

**Statement of the SPC Social Science Department's
Government/Political Science Division for
GOVT 2306 Common Course Syllabus**

*(As required by the Texas Legislature and Texas Higher Education
Coordinating Board and approved by Texas Higher Education Coordinating
Board and SPC)*

Department: Social Sciences

Discipline: Government

Course Number: GOVERNMENT 2306

Course Title: Texas Government (Texas Constitution and Topics)

Credit: 3 Lecture, 0 Lab

Satisfies a core curriculum requirement? Yes, Social Science and ALL Undergraduate Degrees

Prerequisites: TSI compliance in Reading

Available Formats: Conventional, INET, ITV

Campus: Levelland, Reese, ATC, Plainview

Textbook: Varies according to instructor. Refer to each instructor's instructions for textbook requirements.

Course Specific Instructions: Each instructor will attach his/her course with specific instructions.

Course Description: This course is a study of the functions performed in the American system of state governments, with special reference to the development of governance in Texas and its Constitutions. This course satisfies the Legislative requirements for teacher certification.

Course Purpose: Government 2306, as taught at South Plains College, is a reading intensive course designed to acquaint the learner with 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. This course meets the statutory requirements as set forth by the state of Texas.

Approval Number: 45.1002.51 25

Course Requirements: To maximize a student's potential to complete this course, he/she should attend all class meetings, complete all homework assignments and examinations in a timely manner, and complete all other projects or papers as assigned in the instructor's specific instructions.

Course Evaluation: See the instructor's course information sheet for specific items used in evaluating student performance.

Attendance Policy: Whenever absences become excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the

course. Each instructor will have additional information about attendance on his/her course information sheet.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students who have completed this course will:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas Constitution.
2. Demonstrate and understanding of 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. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.

Fundamental Component Areas (FCA):

Students will be expected to perform satisfactorily in four FCA.

1. Critical Thinking Skills – to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information by:
 - a. Generating and communicating ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information,
 - b. Gathering and assessing information relevant to a question,
 - c. Analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information.
2. Communication – to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral or visual communication by:

Developing, interpreting, and expressing ideas through written, oral, or visual communication.
3. Social Responsibility Skills – to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively I regional, national, and global communities by:
 - a. Demonstrating intercultural competence,
 - b. Identifying civic responsibility,
 - c. Engaging in regional, national, and global communities.
4. Personal Responsibility – to include the ability to connect choices, action, and consequences to ethical decision-making by:
 - a. Reading, understanding and affirming agreement and acceptance of principles, guidelines and requirements set forth in the “Statement of Personal Responsibility of Students” (Attached)
 - b. Evaluating choices and actions and relating consequences to personal decision-making
 - c. Accepting personal responsibility for decisions and actions taken or not taken

Nelson Course Syllabus GOVT 2306
Texas Government: Texas Constitution and Topics

Course Description

The object of this course is to give the student a better understanding of Texas government. This course will focus on Texas in the federal system, the Texas Constitution, voting and elections, political parties, the Texas legislature, the Texas governor and the executive branch, the Texas judiciary, law and due process, public policy, and local government.

Instructor

Ms. Be Nelson, M.A.

Email

hnelson@southplainscollege.edu

Office Location & Hours

Levelland, Room AD132
(806) 716-2466 (office)

Monday, Wednesday, & Friday:

10:00AM - NOON

Tuesday & Thursday:

11:00AM – NOON

You may schedule a remote meeting via zoom by emailing for an appointment time

Course Resources

The Texas Experience: Lone Star Politics Policy and Participation, 1e Update, 2022 Midterm Elections Update, By Texas Tribune, Paul Benson, Anthony Giardino

TexBook Program: *This course is in the SPC TexBook program, so you do not need to purchase a textbook or access code for this course.*

