


Core Course Syllabus

	Course	GOVT 2306.004
	Course Title	State and Local Government
	Professor	Dr. Kashmiri Medhi [TA: Catherine Huiyan Yin]
	Term	Spring 2025
	Meetings	T/TH 10:00AM - 11:15AM, HH2.402

Professor's Contact Information

Office Location	GR 3.560
Email Address	kashmiri.medhi@utdallas.edu [TA: Huiyan.Yin@utdallas.edu]
Office Hours	T and TH 10:00 am to 11:15 am <i>TA office hours: TBD</i>

General Course Information

Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, & other restrictions	None
Course Description	This course is the second in a two-course sequence in the Department of Political Science that satisfies the Government/Political Science requirement of the University Core Curriculum, focusing on the basic foundations of government within Texas. The course examines the state's institutions, their functions, and their significance in our daily lives. While introductory, the course holds particular relevance as government laws and policies directly impact citizens across all professions – from psychologists to computer scientists to bankers – affecting both employment opportunities and financial well-being. Students will learn about the legislative process and civic engagement opportunities, understanding how laws are created and

	how citizens can participate in and influence governmental decision-making.
Learning Objectives	<p>On completing this core curriculum course, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide examples and apply important theoretical and scholarly approaches to explaining national institutional behavior, citizen involvement, and interaction between citizens and institutions of government. • Analyze and appreciate historical trends in the development of government institutions and their constitutional foundations. • Identify, describe and analyze various mechanisms of citizen political involvement. • Identify and appreciate their social and personal responsibility in the broader context of politics and political institutions.
Required Texts & Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Learning Platform: Top Hat Subscription: 978-0-9866151-0-8 • Online Textbook: An Introduction to American Government: 978-1-7741228-5-3 <p><i>Accessing the Textbook and Required Materials</i></p> <p>Upon purchasing your subscription to Top Hat (www.tophat.com) and the textbook, you will have full access to the necessary course materials.</p> <p>The course join code is: 130129</p> <p>https://success.tophat.com/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide</p>

Assignments and Academic Calendar

Class Dates	Lecture/Reading	Assignment	Due Date
Module 1			
Week 1 Jan 21, 23	<p>Introduction To The Course</p> <p>Chapter 1: Socioeconomic and Political Context</p>	<p>Access TopHat</p> <p>Chapter Questions</p>	January 24 @ 11:59 PM
Week 2 Jan 28, 30	Chapter 2: State Constitutions	Chapter Questions	January 31 @ 11:59 PM
Week 3 Feb 4, 6	Chapter 3: Federalism and the States	Chapter Questions	February 7 @ 11:59 PM

Week 4 Feb 11, 13	Chapter 4: Local Governments Exam Review	Exam 1 (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4)	The exam will be available Feb 14 (Feb 13, 11:59 PM to Feb 14, 11:59 PM)
Module 2			
Week 5 Feb 18, 20	Chapter 5: State and Local Government Relations	Chapter Questions	Feb 21 @ 11:59 PM
Week 6 Feb 25, 27	Chapter 6: Citizen Participation, Parties, and Elections	Chapter Questions	Feb 28 @ 11:59 PM
Week 7 Mar 4, 6	Chapter 7: Public Opinion, Lobbying, and Interest Groups	Chapter Questions Exam 2 (Chapters 5, 6, & 7)	The exam will be available on March 7 (Mar 6, 11:59 PM to Mar 7, 11:59 PM)
Module 3			
Week 8 Mar 11, 13	Chapter 8: The Executive Branch	Chapter Questions	March 14 @ 11:59 PM
Week 9 Mar 18, 20	No Classes	Spring Break	
Week 10 Mar 25, 27	Chapter 9: State Legislatures	Chapter Questions	March 28 @ 11:59 PM
Week 11 Apr 1, 3	Chapter 10: The State Judiciary	Chapter Questions	April 4 @ 11:59 PM
Week 12 Apr 8, 10	Catch up & Exam Review	Exam 3 (Chapters 8, 9, 10)	Exam will be available April 11 (April 10, 11:59 PM to April 11, 11:59)
Module 4			
Week 13 Apr 15, 17	Chapter 11: Taxes and Spending	Chapter Questions	April 18 @ 11:59 PM

Week 14 Apr 22, 24	Chapter 12: Criminal Justice Policy	Chapter Questions	April 25 @ 11:59 PM
Week 15 Apr 29, May 1	Chapter 13: Social Welfare and Healthcare Policy	Chapter Questions	May 2 @ 11:59 PM
Week 16 May 6, 8	Chapter 14: Education Policy & Chapter 15: Environmental and Energy Policy	Chapter Questions	May 9 @ 11:59 PM
Finals Week May 12-16	FINAL EXAM	Exam 4 (Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15)	Exam will be available May 13 (May 12, 11:59 PM to May 13, 11:59 PM)

