

Government 2306: State and Local Government
Dr. Douglas C. Dow
Autumn 2015 MWF: 1:00-1:50PM CV Seminar Room - GC 1.208B
Office Hours: MWF 12:00-1:00PM and by appointment (GC 2.206)
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Course Overview

This honors seminar is designed as an introduction to the constitutional structure, institutional processes and political cultures of Texas, within the federal system of the United States. Our first goal will be to understand how American sub-national politics is contoured by its ever-evolving federal constitutional system. We will seek answers to a number of questions: What were the origins of the federal design in the American Constitution? How do the historical beginnings of government continue to shape contemporary politics? How have powers been divided and shared between the national government and the states? What are the functions of state government? How does the Texas Constitution resemble and differ from the U.S. Constitution? What has been the history of civil rights and liberties protection, and its impact on state authority?

The second goal of the course will be to understand those processes and institutions through which citizens behave politically. What is political culture? How are state and local politics shaped by political pluralism? How do people come to articulate political beliefs? What kinds of groups do people create and join to promote their ideas and interests? How do these groups interact with governmental actors themselves? We shall explore the development and evolution of political parties, the growing dominance of interest groups, the importance of public opinion and the role of political culture in shaping the information Texans have about their government and society.

Component Learning Objectives:

- 1) Students will be able to provide examples of and apply important theoretical and scholarly approaches to understanding state and national institutional behavior, citizen involvement and interaction between citizens and institutions of government.
- 2) Students will be able to analyze and appreciate historical trends in development of government institutions and their constitutional foundations.
- 3) Students will be able to identify, describe, and analyze various mechanisms of citizen political involvement.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: An important requirement for this honors seminar will be active participation in class discussion, debate and analysis. Regular attendance is required, and the professor will take attendance for each class. Each student is expected to have completed the day's readings before class. Be prepared to talk. Everyone will be expected to demonstrate civility and a respect for the thoughts, opinions and beliefs of others. Notes or summaries will not be provided for missed classes. Cell phones and all other electronic noise-makers should be turned off (not on vibrate) during class. Because of the frequency by which many students using laptops to take notes also succumb to the temptations to surf the Web, check email, IM, or otherwise disengage themselves from class discussions, laptop use will not be permitted during class.

Exams: There will be three closed-book, closed-note, in-class blue book essay exams. They will cover both assigned readings, as well as lecture and discussion material. Each exam will be worth 15% of the final grade. The questions will be distributed one week in advance of the exam.

Précis: Each student will be expected to write one précis, of between 8-10 pages, for one of the three supplementary readings. Précis should be double-spaced, and no smaller than 12 point font. Please number all pages, and use internal citations. Print single sided pages only. This précis will be worth 30% of the final grade. Students are asked to submit a hard copy of the essay to the professor and an electronic copy to turnitin.com. This is an iterative assignment, which means that students have the opportunity to re-write their précis, based on the professor's comments. This is voluntary, not required, but students may earn up to five points added to their original grade.

For those unfamiliar with this type of assignment, a précis stands somewhere between a summary and a critique, more than a mere recitation of what the author said, but less than an original interrogation of the author's premises or conclusion. Think of it as a characterization of "what the text is doing." Amongst the questions a précis should ask includes: what is the author's main thesis, why this thesis is important, what are the author's main conclusions, and what evidence or arguments are used to arrive at the conclusions. Most good book reviews are written in a précis style, and it is recommended to read some to get a better idea of this type of assignment. The way you read a book changes based upon the questions you are asking of it. Writing a précis, or holding a conversation about a book for three hours, will require each student to read more actively.

Turnitin.com: We will be using **turnitin.com** to guard against plagiarism for the précis. Each student must submit her or his paper to **turnitin.com**. I have established an account for this class. For those who have never used this website before, on the homepage there is a brief tutorial on setting up your class account. You will need both your class ID # and class enrollment password. Be careful: the password is case-sensitive:

Class ID #: 10100626
Class Enrollment Password: Flood

Roundtable Sessions: We will hold formal student-led roundtable discussions lasting one week for each of our three supplementary readings. Roundtables are student lead discussion and debate. Each participant will be expected to come prepared with the book, notes on the book, as well as a list of approximately five to seven questions, comments, or quotations for further deliberation. Everyone participates – no one merely listens.

Quizzes: Most classes will begin with a brief quiz covering the readings that are required for that day. These quizzes will test recollection of the reading material and will aid as a starter for class discussion. The accumulation of quizzes, combined with attendance and the quality of participation (especially during the roundtables), will account for 15% of the final grade.

Film and American Political Culture: There will be two assigned films to watch, and each film will be accompanied by a short article. Copies of each film will be left in the CV Lounge for students to view. There will be a set of questions to answer about each film, designed to explore its meanings within a broader American political culture. Taken together, the two film assignment will count for 10% of the final grade.

Make-Ups: Make-up exams, or extensions on paper deadlines, will be given only in documented emergency situations and at the discretion of the professor. The professor reserves the right not to accept any unexcused late papers or exams. In cases in which you will be absent from class, you should notify the professor via email as soon as reasonable possible.

Syllabus Changes: The professor reserves the right to amend this syllabus during the semester. Any changes will be announced in class, and students will be responsible for getting and following the new information.

Grading Scale: All exams will be graded on a 100-point scale. The following conversion chart will be used to translate numbers into letter grades:

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

University Policies

All of the requirements and processes contained in this syllabus and made by the professor shall comply with university wide policies. For more information on UTD's academic policies, including student conduct and discipline, religious holidays, academic integrity, email use, withdrawal from the class, grievance policies, incomplete grade policies, and disability services, please go to: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

Course Texts

Each of the following texts is required, and can be purchased at the on-campus book store and at Off Campus Books. Please make sure that you are using the proper edition of the textbook assigned for the class. All other readings will either be handed out in class, emailed, or available

online. Students are not required to print material available electronically.

