

# GOVT 2306.002: State and Local Government

Fall 2019 F 10:00am - 12:45pm, SLC 2.303

|               |                                 |   |
|---------------|---------------------------------|---|
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| Office Hours: | M W 9:00 - 9:50am               | Tu Th 10:00am - 12:00pm                     |
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## Course Description

This course serves as an introduction to the study of politics and political institutions in state and local government. It includes the origin and development of the Texas Constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and intergovernmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas. The goal is for you to be able to think critically and logically about the functions of local government and how they impact your lives.

## Required Materials

- Governing Texas (ISBN: 978-0-393-64430-2) 4th edition by Champagne, Harpham, & Casellas
- Readings in American State and Local Government by Miller & Holmes, available at <https://bookshelf.vitalsource.com/books/9781524969400> or <https://he.kendallhunt.com/product/readings-american-state-and-local-government>
- Turning Point app for smart phone, tablet, or computer available at <https://www.turningtechnologies.com/turningpoint-app/>. You may also use a physical Clicker, available from the UTD bookstore.
- Additional readings are required and will be provided by the professor and posted in eLearning. It is also important that students remain up to date on current political events in the US. Current events should be monitored using major newspapers and television news sources.

## Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas Constitution.

2. Describe state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.
6. Analyze the state and local election process.
7. Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture in Texas.

## **Grading Criteria**

### **Components**

There are THREE major graded components for this course:

1. 3 Exams (20% each; 60% total)
2. 10 Quizzes: (3% each; 30% total)
3. Clicker Questions (10% total)

### **Grading Policy**

|           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| A: 94-100 | 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: 00-59  |           |           |

NOTE: Point values are final. Final calculations of grades will be rounded following normal rounding rules. However, final grades will not be "bumped" even if a student is one (1) point away from the next grade level.

### **Exams**

The three exams will be given during class on the dates noted in the course calendar below. Students will need to bring a Scantron form 882-E and pencil. Half of the questions for the exam will come directly from the quizzes, the other half will come from lecture notes, so class attendance is vital to your success. The three exams are open note (NOT open book) and will cover the material from each unit only (not comprehensive).

No makeup exams will be given! The only exception to this rule is absence due to official travel for university business or religious holiday. If you miss an exam for any reason you may take the final exam during the time period assigned by the University. The final exam may only replace one missed exam. If you miss more than one, the others will be graded as 0. The final exam may NOT be taken to raise the grade of another exam. There are no exceptions to this rule. The final exam will be in class (on Scantron), comprehensive, and closed book. Plan your semester accordingly.

## **Quizzes**

Quizzes will be taken via eLearning and are due by 11:59PM on the date listed in the course calendar below. Each quiz will open approximately three days before it is due to provide ample time to complete. Each quiz will also have a two hour time limit once it has been started. Please ensure you plan enough time to complete each quiz.

There are no makeup quizzes. If you miss a quiz it will be graded as a 0. It is important to take the quizzes seriously as half of your exams questions come directly from them. I suggest saving and printing them to review for the exams.

## **Clicker Questions**

Clicker questions will be given in class at random times throughout the semester. Individual questions will be presented during the lecture with a 30 second time limit to respond. Questions may or may not have factual answers, or may be opinion based. Grades for clicker questions will be awarded based on participation, not the answer submitted. Failure to answer a question will result in no score be given for that question.

## **Course Calendar**

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. This schedule below should be viewed as the key concepts you should grasp after each week, and also as a study guide before each exam, and at the end of the semester. Each exam will test on the material that was taught up until the exam. Concepts tend to build on each other throughout the semester though, so it is still important to at least review earlier concepts throughout the semester.

### **Week 01, 08/23: Introduction to course**

- Syllabus review

### **Week 02, 08/30:**

- Governing Texas CH1 - The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas
- State and Local Reader CH2 Federalism
  - Quiz 1 due

**Week 03, 09/06:**

- Governing Texas CH2 - The Texas Constitution
  - Quiz 2 due

**Week 04, 09/13:**

- Governing Texas CH11- Public Finance
  - Quiz 3 due

**Week 05, 09/20:**

- Exam 1

**Week 06, 09/27:**

- Governing Texas CH7 - The Legislature
- State and Local Reader CH7 - The Legislature
  - Quiz 4 due

**Week 07, 10/04:**

- Governing Texas CH 8 - The Executive Branch
- State and Local Reader CH8 - Governors
  - Quiz 5 due

**Week 08, 10/11:**

- Governing Texas CH9 - The Judiciary
- State and Local Reader CH9 - Courts
  - Quiz 6 due

**Week 09, 10/18:**

- Governing Texas CH10 - Local Government
- State and Local Reader CH10 - Local Government
  - Quiz 7 due

**Week 10, 10/25:**

- Exam 2

**Week 11, 11/01:**

- Governing Texas CH4 - Political Parties
- State and Local Reader CH5 - Political Parties
  - Quiz 8 due

**Week 12, 11/08:**

- Governing Texas CH5 - Campaigns and Elections
- State and Local Reader CH3 - Participation, Elections, and Representation
  - Quiz 9 due

**Week 13, 11/15:**

- Governing Texas CH6 - Interest Groups and Lobbying
- State and Local Reader CH6 - Interest Groups
  - Quiz 10 due

**Week 14, 11/22:**

- Exam 3

**Week 15, 11/29:** Thanksgiving Break

- NO CLASS

**Week 16, 12/06:** Reading Day

- NO CLASS

**Week 17, 12/13:**

- Final Exam Date & Time TDB

## **Course Policies**

### **Student Responsibility**

You have already made the decision to go to college; now the follow-up decisions on whether to commit to doing the work could very well determine whether you end up working at a good paying job in a field you enjoy or working at minimum wage for the rest of your life. Education involves a partnership that requires both students and instructors to do their parts. By entering into this partnership, you have a responsibility to show up for class, do the assigned readings before class, be engaged and pay attention in class, follow directions, and put your best effort into it. You will get out of your experience here exactly what you put into it - nothing more and nothing less.

## **Attendance**

Academic success is closely associated with regular classroom attendance and course participation. All successful students, whether on campus or online, are expected to be self-motivated. Class attendance is expected and required, although I do not take role. You are responsible for any announcements made or information given during class. I do not provide copies of lecture slides to those who miss class, so your attendance is very important if you are to master the material.

## **Late Assignments**

Sufficient time has been allotted for each of the assignments in this course. As such, late assignments are not accepted in this course. Do not fail to plan your time appropriately and expect me to make exceptions.

## **Extra Credit**

There is NO extra credit for this course. Note the grading criteria and plan accordingly.

## **eLearning**

eLearning is used in this class for quizzes, review, and to check your progress in the class. You can access the course eLearning page at <http://elearning.utdallas.edu>. Additional information about how to use eLearning is available at this site as well. You will need your UTD netid to access this site. eLearning is also how I will communicate with you. You are responsible for announcements made through eLearning. You may forward messages from eLearning to your regular UTD e-mail account. Please select a forwarding address in your mail preferences if you do not regularly check your eLearning mail or UTD email.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity and Honesty**

It is the policy of the University of Texas at Dallas that cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Violations will result in immediate disciplinary action to the fullest extent of University policy. See the University catalog for a detailed explanation.

### **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."

### **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 a copy of these policies.

## **Instructor's Rights**

The instructor has the right to add, delete, or revise this course syllabus.