



GOVT 2306-012I1
Texas Government
Spring 2025 – First Eight-Week Session
Asynchronous Online Course

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Office Hours: Held online – Wednesdays from 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm and by appointment

Required Textbook: Lone Star Politics (8th Ed.), Ken Collier et al, Sage (CQ) Press, 2024

Course Description: Origin and development of the U.S. Constitution, structure and powers of the national government including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public policy, civil liberties, and civil rights.

Course Requirements:

Discussion Board Threads:

From the first module of the course up to and including Module 14, you will have a discussion board thread to participate in. Your participation in these threads is graded, so it is important to make an honest effort to constructively participate in online discussion. The questions posed to you are designed to demonstrate contemporary relevance of course material. In other words, I want to show you how this material in this course applies to the “real world” through discussion and dialogue.

Each discussion board thread is worth 20 points. Your initial discussion board post must be, at minimum, 200 words in length and directly address the question posed for that week’s thread. Then, students are required to submit two response posts, each responding to another student’s initial post. Each of these two response posts are to be, at minimum, 75 words in length and address something contained in the student’s post. “Good post” and “I agree” are not adequate response posts. *Please pay attention to deadlines for initial posts and response posts in the course calendar.*

For each discussion board thread, your initial posts are always due each Wednesday of each week, with your two response posts due each Sunday of each week. This is *very* important to remember; not posting initial posts and/or response posts in a timely manner is the number one cause of lost points in this course. To have fruitful discussions on the topics to be covered, we must have different due dates for initial posts and for response posts.

When I grade your discussion board posts, I will issue 10 points (assuming you met expectations) for your effort, so you know you are on the right track with your posts. Then, once you submit your two response posts, if they meet expectations, I will then issue the other 10 points (five points for each response post). You will find that I grade assignments on the day they are submitted; it is important to me that students know where they stand in the course at any given time. If you submit your initial post and receive 10 points out of 20 points, do not panic! If you submit those two response posts, you will earn the remaining 10 points.

Remember – because we are covering two modules per week, this means you will be completing two discussion board threads each week.

Quizzes:

For each module up to and including Module 14, students will be required to complete a quiz that covers the chapter for that week. Each quiz consists of 20 questions, one point for each question, and are either multiple-choice or true/false. The quiz questions are directly based on the material in each of the chapters of the textbook and the quizzes are open book. You will have 30 minutes to complete each quiz.

Remember – because we are covering two modules per week, this means you will be completing two quizzes each week.

Essay Tests:

As previously indicated, you will be required to complete four essay tests at various points during the course. The course schedule outlines when they will be due. Each test will consist of ten questions, each requiring an itemized list, the defining of a term or a short answer, typically not to exceed a 5-6 sentence paragraph. Each essay test will also include an extra credit question for an opportunity for you to earn additional points toward your overall final grade.

Article Report:

For Module 14, you will be required to submit to me an article report. For this report, you are to pick an article from a news periodical or scholarly journal that pertains to a topic, theory, or issue related to the course (meaning, pertains to an issue related to American government and politics). You are then to read it and submit to me a report on this article. The report should include a summary of the article, as well as your assessment, interpretations, and analysis of the information contained in the article. News journals such as Time, Newsweek, and US News and World Report are acceptable. Countless articles contained in scholarly journals are available in the EBSCO and JSTOR databases accessible through the Dallas College Virtual Library. This report should be three pages in length (minimum), double-spaced, using 12-point font, and make sure you provide a citation for the article used on a separate page. **Newspaper articles are NOT acceptable.**

Position Paper Assignment:

For this assignment, you are to write a position paper on a specific controversy in the current public policy discourse and debate in the State of Texas. What is meant by a position paper is to take a stance on the issue of your choice and defend that stance with facts and information. You may take any position on the issue of your choice; all I ask is that you defend this position. *As is always the case in my class, you will never be graded, judged, or assessed on your opinions and positions.*

The paper is to be 1000 words in length (roughly five pages), using 12-point font, double-spaced with one-inch margins, and utilizing the Chicago Style of Writing. Footnotes and bibliography must reflect this style.