- Anthony Champagne and Edward Harpham. *Governing Texas: An Introduction to Texas Politics*. Second Edition (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015)

- John Paul Stevens. *Six Amendments: How and Why We Should Change the Constitution*. (Little, Brown and Co., 2014)

- Martha C. Nussbaum. *From Disgust to Humanity: Sexual Orientation and Constitutional Law* (Oxford University Press, 2010)

- Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson. *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer – And Turned Its Back on the Middle Class* (Simon & Schuster, 2010)

Course Schedule

I. Political Cultures of the United States and Texas

8/24: Introductions

Read: Syllabus.

8/26: Foundations of American Political Culture: Republicanism

Read: Ryan Griffiths. “Republicanism.”

8/28: Foundations of American Political Culture: Liberalism.

Read: Douglas Dow. “Liberalism.”

8/31: Foundations of American Political Culture: Democracy

Read: Duncan Ivison. “Democracy.”

9/2: Texas Political Culture and Demographics

Read: Ch. 1 - pp. 3-34.

There will be no official seminar meeting 9/2 or 9/4, as Dr. Dow will be out of town attending an academic conference.

9/4: The Texas Way

Read: Cal Jilson. “The Texas Way.”

9/7: Labor Day

No seminar meeting. University closed for official holiday.

II. Federal Relations in Theory and Historical Development

9/9: Federalism During the Founding Era

Read: Ch. 3 – pp. 79- 90; Articles of Confederation; United States Constitution; *Federalist #10*, #51.

9/11: Federalism in the Early Republic

Read: *Federalist #39*; Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions (1798); *McCulloch v Maryland* (1819); *Gibbons v Ogden* (1824)

9/14: How Social and Political Changes Lead to Changes in Federalism

Read: Ch. 3 – pp. 90-100; *Hammer v Dagenhart* (1918); *Wickard v Filburn* (1942)

9/16: The Growth of National Supremacy

Read: Ch. 12 – pp. 403-412; *Katzenbach v McClung* (1964)

9/18: The Return of the Anti-Federalists?

Read: David Brian Robertson. “Federalism and Conservative Governance after 1980”

9/21: Contemporary Federalism Debates: Health Care

Read: *NFIB v Sebelius* (2012)

9/23: Contemporary Federalism Debates: Immigration

Read: TBA

9/25: First In-Class Exam

III. Roundtable on John Paul Steven’s Six Amendments

9/28: Stevens Roundtable

Read: *Six Amendments* (all). **Due: Stevens précis.**

9/30: Stevens Roundtable cont.

10/2: Stevens Roundtable cont.

IV. The Political Institutions of Texas

10/5: Texas Political Culture

Read: Cal Jilson. “Texas: The Myth vs. The Reality.”

10/7: Locked in the Past?: Reconstruction and the Texas Constitution

Read: Ch. 2 - pp. 39-74.

10/9: Does Texas Need Its Eighth Constitution?

Read: Janice May. “Texas Constitution.”

10/12: The Texas Legislature

Read: Ch. 7 - pp. 199-229.

10/14: The Plural Executive in Texas

Read: Ch. 8 - pp. 235-270.

10/16: Meet Your Lawmakers

Quest Speaker: TBA

10/19: The Texas Judicial Branch

Read: Ch 9 – pp. 275-306.

First “Film and American Political Culture” Assignment Due

10/21: Crime and Punishment in Texas

Read: Ch. 13 – pp. 423-452.

10/23: Local Government

Read: Ch. 10 - pp. 311-342.

V: Roundtable on Martha Nussbaum’s *From Disgust to Humanity*

10/26: Nussbaum Roundtable

Read: *From Disgust to Humanity* (all). **Due: Nussbaum précis**

10/28: Nussbaum Roundtable cont.

10/30: Nussbaum Roundtable cont.

VI. Political Pluralism and Texas Political Culture

11/2: Public Education in Texas

Read: Ch. 12 - pp. 387-397; Cal Jilson. “Public Education in Texas” pp. 103-116.

11/4: Finance and the Budget in Texas

Read: Ch. 11 – pp. 347-378.

11/6: Second In-Class Exam

VII. Pluralism and Civil Society in Texas

11/9: Civil Society and Interest Groups in Texas

Read: Ch. 6 - pp. 161-176.

11/11: Elections and the Marketplace of Ideas

Read: Ch. 5 – pp. 133-157.

11/13: Contemporary Problems with Pluralism

Read: Morris Fiorina – “Parties, Participation and Representation in America.”

VIII. Roundtable on Hacker and Pierson’s *Winner Take All Politics*

11/16: Hacker and Pierson Roundtable

Read: *Winner Take All Politics* (all). **Due: Hacker/Pierson précis**

11/18: Hacker and Pierson Roundtable cont.

11/20: Hacker and Pierson Roundtable cont.

Second “Film and American Political Culture” Assignment Due

Thanksgiving Holiday Break: Monday 11/23 - Friday 11/27

IX. Civil Rights and Pluralist Democracy in Texas

11/30: The Evolution and Development of Political Parties in Texas

Read: Ch. 4 – pp. 105-129.

12/2: Federalism, Race, and Political Parties in Texas

Read: David Brian Robertson. “Federalism and Race.”

12/4: The Rise of Jim Crow and its Decline

Read: *Smith v Allwright* (1944); Voting Rights Act of 1965.

12/7: Voting Rights

Read: *Shelby County v Holder* (2013)

12/9: Third In-Class Exam