Government 2306
State and Local Politics: Texas
Fall 2014

Dr. Edward J. Harpham
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GC 2.204
Class time: MW 8:30-9:45
Location: GC 1.208b
Office Hours: M 1:00-2:00 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 demography and economic challenges that face state and local government in Texas today and suggest solutions to these problems
5) Be able to access the online resources that are available for understanding politics and government in Texas.

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

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**Required Textbooks and Materials:**


Other reading will be available through elearning.

Other Recommended Readings:
- Texas Tribune: [https://www.texastribune.org/](https://www.texastribune.org/)
- The Handbook of Texas online: [https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook](https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook)
- Texas Legislative Budget Board: [http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/](http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/)
- Texas Constitution: [http://www.constitution.legis.state.tx.us/](http://www.constitution.legis.state.tx.us/)

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Amendments to the Texas Constitution: [http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/pubsconamend/constamend1876.pdf](http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/pubsconamend/constamend1876.pdf)

Texas Statutes: [http://www.constitution.legis.state.tx.us/](http://www.constitution.legis.state.tx.us/)
Assignments & Academic Calendar

Background
August 25: 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)

August 27: Culture, Demographics and Economy in the Lone Star State

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

Constitutionalism

September 3 and 8: Texas and the Nation

Read:
1) Champagne and Harpham Chapter 2
2) Champagne and Harpham Federalism and the Nation (elearning)
September 10: Guest Speaker

September 15 and 17: Texas and Its Constitutions

Read:
1) Champagne and Harpham Chapter 3
2) The Texas Founding (elearning)
3) Texas Constitution: [http://www.constitution.legis.state.tx.us/](http://www.constitution.legis.state.tx.us/)
4) Amendments to the Texas Constitution: [http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/pubsconamend/constamend1876.pdf](http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/pubsconamend/constamend1876.pdf)

Politics

September 22 and 24: 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/

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

Third Parties:
Libertarian Party:  https://www.lptexas.org/
Platform:  https://www.lptexas.org/state-platform

September 29: 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

October 1: Guest Speaker
October 6: Elections in Texas Part II
   Read: Champagne and Harpham Chapter 5 (again)

October 8: REVIEW AND CATCHUP

October 13: First exam

The Institutions of Texas Government

October 15 and 20: 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

7) Texas Legislature online: http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/

October 22 and 27: The Plural Executive
Read: Champagne and Harpham Chapter 8

October 29: The Texas Judiciary
Read Champagne and Harpham Chapter 9

November 3: Local Government in Texas

Read Champagne and Harpham Chapter 13
November 5: Assessing the Election of 2014

Taxes and Public Policy in Texas

November 10: Local Government (again)

November 12: Guest Speaker

November 17: Public Finance in Texas
Read Champagne and Harpham Chapter 11
Read *Fiscal Sizeup* (elearning), pp. 1-48

**November 19: Crime and Corrections Policy in Texas**

Texas Rangers Company B (1880)  
Texas Corrections Institution

**Read:**
1) Champagne and Harpham Chapter 10
2) *Fiscal Sizeup* (elearning), pp. 357-400

**December 1: Education Policy and Welfare Policy**
Read: Champagne and Harpham Chapter 12, pp. 343-57
*Fiscal Sizeup* (elearning), pp. 227-32 pp. 222-25

December 3: 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.

Source: American Legislative Exchange Council

*Water for Texas.*

Read Champagne and Harpham Chapter 12, pp. 358-77
*Fiscal Sizeup,* pp. 161-169; 211-221; 458-466.
December 8: Review

December 10: 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. 3 of these quizzes will on the speakers visiting our classes.

• There will be 2 in-class exams, each worth 80 points, for a total of 160 points.

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.