- **What is TexBook?** The required textbook/digital content for this course is available to you in Blackboard from the first day of class. The charge for the textbook/digital content is the lowest price available from the publisher and bookstore and is included in your tuition.
- **How do I access my TexBook?** Your course material is in your Blackboard course from the first day of class. Access to your course material is provided either by VitalSource or other links inside your Blackboard course. VitalSource (and many publisher's) eBook features include the ability to hear the text read aloud, highlight, take notes, create flash cards, see word definitions, build study guides, print select pages, and download 100% of the book for offline access.
- **Help with TexBook issues and support:** check with your professor or visit: <https://support.vitalsource.com/hc/en-us/requests/new> (available 24/7 via chat, email, phone, and text)
- **Opting out of TexBook:** Participating in TexBook is not mandatory, and you can choose to opt out. However, by opting out you will lose access to the course textbook/digital content and competitive pricing, and you will need to purchase the required course material on your own. If you drop the class or opt-out before the opt-out deadline, the TexBook fee will be automatically refunded to your SPC account. The opt-out deadline for Fall and Spring is the twelfth class day. The opt-out deadline for shorter terms varies between the second and third class day. **Please consult with your professor before deciding to opt-out. If you still feel that you should purchase the course textbook/materials on your own, send an **opt-out email** to pwells@texasbook.com. Include your first name, last name, student ID number, and the course you are opting out of. Once you have been opted-out, you will receive a confirmation email. If you need assistance with the process, contact the SPC Bookstore:*

Email: pwells@texasbook.com / **Phone:** 806-716-2097

Email: agamble@texasbook.com / **Phone:** 806-716-4610

Additional Reading Materials: Instructor will provide additional readings from a variety of sources including current event articles. Readings will be made available to students electronically when possible.

Course Structure: This course will include class lectures, videos, supplemental readings, assignments, and tests. All materials, including the class required textbook, will be accessible through Blackboard, or provided in class.

Attendance: Regular attendance is mandatory; attendance will be taken each class. It is in **your best interest** to attend class regularly and on time. Material that will be covered in class goes beyond the assigned reading and many questions that will be on exams come exclusively from lectures rather than just the book. If you miss a class, **you and you alone** are responsible for finding out what you missed from a classmate buddy or from what is posted on Blackboard. I do not repeat lectures in office hours or provide PowerPoints online. An absence is defined as failing to attend class, missing 15 or more minutes of class, or leaving class without the instructor's approval. Additionally, a student accrues an absence each time he or she accumulates a total of three late arrivals (i.e. 5+ minutes late). Whenever feasible, students should let the instructor know about expected absences as soon as possible.

Students who have approved absences for athletic or other school approved activities should provide a schedule within the first two weeks. Students who miss classes or exams due to verifiable circumstances such as medical emergencies should provide the documentation to the professor or facilitator as soon as they return to classes.

Student Performance: You must maintain your standards throughout the duration of the semester. There will be no extra credit and there will be little time for playing "catch-up." **If you fail three (3) consecutive quizzes, or if you fail to complete 3 consecutive grades, you will be dropped from the class with a failing grade with no further warning.** If you repeatedly fail to submit required work on time, you may be dropped from the class at the discretion of the instructor. **Students who do not complete Quiz 1 by the census will be automatically dropped from the class.**

GENERAL POLICIES

- ❖ **Behavior:** Students are expected to be considerate of one another as well as of the instructor. In the words of the late Molly Ivins, "It really is possible to disagree with someone's policies without hating them. Grown-ups can do that." Conduct that interferes with other students' right to learn will not be tolerated.
- ❖ **Getting help:** Come see me after class or email me if you have a problem with readings, lecture, or assignments. If you are having difficulty of any kind **the earlier you ask for help, the easier the solution to your problem will be.** I cannot help if I am unaware. When emailing, please be sure to include your full name, the course number, and section number in the subject line of your email. Ex. GOVT 2306-006; the course number is 2306, the section number is 006.
- ❖ **Academic Honesty:** Honesty is the expected standard. **Plagiarism and cheating (copying answers from an outside source or another student or generating answers with AI) will not be tolerated and can be grounds for dismissal from South Plains College.** Incidents of cheating on examinations will result in failure of the course and potential consequences such as dismissal from South Plains College.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

For information regarding Intellectual Exchange, Disabilities, Non-Discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) Team, and Campus Concealed Carry, please use the following link: [Syllabus Statements \(southplainscollege.edu\)](https://southplainscollege.edu/SyllabusStatements).

REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO COVID-19:

If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms, please do not attend class and either seek medical attention or test for COVID-19.

- Cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- Fever or chills
- Muscles or body aches
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- New loss of taste and smell

Please also notify **DeEtte Edens**, BSN, RN, Associate Director of Health & Wellness, at dedens@southplainscollege.edu or **806-716-2376**. Proof of a positive test is required. A home test is sufficient but students must submit a photo of the positive result. The date of test must be written on the test result and an ID included in the photo. If tested elsewhere (clinic, pharmacy, etc.), please submit a copy of the doctor's note or email notification. Results may be emailed to DeEtte Edens, BSN, RN at dedens@southplainscollege.edu.