Please choose an issue and find a specific policy or proposed policy related to that issue. Some examples are as follows:

Should the Texas abortion law be repealed?

Should marijuana be legalized in Texas?

Does Texas have the power to prevent illegal migrants from crossing the border?

Is the use of capital punishment by Texas appropriate and legitimate?

Should Texas offer tuition-free community college for its residents (similar to what Tennessee offers)?

How should Texas spend rainy day funds?

Should the State of Texas legalize sports gambling?

A reminder - your position paper assignment is due no later than 11:59 pm on Thursday, March 6th, 2025. I am unable to accept this assignment late for any reason. Please plan and *work ahead* on this assignment.

Final Examination:

Your final examination will be open book and consist of 100 multiple choice questions (one point each). You will have two hours to complete the final exam. The final exam will be due no later than **11:59 pm Central Time on Thursday, March 6th, 2025.**

Summary of Graded Work:

Assignments	Points	Totals
Discussion Boards	14 @ 20 points each	280 points
Chapter Quizzes	14 @ 20 points each	280 points
Essay Tests	4 @ 50 points each	200 points

Assignments	Points	Totals
Article Report	1 @ 40 points each	40 points
Position Paper Assignment	1 @ 100 points	100 points
Final Examination	1 @ 100 points	100 points

TOTAL: 1,000 points

Final Grade:

Points	Percentages	Letter Grade
900 – 1000	90-100%	A
800 - 899	80-89%	B
700 - 799	70-79%	C
600 - 699	60-69%	D
0-599	0-59%	F

Student Learner Outcome	Maps to Core Objective	Assessed via this Assignment
1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas State Constitution.	None	Exam
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.	None	Exam
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.	None	Exam
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas state government.	None	Exam
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the Texas political system.	Critical Thinking	Paper
6. Analyze election process.	None	Exam
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.	None	Exam

8. Analyze issues and policies in Texas politics	Critical Thinking	Paper
9. Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written communication.	Critical Thinking	Paper
10. Evaluate choices and actions of others or one's own and relate consequences to decision-making.	Critical Thinking	Paper

Late Work Policy:

Late assignments are not accepted in this course and will be issued a zero grade. However, if a student experiences a family emergency or a medical condition that prevents the timely submission of the assignment, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the professor as soon as possible. These extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis and if an extension is warranted, one will be granted. But, in general, assignments are not accepted late.

In addition, for those students that fail to submit their initial discussion board post by the Wednesday deadline, *those students will receive a zero grade for the entire discussion board thread for that module.* (Excepting possible extenuating circumstances).

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. (Faculty may add additional statement requiring monitoring and communication expectations via D2L or other LMS)

Academic Dishonesty: Any incident of academic policy will be dealt with in accordance with college policy and the Student Handbook. Academic dishonesty – such as cheating on exams is an extremely serious offense and will result in a grade of zero on that exam and the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for appropriate discipline action.

Student Concerns: If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course, please contact me using the contact information previously provided. If, after discussing your concern with me, you continue to have questions, please contact Shinya Wakao at swakao@com.edu.

Course outline:

**Course Schedule – All Assignments Must Be Completed and Submitted by 11:59 pm
Central Time on the Specified Due Date**

Topic	Readings & Assignments
Module One	<p>Reading: Chapter 1: Political Culture and the People of Texas</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board One, Chapter One Quiz</p> <p>Initial Discussion Board Post Due: Wednesday, January 15th</p> <p>Response Posts and Quiz Due: Sunday, January 19th</p>
Module Two	<p>Reading: Chapter 2: The American Federal System</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board Two, Chapter Two Quiz</p> <p>Initial Discussion Board Post Due: Wednesday, January 15th</p> <p>Response Posts and Quiz Due: Sunday, January 19th</p>
Module Three	<p>Reading: Chapter 3: Texas Constitution</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board Three, Chapter Three Quiz, Essay Test #1</p> <p>Initial Discussion Board Post Due: Wednesday, January 22nd</p> <p>Response Posts, Quiz, and Essay Test #1 Due: Sunday, January 26th</p>
Module Four	<p>Reading: Chapter 4: Political Parties in Texas</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board Four, Chapter Four Quiz.</p>

