



**GOVT 2306.013IN**  
**Texas Government**  
**Fall 2023**  
**Online**  
**August 23, 2023 – December 15, 2023**

**Instructor Information:**

Will Geisler, [wgeisler@com.edu](mailto:wgeisler@com.edu)

**Student hours and location:**

M-F 9:00am-10:00am, online or via Zoom by appointment.

**Required Textbook:**

Collier, Lone Star Politics, 7th Edition, 2021

**Course Description:** Origin and development of the Texas constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and inter-governmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas.

**Course requirements (including description of any special projects or assignments):**

Chapter Work:

For each chapter, do the following:

1. Carefully read the chapter in your textbook and take notes.
2. Read the Learning Objectives.
3. Watch the PowerPoint presentation for the chapter.
4. Watch the chapter video.
5. Do the chapter discussion forum
6. Do any written assignments as you encounter them in the chapter
7. When you have mastered the chapter, take the chapter exam (two attempts).

**Late Work/Make-Up, and Extra Credit Policy**

Late work is generally not accepted. If late work is accepted, the grade may be lowered or given a 0 at the discretion of the instructor.

**Determination of Course Grad/Detailed Grading Formula**

Orientation (Quiz - 5 points, Introductory Discussion – 5 points):

After you have carefully read the Read Me First menu item, then do the orientation items.

Chapter Exam (420 points):

There are 14 chapter exams each worth 30 points. The format for each exam is "open book" and each exam has a time limit of 30 minutes. Utilize the PowerPoint chapter presentations, the eFlashcards, as well as the textbook to prepare for each exam.

Each student will have two attempts per exam, so study hard before you attempt to take an exam. Exam questions are pulled from a larger group of questions. By design, there is not enough time to look up each and every question, so study prior to taking the exam. The higher grade will be recorded and the grade will post immediately after submission.

You must be prepared for each exam by reading the assigned chapter. Do not procrastinate; give yourself time to complete each exam in sequence as you progress through the chapters and the units. You may, of course, move at your own pace ahead of each deadline.

On rare occasions, there may be an issue with the exam questions. Please let me know if that is the case. I always appreciate help in catching errors in the exam. Always feel free to check the answers against the book – if you have a question about an answer marked wrong, just email me with the question and your evidence (a pic) from the book.

Unforeseen glitches during an exam attempt can occur from time to time. There are several steps you can take to ensure you do not have a problem during an attempt. Go ahead and contact me if you have any problems with the exam, if it is a tech support problem, consult tech support.

#### Written Projects (260 points):

There are five written projects for the course.

- Texas Rights Project (25 points)
- Legislative Profiles (35 points),
- Governor Profiles (50 points),
- State and Local Government (50 points)
- Texas Interest Group Project (50 points)

See instructions for each assignment in Blackboard. There will be an attached rubric given with the grade on the written assignment. Be sure to answer all questions for each assignment. Questions that require more work are always worth more points. Do not skip questions that require paragraph summaries or extended replies, you're grade on the assignment will suffer greatly if you do. Incomplete written assignment may not be accepted and may be given a 0, so do not turn in half-completed work or skip any of the questions. Do not cut and paste any answers for the written assignments unless otherwise indicated. That is plagiarism. Students who plagiarize will get a 0 on the assignment and may fail the course and be reported to the college.

#### Discussion Forums (280 points)

There are 14 discussion forums each worth 20 points. To get the full credit, write a 250-300-word response (include the word count at the end of your post). Your response should carefully address all parts of the question in a coherent, organized, and professional manner. You must also respond to someone else's post with a 100-word response (use word count again). Your responses should be your own words. Do not cut and paste - this is plagiarism. If you do quote the textbook or other sources, be sure to use parenthetical citation or footnotes for proper attribution. Use proper

grammar and spelling – posts with excessive grammar and spelling errors may receive a lowered grade or a 0.

**Facebook Group (25 points):**

There is a Facebook group assigned to your class. See the Facebook menu item on Blackboard for instructions.

**Grading Scale/Formula:**

A = 900-1000 points

B = 800-899 points

C = 700-799 points

D = 600-699 points

F = 0-599 points

**Late Work, Make-Up, and Extra Credit Policy:**

Late work may or may not be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. If the work is accepted, the grade may be lowered. Make-Up work may or may not be allowed at the discretion of the instructor. Extra credit may or may not be offered at the discretion of the instructor.

**Attendance Policy:**

You should login to the course a minimum of three times per week. You are welcome to work ahead, but do not turn in work late, it may not be accepted

**Communicating with your instructor:** ALL electronic communication with the instructor must be through your COM email. Due to FERPA restrictions, faculty cannot share any information about performance in the class through other electronic means.