Course Policies

Class Materials	<p>Instructions for accessing and purchasing course materials will be provided during the first week of classes. All required materials must be obtained by the second week of class to ensure successful course completion. You will NOT be able to pass the course without these materials.</p> <p>You will receive an email invitation to join our course platform - this is the simplest way to purchase and access the materials. If you need to purchase access through the university bookstore instead, please contact me if you have any difficulties locating the materials.</p> <p>Technical Requirements: The course requires a confident level of computer and internet literacy, along with access to appropriate technical resources. Please consult the Getting Started with eLearning webpage for detailed technical requirements that will enable a successful learning experience.</p> <p>Throughout the semester, supplementary class materials will be made available to registered students. While these materials may be downloaded for personal use during the course, they are exclusively registered students' use. Sharing, reproducing, or uploading these materials to other online environments is prohibited, except when implementing approved</p>
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	<p>AccessAbility Resource Center accommodations. Any violation of these requirements constitutes a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.</p>
Class Attendance	<p>Regular attendance is crucial for success in this course. Attendance will be recorded randomly during 15 class sessions throughout the semester using our course platform. These attendance records contribute to your overall class participation grade. Students who frequently miss class often struggle to keep up with course material and typically see this reflected in their performance. While emergencies and illnesses happen, it's your responsibility to obtain notes and information from missed class sessions from your classmates or during office hours.</p>
Class Participation	<p>Active participation is vital for success in this course and constitutes a portion of your final grade. Participation involves more than just attendance - it includes engaging in class discussions, contributing to group activities, and providing thoughtful feedback on homework assignments, readings, and lecture materials. Your participation will be documented throughout the semester by faculty, with successful participation defined as consistent engagement with course activities and adherence to university requirements outlined in this syllabus.</p> <p>Texas Senate Bill 17 does not affect academic course instruction or classroom discussions. The law, which restricts certain diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public universities in Texas, has no impact on academic course content or classroom dialogue. Students should participate fully in academic discussions of all topics, including those related to race, society, identity, and inequality, when relevant to course material. Your academic freedom to engage in open, respectful dialogue within the classroom remains protected and valued.</p>
Class Recordings	<p>Recording of class sessions is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the AccessAbility Resource Center. Students with approved accommodations must protect their login credentials and may not share course recordings under any circumstances. Course recordings cannot be published, reproduced, shared with non-enrolled students, or uploaded to any external platforms. This includes all course materials, lectures, and discussions. Any unauthorized recording or sharing of course content violates the Student Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action.</p>
Grading Criteria	<p>Your final grade in this course will be calculated from four exams, regular</p>

homework assignments, and class participation. Of the four exams, ***your lowest score will be dropped.*** Each exam covers material from assigned readings and lectures, featuring multiple-choice, true/false, and matching questions. Exams are administered online through our course platform and are open-book/open-note. You'll have a 24-hour window to start each exam, and once begun, you'll have 90 minutes to complete it. Specific exam dates are listed in the course schedule.

Homework assignments are integrated directly into the course readings through embedded questions. These must be completed by Friday at 11:59 PM CST of the week they are assigned. Your homework grades will be averaged to calculate your final homework score.

Class participation combines both attendance and active engagement in course activities. Attendance will be taken randomly during 15 class sessions throughout the semester, with no advance notice of which days will be recorded.

Grade Distribution:

- Exams: 60% (lowest of four exams dropped)
- Homework: 30%
- Class Participation: 10%

Grading Scale:

- A+ (97-100%)
- A (94-96%)
- 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%)

Extra Credit	None
Late Work	<p>Late assignments will not be accepted without prior instructor approval under documented special circumstances. All due dates are listed in the syllabus and any schedule changes will be announced in class, posted as an online announcement, and reflected in an updated syllabus.</p> <p>For exam-related technical difficulties or personal emergencies, you must contact me within 24 hours of the original deadline. Accommodation requests made after this 24-hour window will not be considered. No make-up opportunities will be provided for missed participation points, and no extra credit will be offered in this course.</p> <p>For complete university policies regarding coursework and deadlines, please visit http://provost.utdallas.edu/home/syllabus-policies.</p>
Classroom Citizenship	<p>Electronic devices, including laptops and tablets, are welcome for course-related activities and note-taking. However, please use them responsibly and avoid distracting your fellow students. All mobile phones must be silenced during class time.</p> <p>Health and Absence Policy: If you are ill with any contagious condition, please do not attend class. For illness-related absences, email documentation to the teaching assistant within 24 hours of the missed class for appropriate accommodations. Similarly, absences for university-sponsored activities require advance documentation.</p>
Communication	<p>Course information will be shared through multiple channels: in-class announcements, email, and our online learning platform. It is your responsibility to stay informed through regular class attendance, checking your university email, and monitoring course announcements online.</p> <p>All official email communication must occur through your university email account - personal email accounts cannot be used for course correspondence. I will only respond to emails sent from official university email addresses and allow up to 72 business hours for a response.</p> <p>**All technical and logistical concerns (including TopHat registration, attendance tracking, or access issues) should be directed to your Teaching Assistant - I will only address emails concerning course content, academic</p>

	accommodations, or other substantive matters requiring professor attention.
Academic Dishonesty	Academic honesty is fundamental to the university experience and the value of your degree. This course requires independent work and holds students to the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty - including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, or unauthorized collaboration - will be addressed according to university policy. For complete information about academic integrity standards and procedures, visit conduct.utdallas.edu/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."
	<p>Students experiencing anxiety or distress, either from the topics discussed in this class or from other stressors, are encouraged to seek self-care via the on-campus services provided:</p> <p>Student Counseling Center Phone: 972-883-2575 Location: Student Services Building SSB 4.600</p> <p>If you are having a mental health crisis you can call the 972-UTD-TALK or 911 24 hrs/7 days a week</p>
Accommodations for Students with Disabilities	Please review the section within the UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures webpage.
Academic Support Resources	Please visit the Academic Support Resources page to view the University's academic support resources for all students.
UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures	<p>Please visit the Syllabus Policies page to view the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.</p> <p>Please review the catalog sections regarding the credit/no credit or pass/fail grading option and withdrawal from class.</p>

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