



**Course Number:** GOVT 2306.HN1  
**Course Name:** State and Local Government  
**Professor:** Dr. Elliott  
**Term:** Spring Semester 2022  
**Meeting Times:** MW 1:00-2:15 PM  
**Location:** AD 2.238

#### PROFESSOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

<b>Office Phone</b>	972-883-2066 (Elliott)
<b>Office Location</b>	GR 2.808
<b>Email Address</b>	<a href="mailto:eelliott@utdallas.edu">eelliott@utdallas.edu</a>
<b>Office Hours</b>	11:00 AM – 12:00 PM Tuesday and Thursday or by appointment upon return to in-class teaching.
<b>Teaching Assistant</b>	Kiwan Park
<b>Other Contact Information</b>	TBA

#### COURSE PRE-REQUISITES, CO-REQUISITES AND OTHER RESTRICTIONS:

None

**Course Description** This course will provide students with an introduction to Texas' state government in the context of the federal government and other US states. The course covers the political institutions of state governments, including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, as well as political parties and interest groups. The course also covers political behavior, including culture, elections, and media. We will conclude with a discussion of public policy and local government.

**Learning Objectives** In this course, students will:

1. Learn about the interaction between federal, state, and local governments.
2. Identify, describe, and evaluate state political institutions and electoral processes.
3. Analyze and think critically about contemporary developments in Texas politics.
4. Apply course topics meaningfully to living in Texas.

**Required Books** Champagne, Anthony, Edward J. Harpham and Jason P. Casellas. 2019. *Governing Texas*. (Fourth Edition) New York and London: WW Norton.

Elliott, Euel and Doug Goodman. 2021 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). *Texas Yesterday and Today: Readings in Texas Politics and Public Policy*. (Henceforth abbreviated to *TYT*) Austin: Great River Learning. **This is an eBook. It is critical that you purchase access to the Reader since questions on tests will be drawn from the reader.**

Instructions on how to purchase access to the Reader will be posted on eLearning and via e-mail.

## **Class Format**

Given President Benson's recent directives this course will be offered online until further notice. The class will be offered synchronously (in real time; details will be provided later). However, I will also offer an in-class option for students who want to attend the class in person. Students interested in this option should simply come to class as regularly scheduled. Please wear masks and maintain appropriate social distancing. Classes will resume in person exclusively as soon as the University approves.

Class meetings are designed to encourage participation and discussion, although there will be some material that I will discuss more or less in the form of lectures. Nonetheless, it is important you participate through class discussion, and other activities.

## **Course Requirements and Grading Criteria (Tests and Research Paper)**

In addition to class participation, there will be two major components to your grade: a series of objective tests (four) and a short research paper. The objective tests are designed to make sure you are doing your reading. The objective tests (non-cumulative) will be conducted through e-learning and consist of 50-60 questions each (multiple choice and true-false) and will be open-book/open-note. You will be given a total of 90-120 minutes to answer the questions. However, you will be given a 24-hour window in which to take the test. Once you begin, you need to complete in the allotted time. You cannot log out and then come back to the test. Also, please note that all tests are scheduled for times when we do not have classes (Fridays), and in the case of the last test, a Monday.

### **Research Paper**

Your research paper should be approximately 6-8 pages, typed and double-spaced with a one-inch margin and standard size 12 font. You should use references to support the discussion; any standard citation method is acceptable, provided that you are consistent in its' use. Your topic can be anything related to contemporary political or public policy issues in Texas or another state, or that involves local politics in one or more states (provided there is some common theme or thread that connects them). You may also examine two or more states regarding some political or policy controversy. Recent legislation, legislative initiatives, state constitutional amendments, state or local elections, or local ordinances would all be appropriate. However, I would like for students to clear topics with me prior to beginning your paper. I will say more about that later in the semester. My only hard and fast restriction is that a. the topic relates to contemporary politics or public policy b. It NOT involve a discussion of national politics or controversies except to the extent national politics and institutions become implicated in state and local politics and issues.

