

GOVT 2306.004: State and Local Government

Fall 2019 MW 11:30am - 12:45pm, ECSW 1.315

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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>
- 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, 08/19 - 08/23: Introduction to course

- 8/19 Syllabus review
- 8/21 Governing Texas CH1 - The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas

Week 02, 08/26 - 08/30:

- 8/26 Governing Texas CH1 - The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas
- 8/28 State and Local Reader CH2 Federalism
 - Quiz 1 due

Week 03, 09/02 - 09/06:

- 9/2 NO Class - Labor Day
- 9/4 Governing Texas CH2 - The Texas Constitution

Week 04, 09/09 - 09/13:

- 9/9 Governing Texas CH2 - The Texas Constitution
 - Quiz 2 due
- 9/11 Governing Texas CH11- Public Finance

Week 05, 09/16 - 09/20:

- 9/16 Governing Texas CH11- Public Finance
 - Quiz 3 due
- 9/18 **Exam 1**

Week 06, 09/23 - 09/27:

- 9/23 Governing Texas CH7 - The Legislature
- 9/25 State and Local Reader CH7 - The Legislature
 - Quiz 4 due

Week 07, 09/30 - 10/04:

- 9/30 Governing Texas CH 8 - The Executive Branch
- 10/2 State and Local Reader CH8 - Governors
 - Quiz 5 due

Week 08, 10/07 - 10/11:

- 10/7 Governing Texas CH9 - The Judiciary
- 10/9 State and Local Reader CH9 - Courts
 - Quiz 6 due

Week 09, 10/14 - 10/18:

- 10/14 Governing Texas CH10 - Local Government
- 10/16 Governing Texas CH10 - Local Government
 - Quiz 7 due

Week 10, 10/21 - 10/25:

- 10/21 State and Local Reader CH10 - Local Government
- 10/23 **Exam 2**

Week 11, 10/28 - 11/01:

- 10/28 Governing Texas CH4 - Political Parties
- 10/30 State and Local Reader CH5 - Political Parties
 - Quiz 8 due

Week 12, 11/04 - 11/08:

- 11/4 Governing Texas CH5 - Campaigns and Elections
- 11/6 State and Local Reader CH3 - Participation, Elections, and Representation
 - Quiz 9 due

Week 13, 11/11 - 11/15:

- 11/11 Governing Texas CH6 - Interest Groups and Lobbying
- 11/13 Governing Texas CH6 - Interest Groups and Lobbying
 - Quiz 10 due

Week 14, 11/18 - 11/22:

- 11/18 State and Local Reader CH6 - Interest Groups
- 11/20 **Exam 3**

Week 15, 11/25 - 11/29: Thanksgiving Break

- NO CLASS

Week 16, 12/02 - 12/06: Reading Day

- 12/2 Class debriefing
- 12/4 NO CLASS

Week 17, 12/09 - 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 roll. The only exception to this is during the Camelot exercise. As that is a participatory assignment, attendance will be taken and factored into the grade for that assignment. 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.

University Policies

Academic Integrity and Honesty

Institutional Information

Instructor's Rights

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