



Course GOVT 2306.004: State and Local Government
Professor Dr. Kevin Kearns
Term Fall 2016
Meetings MWF 12:00pm-12:50pm FN 2.102

Professor's Contact Information

Office Location GR 3.822
Email Address kxk166830@utdallas.edu
Office Hours TR 10:00am-12:00pm
Office Phone 972-883-4897

Teaching Assistant: Kuo-Chu Yang

Office Location GR 3.314
Email Address kxy120830@utdallas.edu
Office Hours MWF 1:00pm-2:00pm

General Course Information

Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, & other restrictions There are no prerequisites for this course other than an eagerness to learn.

Course Description This course is intended to provide students with an introduction to Texas' State government and politics. The course covers topics that relate to the state government and policy process. The course begins with a discussion of Texas political culture, federalism, and the Texas Constitution. Then, the course proceeds to a discussion of Texas institutions. The final part of the class discusses Texas political behavior. Despite the large class size, there will be class discussion along with lecture. It is crucial that students have the material before class and are prepared to discuss.

-Evaluate the role of interest groups, political parties, and public opinion in Texas politics.

-Analyze and think critically about issues and policies in Texas politics.

-Identify, describe, and analyze the electoral and institutional processes.

Learning Outcomes

-Analyze and appreciate historical trends in the development of state institutions, constitutional foundations, and the development of the Texas constitution.

-Describe how course topics affect being personally and socially responsible.

Required Texts & Materials Champagne and Harpham. 2015. "Governing Texas," 2nd Edition. W.W. Norton.

Suggested Texts, Readings, & Materials Some additional readings, to be determined over the course of the semester may be assigned and posted on e-reserve and e-learning. You will be notified when posted. Also, since there will be considerable discussion of current events related to Texas government and politics, and the intersection of Texas and national politics, it is strongly recommended you read a newspaper and use online news sites on a regular basis.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Week 1 (8/22-26) Introduction to Texas Politics
Week 2 (8/29-9/2) Political Culture (Read Ch. 1-Reading Quiz due by 8/28 at 11:59pm)
Week 3 (9/5-9/9) Texas Constitution(s) (Read Ch. 3-Reading Quiz due by 9/4 at 11:59pm)
Week 4 (9/12-9/16) Federalism (Read Ch. 2-Reading Quiz due by 9/11 at 11:59pm)
Week 5 (9/19-9/23) **Exam Review (9/21) and Exam #1 (9/23)**
Week 6 (9/26-9/30) Legislature (Read Ch. 7-Reading Quiz due by 9/25 at 11:59pm)
Week 7 (10/3-10/7) Executive (Read Ch. 8-Reading Quiz due by 10/2 at 11:59pm)
Week 8 (10/10-10/14) Judiciary (Read Ch. 9-Reading Quiz due by 10/9 at 11:59pm)
Week 9 (10/17-10/21) **Exam Review (10/19) and Exam #2 (10/21)**
Week 10(10/24-10/28) Parties (Read Ch. 4-Reading Quiz due by 10/23 at 11:59pm)
Week 11 (10/31-11/4) Elections (Read Ch. 5-Reading Quiz due by 10/30 at 11:59pm)
Week 12 (11/7-11/11) Interest Groups (Read Ch. 6-Reading Quiz due by 11/6 at 11:59pm)
Week 13(11/14-11/18) Policy (Read Ch. 12-Reading Quiz due by 11/13 at 11:59pm)
Week 14(11/21-11/25) No Class
Week 15 (11/28-12/7) Local Government (Read Ch. 13-Reading Quiz due by 11/27 at 11:59pm),
Exam Review (12/5) and Exam #3 (12/7)
Optional Final: TBD

Course Policies

Grading (credit) Criteria	Class Responsibilities:		
	Grading:		
	Online Quizzes:	15%	
	Four One-hour Exams:	75%	
	Attendance		10%
	Grading Scale:		
	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
	Exams:		
	There will be four exams in the course but only three count towards your grade. You may miss one without penalty (reason does not matter). If you take all four exams, your lowest exam score will be dropped. The first three exams are not cumulative and will have review days. Exam 4 is cumulative and will be on the scheduled final exam day.		

	<p>All exams are in-class, closed book/notebook, etc. All four exams will be multiple choice. Scantrons will be provided but you must bring a pencil with you. The exams will cover lectures as well as readings from the text that I may or may not cover in class.</p> <p>Online Quizzes:</p> <p>Quizzes will cover materials in the book and can be accessed within elearning. I will not, under any circumstances, accept late quizzes.</p>
Make-up Exams	<p>No exams will be given out after the first exam is turned in. So, make sure to arrive to class on time for exam days. If you miss an exam, you will have to take the optional cumulative final. Students who are sick, with written notice, should notify the TA (at least 24 hours before the exam) if they will miss an exam. I will not provide makeups to students who do not notify the TA and/or do not have proper written documentation. Acceptable excuses include university sanctioned events and religious holy days. All makeups must occur within 48 hours after the exam. Go to http://provost.utdallas.edu/home/syllabuspolicies for additional information regarding policies and procedures.</p>
Extra Credit	There is no extra credit for this class.
Late Work	No late work will be accepted in this course.
Special Assignments	NA
Class Attendance	<p>Attendance and participation is mandatory. You are allowed up to 3 absences. All absences beyond 3 will result in zero points for that day. Participation will also be a component of the final attendance/ participation grade.</p>
Classroom Citizenship	<p>I expect that everyone will maintain a classroom conducive to learning. Therefore, your behavior in the classroom should not interfere with other students' opportunity to learn, or the instructor's ability to conduct class. Students who are disruptive will be asked to leave class.</p> <p>Cheating:</p> <p>Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the university administration which may impose further sanction.</p>
Comet Creed	<p><i>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:</i></p> <p>"As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."</p>

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor. The Professor reserves the right to alter the syllabus at any time.