Please note this represents a change in the campus guidance issued on May 20, 2021.

Vaccinations are widely available, free and not billed to health insurance. The vaccine will help protect against the transmission of the virus to others and reduce serious symptoms in those who are vaccinated. You are encouraged to get a COVID-19 vaccine and register your vaccination status through the voluntary vaccine report form. [Student Safety](#) remains an important part of the UT Dallas' efforts to protect our community. All students will adhere to the Comet Commitment. Unvaccinated Comets will be expected to complete the mandatory [Required Daily Health Screening](#). Those students who do not comply will be referred to the Office of Community Standards and Conduct for disciplinary action under the [Student Code of Conduct – UTSP5003](#). All students are encouraged to read the [Recommendations for Students Returning to Campus](#) issued on August 2, 2021. (<https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdsp5003>).

Verifying COVID-19 Isolations or Quarantines

Students need to self-report COVID-19 positive results or exposures via an online form (<https://veoci.com/v/p/form/tqeyzbbexcyf?c=131560#tab=entryForm>) so that university campus tracers

can verify, record, and take necessary campus precautions. When faculty are notified by students rather than by the Dean of Students' Office that the students are isolating or quarantining, the faculty should remind students to self-report via the form; students should not attend class until cleared by campus tracers. ***Students who have tested positive for COVID-19 or may have been exposed should not attend class*** in person and should instead follow required disclosure notifications as posted on the university's website (see "What should I do if I become sick?" at <https://www.utdallas.edu/covid/response/faq/#students>).

Accommodations for Students Who Must Isolate or Quarantine Due to COVID-19

To keep the UT Dallas community as safe as possible, the University requires students who test positive for COVID-19 or who are close contacts as determined by the campus contact tracing program to isolate or quarantine as applicable. Faculty will be notified by the Dean of Students' Office if a student in their class has been required to isolate (positive case) or quarantine (exposed). Faculty must make lectures available for those students during the period the students must isolate or quarantine. Faculty have the discretion to set an attendance policy for their in-person meetings, but the absences due to COVID-19 cannot be counted against an isolated or quarantined student.

Proactive Community Testing remains an important part of the university's efforts to protect our community. Tests are fast and free. Please check the [Comets United](#) webpage for additional information.

COVID-19 Resources

Comets United webpage: <https://utdallas.edu/covid/>

FAQ: <https://utdallas.edu/covid/response/faq/>

Student Resources: <https://utdallas.edu/covid/students-families-info/student-resources/>

ASSIGNMENTS & ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Date(s)	Readings & Assignments	Due (by 11:5p on date listed)
Week 1 Aug 23–27.	Introduction to Government & Politics	
Week 2 Aug 30– Sept 3	Federalism and the States - <i>Introduction to ...</i> : Chapter 2	9/3: Syllabus Quiz, TopHat*
Sept 6	Labor Day (No Classes)	
Week 3 Sept 7-10	Local Government - <i>Introduction to ...</i> : Chapter 3	9/10: Reader Ch. 2, TopHat
Week 4 Sept 13-17	State and Local Government Relations - <i>Introduction to ...</i> : Chapter 4	9/17: Reader Ch. 3, TopHat
Week 5 Sept 20-24	State and Local Government Relations (Wrap up) <u>Exam Review (9/20)</u> EXAM 1 (9/22)	9/24: Reader Ch. 4, TopHat
Week 6 Sept 27- Oct 1	State Legislative - <i>Introduction to ...</i> : Chapter 8	
Week 7 Oct 4- 8	State Executive - <i>Introduction to ...</i> : Chapter 7	10/8: Reader Ch. 8, TopHat
Week 8 Oct 11–15	State Judiciary - <i>Introduction to ...</i> : Chapter 9	10/15: Reader Ch. 7, TopHat
Week 9 Oct 18-22	State Judiciary (Wrap up) <u>Exam Review (10/18)</u> EXAM 2 (10/22)	10/22: Reader Ch. 9, TopHat
Week 10 Oct 25-29	Citizen Participation, Parties, and Elections - <i>Introduction to ...</i> : Chapter 5	
Week 11 Nov 1-5	Public Opinion, Lobbying, and Interest Groups - <i>Introduction to ...</i> : Chapter 6	11/5: Reader Ch. 5, TopHat
Week 12 Nov 8–12	Taxes and Spending - <i>Introduction to ...</i> : Chapter 10	11/12: Reader Ch. 6, TopHat
Week 13 Nov 15–19	Economic Development - <i>Introduction to ...</i> : Chapter 11	11/19: Reader Ch. 10, TopHat
Week 14 Nov 22-26	Fall Break (No Classes)	
Week 15 Nov 29– Dec 3	Social Welfare and Healthcare Policy (Wrap Up) - <i>Introduction to ...</i> : Chapter 13 <u>Final Review</u>	12/3: Reader Ch. 11, TopHat
Week 16 Dec 6	EXAM 3 (12/6)	
Dec 8	Reading Day (No Classes)	
Finals Week Dec 9-15	FINAL EXAM Pending official University announcement	

* “TopHat” in the due column refers to the chapter quizzes posted in TopHat for that topic. There may be several readings per topic; all readings will be contained in the folder with the title matching the topic in the syllabus.

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