### **Grading Scale for the course:**

A = 94 and above

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 = below 60

The grading criteria for the course, allocated by percentages, are as follows:

Research Paper	30%
Objective Tests [FOUR]	60%; Each test = 15%
Class Participation	10%
TOTAL	100%

Also see: <http://provost.utdallas.edu/home/syllabus-policies> for additional information regarding policies and procedures.

## **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Regular class participation is expected regardless of course modality. Students should be ready to engage in class discussion. A portion of the grade (10%) for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class. This may also include any possible discussion board activities. 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.

## **DISCUSSION BOARD**

There may be occasional discussions held on the eLearning discussion board. You will be notified ahead of time regarding any such discussion board activities.

## **ACADEMIC SUPPORT RESOURCES**

The information contained in the following link lists the University's academic support resources for all students.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources>.

## **INTERNET ACCESS**

It is essential you have internet capability, defined as access to a high-speed Internet connection. Information on computer and browser requirements can be found on the [eLearning Help Page](#). You may also use one of UTD's on-campus computer labs. For location and hours, visit [Computer Labs - ACUS | IR - UT Dallas](#)

## **TECHNICAL PROBLEMS**

Remember, computer technology can be unreliable, so plan ahead. Tests will be timed, and once you start your test, you cannot reset the clock – the test must be completed within the allotted time period. If you are booted off or experience a slow connection, you will not be able to start over.

**If you run into trouble, send me as well as my teaching assistant an email IMMEDIATELY to document the problem.** Or you may send an email to the UTD Computing Help Desk ([assist@utdallas.edu](mailto:assist@utdallas.edu)) and copy me on the email. If your problem is related specifically to eLearning, call the help desk anytime of the day or night at 1-866-588-3192 and ask for an email copy of your ticket, which you can then forward to me for verification. For more information, visit the eLearning Help Desk [website](#).

## **eLEARNING SYSTEM**

This class uses UTD's eLearning System to manage the online content. You should log in to your eLearning account on the first day of class to ensure that you have no problems accessing the site. If you are not familiar with the NEW e:Learning, watch this [online learning demo](#). Once you are logged in, you will find links to [eLearning student tutorials](#). You can get more help by calling 1-866-588-3192 or visiting [eLearning - The University of Texas at Dallas](#)

## **EMAIL ACCOUNT**

**Please be sure that you know how to access your UTD email account and can check it regularly.** The university provides students with free email accounts in order to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of individuals corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. Therefore, the university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's UT Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. For help with your UTD email account, call 972-883-2911 or go to <http://www.utdallas.edu/ir/helpdesk/>

## **CLASS MATERIALS**

Class materials 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](#).

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

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **MAKE-UP TESTS AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

The dates of tests and due date for the research paper are indicated on the class schedule. It is unlikely that you will need a make-up test. However, in case of extenuating circumstances, make-ups will only

be given for legitimate reasons and with proper written documentation. Forgetting a due date does not qualify as a legitimate reason. If you fail to take a test or turn in your paper on time without a reasonable excuse, you will receive a “0” for that portion of the course. Penalties for late work on the wiki are listed later in the syllabus.

## **INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY**

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester’s end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of **F**.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

The faculty expects a high level of responsibility and academic honesty from students. 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 demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. **For online classes, letting another person complete your work for you or representing them as you is considered cheating.** Only students registered for the class may participate in class work or assignments.

## **SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY**

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university’s policy on plagiarism. Here is more information on how to [avoid academic dishonesty](#).