A student is clear to return to class without further assessment from DeEtte Edens, BSN, RN if they have completed the 5-day isolation period, symptoms have improved, and they are without fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Students must communicate with DeEtte Edens, BSN, RN prior to their return date if still symptomatic at the end of the 5-day isolation. Please note that day 0 is the date of positive test. Day 1 begins the first full day after the date of positive result.

Student Absence for Observation of Religious Holy Days: A student who is absent from classes for the observation of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence **if, not later than the fifteenth day after the first day of the semester, the student had notified the instructor of each scheduled class that the student would be absent for a religious holy day.**

I will accommodate students who have the appropriate documentation of disability. Documented or not; however, see me during the **first week** of class to discuss our plan of action.

Evaluation Method:

13 Quizzes	20%
3 Exams	40%
4 Assignments	25%
4 Discussions	15%

Grading: The grading scale will be as follows:

90-100 = A	80-89 = B	70-79 = C	60-69 = D	59 or below = F
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You earn your grade; that grade is entered. Grades are updated weekly (sometimes sooner if there is less reading involved).

- ❖ **Quizzes:** The instructor will administer 13 (may drop a quiz) quizzes. Should a student miss a quiz deadline they will be required to submit outlined reading notes for the chapters covered before they can make up the quiz.
- ❖ **Exams:** There will be **3 exams**. These exams account for 40% of your overall grade. The final exam will not be cumulative. Exams will consist of a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. Make-up exams will be allowed with prior notification, but may require documentation. Students wishing to take a make-up exam must apply to the instructor via email. **There are no make-ups for the FINAL EXAM.**
- ❖ **Assignments:** There will be **4 assignments** to supplement student knowledge and understanding. Assignments have a greater weight than a single quiz because there are fewer assignments than quizzes. It would be best not to attempt to offset a zero. Late assignments will receive an automatic deduction of ten points each day they are late. No assignment will be accepted 3 days after their due date.
- ❖ **Discussions:** Every semester I create a discussion thread to simulate classroom discussion in government. Carefully read the handout (on blackboard) detailing discussions and how to receive full credit. Discussions consist of an initial post of 300 words (including at least one source outside of class materials) as well as two fully developed 100-word responses to two different classmates (no repeats). As with assignments, an automatic deduction of 10 points will be assessed each day late and will not be accepted after 5 days.

SPC Tutors

Tutoring is FREE for all currently enrolled students. Make an appointment or drop-in for help at any SPC location or online! Visit the link below to learn more about how to book an appointment, view the tutoring schedule, and view tutoring locations.

<http://www.southplainscollege.edu/exploreprograms/artsandsciences/teacheredtutoring.php>

Tutor.com

You also have 180 FREE minutes of tutoring with Tutor.com each week, and your hours reset every Monday morning. Log into Blackboard, click on the tools option from the left-hand menu bar. Click on the Tutor.com link and you will automatically be logged in for free tutoring. You may access tutor.com tutors during the following times:
Monday – Thursday: 8pm-8am, Friday: 6pm – 8am Monday morning.

For questions regarding tutoring, please email tutoring@southplainscollege.edu or call 806-716-2538.

Tentative Course Schedule/Pacing

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this schedule as needed, but will endeavor to give as much advanced notice as possible.

Class Week	Topic	Reading Guide
1	Texas Society and Political Culture	Ch. 1 Quiz 1 Discussion 1
2-3	Federalism and the Texas Constitution	Ch. 2 Quiz 2 Assignment 1
4	Voting and Elections in Texas	Ch. 3 Quiz 3
5	Political Parties in Texas	Ch. 4 Quiz 4 Discussion 2
6	Interest Groups in Texas Politics	Ch. 5 Quiz 5 Assignment 2
7	The Media and Public Opinion in Texas	Ch. 6 Quiz 6 Exam 1
8-9	The Texas Legislature	Ch. 7 Quiz 7 Discussion 3
10	The Governor in Texas	Ch. 8 Quiz 8 Assignment 3
11	The Plural Executive and the Bureaucracy in Texas	Ch. 9 Quiz 9
12	The Texas Courts System	Ch. 10 Quiz 10 Assignment 4
13	Criminal Justice Policy in Texas	Ch. 12 (out of order) Quiz 11 Discussion 4 Exam 2
14	Local and County Governments and Special Districts in Texas	Ch. 11 Quiz 12
15	Public Policy, Finance, and Budgeting in Texas	Ch. 13 Quiz 13
16	FINAL EXAM WEEK (Exam 3)	