Topic	Readings & Assignments
	<p>Initial Discussion Board Post Due: Wednesday, January 22nd</p> <p>Response Posts and Quiz Due: Sunday, January 26th</p>
Module Five	<p>Reading: Chapter 5: Elections and Political Participation in Texas</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board Five, Chapter Five Quiz.</p> <p>Initial Discussion Board Post Due: Wednesday, January 29th</p> <p>Response Posts and Quiz Due: Sunday, February 2nd</p>
Module Six	<p>Reading: Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board Six, Chapter Six Quiz, Essay Test #2</p> <p>Initial Discussion Board Post Due: Wednesday, January 29th</p> <p>Response Posts, Quiz, and Essay Test #2 Due: Sunday, February 2nd</p>
Module Seven	<p>Reading: Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board Seven, Chapter Seven Quiz.</p> <p>Initial Discussion Board Post Due: Wednesday, February 5th</p> <p>Response Posts and Quiz Due: Sunday, February 9th</p>
Module Eight	<p>Reading: Chapter 8: The Executive Branch and the Governor of Texas</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board Eight, Chapter Eight Quiz, Essay Test #3</p>

Topic	Readings & Assignments
	<p>Initial Discussion Board Post Due: Wednesday, February 5th</p> <p>Response Posts, Quiz, and Essay Test #3 Due: Sunday, February 9th</p>
Module Nine	<p>Reading: Chapter 9: The Evolution of the Law in Texas</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board Nine, Chapter Nine Quiz</p> <p>Initial Discussion Board Post Due: Wednesday, February 12th</p> <p>Response Posts and Quiz Due: Sunday, February 16th</p>
Module 10	<p>Reading: Chapter 10: Local Government</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board Ten, Chapter 10 Quiz, Essay Test #4</p> <p>Initial Discussion Board Post Due: Wednesday, February 12th</p> <p>Response Posts, Quiz, and Essay Test #4 Due: Sunday, February 16th</p>
Module 11	<p>Reading: Chapter 11: Public Policy in Texas</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board 11, Chapter 11 Quiz, Article Report</p> <p>Initial Discussion Board Post Due: Wednesday, February 19th</p> <p>Response Posts, Quiz, and Article Report Due: Sunday, February 23rd</p>
Module 12	<p>Reading: Chapter 12: The Criminal Justice System in Texas</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board 12, Chapter 12 Quiz</p>

Topic	Readings & Assignments
	<p>Initial Discussion Board Post Due: Wednesday, February 19th</p> <p>Response Posts and Quiz Due: Sunday, February 23rd</p>
Module 13	<p>Reading: Chapter 13: State Finance</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board 13, Chapter 13 Quiz</p> <p>Initial Discussion Board Post Due: Wednesday, February 26th</p> <p>Response Posts and Quiz Due: Sunday, March 2nd</p>
Module 14	<p>Reading: Chapter 14: Building the Future: Public Policies for a Changing Texas</p> <p>Assignments: Discussion Board 14, Chapter 14 Quiz</p> <p>Initial Discussion Board Post Due: Wednesday, February 26th</p> <p>Response Posts and Quiz Due: Sunday, March 2nd</p>
Module 15	<p>Reading: Review for Final Exam</p> <p>Assignments: Position Paper Assignment</p> <p>Position Paper Assignment Due: Thursday, March 6th</p>
Module 16	<p>Reading: Review for Final Exam</p> <p>Assignments: Final Examination</p> <p>Final Examination Due: Thursday, March 6th</p>

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_2024-2025_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, Student Accessibility Services Coordinator

Phone: 409-933-8919

Email: AccessibilityServices@com.edu

Location: COM Doyle Family Administration Building, 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 1st 8-week session is February 26. The last date to withdraw from the 16-week session is April 21. The last date to withdraw for the 2nd 8-week session is April 30.

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 or communityresources@com.edu.

Nondiscrimination Statement:

The College District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of College District policy.