## **GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The University of Texas at Dallas has developed a number of policies and procedures designed to provide students with a safe and supportive learning environment. For UT Dallas policy related to the following go to [UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures](#):

**Field Trip Policies**  
**Student Conduct & Discipline**  
**Email Use**

**Withdrawal from Class**  
**Student Grievance Procedures**  
**Disability Services**

**Religious Holy Day**

## ASSIGNMENTS & ACADEMIC CALENDAR

**Please Note:** assignments in *TYT* are not always in the order they appear in the Reader.

Date(s)	Topics Covered in Class Time
<b>Jan. 19</b>	<b>Introduction to the Course and Political Culture, People and Economy of Texas</b>
<b>Jan. 24</b>	<p><b>Political Culture, People and Economy of Texas (cont'd)</b></p> <p>Readings: Chapter One, <i>Governing Texas</i> [henceforth, <i>GT</i>]</p> <p>Mortensen in <i>TYT</i> (“Texas History: Rulers and Revolutionaries”: CH. 1)</p> <p>Tunstall in <i>TYT</i> (“The Demographics and Political Economy of the Lone Star State”: CH. 3)</p>
<b>Jan. 26-31</b>	<p><b>The Texas Constitution</b></p> <p>Readings: Chapter 2, <i>GT</i></p> <p>Lux in <i>TYT</i> (“The Texas Constitution” CH. 7)</p> <p>Madison, <i>Federalist</i> 10 [Online]</p>
<b>Feb. 2- 9</b>	<p><b>Texas and the Nation: A Federal System</b></p> <p>Readings Articles of Confederation, Constitution of U.S.; Federalist 10 and 51 [online]</p> <p>Chapter 3, <i>GT</i></p> <p>Elliott, Goodman and Kim in <i>TYT</i> (“Texas, the National Government and Federalism”: CH. 4)</p> <p>Labastida, Gathman and Elliott in <i>TYT</i> (“What if Texas Had Never Joined the Union?”: CH. 2)</p>
<b>Feb. 11 (Friday)</b>	<p><b>Test 1 Details to be provided prior to the test</b></p> <p><b>NOT A CLASS DAY</b></p>
<b>Feb. 14</b>	<p><b>Political Parties</b></p> <p>Readings:</p>



<p><b>March 25 (Friday)</b></p>	<p>Kirby in <i>TYT</i> ("The Texas Court System, Justice of Peace Courts and Non-Lawyer Judges." CH. 10)</p> <p><b>Test 3 Details to be provided prior to the test</b></p> <p><b>NOT A CLASS DAY</b></p>
<p><b>March 28-April 6</b></p>	<p><b>Local Government and Public Finance</b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Chapters 10, 11 in <i>GT</i></p> <p>Gorina in <i>TYT</i> ("Financing Public Goods in Texas": CH. 11)</p>
<p><b>April 11-25</b></p>	<p><b>Policy Process and Public Policy Issues</b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Chapter 12 in <i>GT</i></p> <p>Lowry in <i>TYT</i> ("Education Politics and Policy in Texas": CH. 12)</p> <p>Newman and Forbis in <i>TYT</i> ("Environmental and Energy Politics in Texas": CH. 14)</p> <p>Scotch and Sutton in <i>TYT</i> ("Health Care Policy in a Conservative State": CH. 15)</p> <p>Alexander in <i>TYT</i> ("Texas' Immigration Policy": CH. 16)</p>
<p><b>April 27-May 4</b></p>	<p><b>Criminal Justice and Future Issues</b></p> <p>Chapters 13 and 14 in <i>GT</i></p> <p>Laprade and Worrall chapters in <i>TYT</i> ("Criminal Justice in Texas: An Overview and Examination of the Death Penalty." CH 13)</p>
<p><b>May 5 (Thursday)</b></p>	<p><b>Test 4 Details to be provided prior to the test</b></p> <p><b>NOT A CLASS DAY</b></p>
<p><b>May 8</b></p>	<p><b>Research Paper due at 12 noon.</b></p>

**NOTE:** The instructor reserves the right to make modest changes to the course schedule as necessary. Also, there may be the need for one or two make up classes due to the unavoidable travel by the instructor. Makeup classes will likely be held on Saturdays and announced well in advance.