<b>STUDENT LEARNER OUTCOME</b>	<b>CONNECTSTO CORE OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ASSESSED VIA</b>
1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.	Critical Thinking (CT)	Exam/Written Assignment
2. Describe state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.	Critical Thinking (CT)	Exam/Written Assignment
Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.	Critical Thinking (CT)	Exam/Written Assignment
Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.	Critical Thinking (CT)	Exam/Written Assignment
Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas	Critical Thinking (CT) Personal Responsibility (PR) Communication Skills (CS1)	Exam/ Written Assignment

Analyze the state and local election process.	Critical Thinking (CT) Social Responsibility (SR)	Exam/Written Assignment
Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens.	Social Responsibility (SR) Personal Responsibility (PR)	Exam/Written Assignment
Analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas.	Critical Thinking (CT)	Exam/Written Assignment

**Academic Dishonesty:**

Any student who has been found to have been academically dishonest due to plagiarism, cheating, or collusion on an assignment **may receive a grade of zero for the assignment, and may be given an F for the course and reported to the college for disciplinary action.**

**Plagiarism:**

The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own. Any student who has been found to have been academically dishonest due to plagiarism **may receive a grade of zero for the assignment, and may be given an F for the course and reported to the college for disciplinary action.**

**Link(s) to resource(s) about ways to avoid plagiarism:**

<http://en.writecheck.com/ways-to-avoid-plagiarism/>

**Student Concerns:**

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course, please contact me at [wgeisler@com.edu](mailto:wgeisler@com.edu) or by phone at 972.983.1816. If, after discussing your concern with me, you continue to have questions, please contact Dr. Shinya Wakao at 409-933-8107.

**Institutional Policies and Guidelines**

**Grade Appeal Process:** Concerns about the accuracy of grades should first be discussed with the instructor. A request for a change of grade is a formal request and must be made within six months of the grade assignment. Directions for filing an appeal can be found in the student handbook [https://www.com.edu/student-services/docs/Student\\_Handbook\\_2023-2024\\_v2.pdf](https://www.com.edu/student-services/docs/Student_Handbook_2023-2024_v2.pdf). *An appeal will not be considered because of general dissatisfaction with a grade, penalty, or outcome of a course. Disagreement with the instructor's professional judgment of the quality of the student's work and performance is also not an admissible basis for a grade appeal.*

**Academic Success & Support Services:** College of the Mainland is committed to providing students the necessary support and tools for success in their college careers. Support is offered through our Tutoring Services, Library, Counseling, and through Student Services. Please discuss any concerns with your faculty or an advisor.

**ADA Statement:** Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations is requested to contact Kimberly Lachney at 409-933-8919 or [klachney@com.edu](mailto:klachney@com.edu). The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities is located in the Student Success Center.

**Textbook Purchasing Statement:** A student attending College of the Mainland is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from the college-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

**Withdrawal Policy:** Students may withdraw from this course for any reason prior to the last eligible day for a “W” grade. Before withdrawing students should speak with the instructor and consult an advisor. Students are permitted to withdraw only six times during their college career by state law. The last date to withdraw from the 1<sup>st</sup> 8-week session is October 11. The last date to withdraw from the 16-week session is November 28. The last date to withdraw for the 2<sup>nd</sup> 8-week session is December 7.

**FN Grading:** The FN grade is issued in cases of *failure due to a lack of attendance*, as determined by the instructor. The FN grade may be issued for cases in which the student ceases or fails to attend class, submit assignments, or participate in required capacities, and for which the student has failed to withdraw. The issuing of the FN grade is at the discretion of the instructor. The last date of attendance should be documented for submission of an FN grade.

**Early Alert Program:** The Student Success Center at College of the Mainland has implemented an Early Alert Program because student success and retention are very important to us. I have been asked to refer students to the program throughout the semester if they are having difficulty completing assignments or have poor attendance. If you are referred to the Early Alert Program you will be contacted by someone in the Student Success Center who will schedule a meeting with you to see what assistance they can offer in order for you to meet your academic goals.

### **Resources to Help with Stress:**

If you are experiencing stress or anxiety about your daily living needs including food, housing or just feel you could benefit from free resources to help you through a difficult time, please click here <https://www.com.edu/community-resource-center/>. College of the Mainland has partnered with free community resources to help you stay on track with your schoolwork, by addressing life issues that get in the way of doing your best in school. All services are private and confidential. You may also contact the Dean of Students office at [deanofstudents@com.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@com.edu) or [communityresources@com.edu](mailto:communityresources@com.edu).

### **Course Schedule**

Next to each unit is the time allotted for that unit's work to be completed. All Deadlines are by 11:59pm on the date indicated. For each chapter: read the chapter, read the chapter learning objectives, watch the PowerPoint, watch the chapter video, study the chapter, do the chapter discussion forum, and take the exam. Do any written assignments as you encounter them in the chapters.

### **Orientation Activities**

Introductory Discussion Board (due 8-28)  
Orientation Quiz (due 8-28)  
Join Facebook Group (due 8-28)

### **Unit 1 - Foundations**

Chapter 1 - Intro to Texas Government

Read the Chapter, Learning Objectives, Chapter Summary  
Watch the Chapter PowerPoint  
Watch Chapter Video  
Do the Chapter Discussion Forum (due by 9-4)  
Take the Chapter Exam (due by 9-5)

Chapter 2 - Texas Constitution  
Read the Chapter, Learning Objectives, Chapter Summary  
Watch the Chapter PowerPoint  
Watch Chapter Video  
Do the Chapter Discussion Forum (due by 9-9)  
*Written Assignment: Texas Rights Project (due by 9-11)*  
Take the Chapter Exam (due by 9-13)  
Facebook Discussion Posts and Comments (two posts/two comments per week)

Chapter 11 - Local Government in Texas  
Read the Chapter, Learning Objectives, Chapter Summary  
Watch the Chapter PowerPoint  
Watch Chapter Video  
Do the Chapter Discussion Forum (due by 9-16)  
*Written Assignment: State and Local Government Project (due 9-18)*  
Take the Chapter Exam (due by 9-20)  
Facebook Discussion Posts and Comments (two posts/two comments per week)

## **Unit 2 - The Texas Legislature**

Chapter 3 - Texas Legislature  
Read the Chapter, Learning Objectives, Chapter Summary  
Watch the Chapter PowerPoint  
Watch Chapter Video  
Do the Chapter Discussion Forum (due by 9-24)  
Take the Chapter Exam (due by 9-28)

Chapter 4 - Legislative Organization  
Read the Chapter, Learning Objectives, Chapter Summary  
Watch the Chapter PowerPoint  
Watch Chapter Video  
Do the Chapter Discussion Forum (due by 9-30)  
*Written Assignment: Legislative Profiles (due 10-5)*  
Take the Chapter Exam (due by 10-6)  
Facebook Discussion Posts and Comments (two posts/two comments per week)

## **Unit 3 - The Texas Executive**

Chapter 5 – The Plural Executive in Texas  
Read the Chapter, Learning Objectives, Chapter Summary  
Watch the Chapter PowerPoint  
Watch Chapter Video  
Do the Chapter Discussion Forum (due by 10-8)

*Written Assignment: Governor Profile (due 10-10)*

Take the Chapter Exam (due by 10-14)

Chapter 6 - Texas Judicial System

Read the Chapter, Learning Objectives, Chapter Summary

Watch the Chapter PowerPoint

Watch Chapter Video

Do the Chapter Discussion Forum (due by 10-17)

Take the Chapter Exam (due by 10-20)

Chapter 7 - Texas-Sized Justice

Read the Chapter, Learning Objectives, Chapter Summary

Watch the Chapter PowerPoint

Watch Chapter Video

Do the Chapter Discussion Forum (due by 10-23)

Take the Chapter Exam (due by 10-27)

Facebook Discussion Posts and Comments (two posts/two comments per week)

#### **Unit 4 - Political Behavior**

Chapter 8- Campaigns and Elections

Read the Chapter, Learning Objectives, Chapter Summary

Watch the Chapter PowerPoint

Watch Chapter Video

Do the Chapter Discussion Forum (due by 10-30)

Take the Chapter Exam (due by 10-5)

Chapter 9 - Political Parties

Read the Chapter, Learning Objectives, Chapter Summary

Watch the Chapter PowerPoint

Watch Chapter Video

Do the Chapter Discussion Forum (due by 11-8)

Take the Chapter Exam (due by 11-11)

Chapter 10 - Organized Interests

Read the Chapter, Learning Objectives, Chapter Summary

Watch the Chapter PowerPoint

Watch Chapter Video

Do the Chapter Discussion Forum (due by 11-13)

*Written Assignment: Texas Interest Group Project (due 11-15)*

Take the Chapter Exam (due by 11-18)

Facebook Discussion Posts and Comments (two posts/two comments per week)

#### **Unit 5 - Policy**

Chapter 12 - Fiscal Policy

Read the Chapter, Learning Objectives, Chapter Summary

Watch the Chapter PowerPoint

Watch Chapter Video

Do the Chapter Discussion Forum (due by 11-20)  
Take the Chapter Exam (due by 11-30)

Chapter. 13 - Energy, Environment, and Transportation  
Read the Chapter, Learning Objectives, Chapter Summary  
Watch the Chapter PowerPoint  
Watch Chapter Video  
Do the Chapter Discussion Forum (due by 11-12-3)  
Take the Chapter Exam (due by 11-12-6)

Chapter 14 – Social Policy, Education, Health  
Read the Chapter, Learning Objectives, Chapter Summary  
Watch the Chapter PowerPoint  
Watch Chapter Video  
Do the Chapter Discussion Forum (due by 12-7)  
Take the Chapter Exam (due by 12-9)

Final Paper (due by 12-12)  
Concluding Discussion Forum (due 12-13)  
Alternate Film Project (for those not doing the Facebook Group) (due 12-13)  
Facebook Discussion Posts and Comments (two posts/two comments per week)

Note: The professor reserves the right to make changes or modifications, if necessary, to this syllabus.