



**Government 2306-111CL
Texas Government
Summer 2023
M-F 10:00-11:50 AM
Learning Resources Center (LRC), Bldg. 8, Rm. 252**

Instructor Information

Name: Mr. John Presnall

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Phone: 409.933.8126 (Leave Message)

Student/Office Hours: M-F 7:30-8:00 AM

Office Location: Learning Resource Center (Building # 8) 215C

Required Textbook: Ken Collier, Steven Galatas, and Julie Harrelson-Stephens, Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation in Texas, 6th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2020).

ISBN-10: 1544316267

Course Description: Government 2306 is an introduction to politics and government in the state of Texas. The purpose of this introduction is to acquire knowledge of the basic principles and practices of state politics.

This semester we will study federalism and inter-governmental relations, the political culture of Texas, the origin and development of the Texas Constitution, the structure and powers of state government, political participation, the election process, and issues in public policy.

This introductory course will also attempt to understand some of the basic questions and problems encountered by political science and political philosophy. For an introduction to these questions, we will read an essay “The Five Conceptions of American Liberty” by Carl Eric Scott and explore some the basic concepts of political science.

Course Requirements

Course Exams: There are three (3) Unit Exams. Each exam will cover the required textbook chapter readings, lecture notes, and additional readings. The exams will consist of multiple-choice questions.

Short Papers: Throughout the course you will complete four (4) short papers (2 pages at a minimum) over a selected topic. Additional information on grading rubric, submission, format, citations, etc. will be provided in the assignment file. Submit in class.

Research Paper: Write a Position Paper on a current public policy controversy in the Texas (e.g., Should marijuana be legalized in Texas?; Should Texas legalize casino gambling?; Should Texas prohibit “sanctuary cities?”; Should Texas prohibit the teaching of “Critical Race Theory” in public primary and secondary schools?; Should Texas reverse its voting laws requiring a government issue photo ID and prohibiting mail in ballots?; Should Texas introduce Covid vaccine mandates?; etc.).

Make sure that your paper is on a topic that is statewide in scope, and not an issue that pertains to the entire nation. The paper can cover an already existing policy or a proposed policy.

Write a paper explaining and describing the policy or proposed policy (what is the law, executive action, administrative regulation, or judicial ruling that has determined or could determine the policy?) Take a position on the policy or proposed policy (in favor or against). Describe the issue that the policy or proposed policy deals with? Explain in detail. What are the controversies regarding the policy? Explain in detail.

Conduct research on the topic, citing at least three sources from credible and reliable publications, web sites, journals, books, etc. Formulate an argument based on evidence in defense of the position you are taking. Also, respond to the most common objections to this position.

Explain how this position impacts the issues of personal responsibility and social responsibility.

The paper should be 1000 words (approximately 5 pages), double-spaced, with one-inch margins, and a 12-point font. Use a standard style for references, citations, and the list of sources (e.g., MLA, Chicago, or APA). Submit in class.

Emergency Assignment: If for any reason the college closes, continue to work on the assignments spelled out in your syllabus and/or refer to Blackboard for Emergency Closing Assignments and further instructions.

Determination of Grade

Unit Exams— 45% (15% each) toward final grade.

Papers— 40% (10% each) toward final grade.

Research Paper— 15% toward final grade.

A 100-90

B 89-80

C 79-70

D 69-60

F 59-0

Late Work, Make-Up, and Extra Credit Policy: Late and make-up work will be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Students need to notify the instructor via email of any problems in this regard. Extra Credit assignments will be offered toward the end of the semester.

Attendance: Attendance is required for every class. Roll is taken every day. In case of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to get missing class materials.

Tardiness: Tardiness disrupts the class. Students must be on time. Frequent tardiness will adversely affect the student's class participation grade.

Withdrawal: It is the student's responsibility to acquire and complete the drop form before the semester deadline. Any student who ceases to attend the class and fails to withdraw will receive an "F" for the course. The instructor also reserves the right to withdraw any student due to insufficient academic progress in the class.

Communicating with your instructor: All 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. Log onto class regularly to keep abreast of posted announcements.

Student Learner Outcome (SLO)	Maps to Core Objective	Assessed via this Assignment
1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.		Exam
2. Demonstrate an understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.		Exam
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.		Exam
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative,		Exam

executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.		
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties.	Communication	Paper
6. Analyze the state and local election process		Exam
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.		Exam
8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.	Communication	Paper
9. Complete a required paper on a selected writing pertaining to issues in Texas government and politics	Communication	Paper
10. Evaluate choices and actions of others or one's own and relate consequences to decision-making.	Communication	Paper

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 the appropriate discipline action.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas without giving proper citation. It includes paraphrasing someone else's words, copying directly from a website and pasting it into a written assignment, and using someone else's words without quotation marks. Any written assignment containing any plagiarized material will receive a grade of zero and the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for the 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 Department Chair, Shinya Wakao at 409-933-8212 or swakao@com.edu.

Texas Government Course Outline

Unit 1—Political Science, Federalism, Political Culture—Weeks 1 & 2

Readings:

Carl Eric Scott, “The Five Conceptions of American Liberty”
The Federalist Papers, no. 39
Martin Diamond, “What the Framers Meant by Federalism”
Textbook Chapter 2, pp. 40-50
Textbook Chapter 1

Assignments:

Paper 1: On Carl Eric Scott, “The Five Conceptions of Liberty”

Paper 2: On Federalism

Unit 1 Exam

Research Paper Due Monday, July 2, 2023

Unit 2—Political Development in Texas: Constitutions, Interest Groups, Parties, and Elections—Weeks 3 & 4

Readings:

Texas Constitution <http://www.constitution.legis.state.tx.us/>
Textbook Chapter 2—The Texas Constitution
Textbook Chapter 8—Voting, Campaigns, and Elections in Texas
Textbook Chapter 9—Political Parties in Texas
Textbook Chapter 10—Organized Interests in Texas

Assignments:

Paper 3 On the Texas Constitution

Unit 2 Exam

Unit 3—Texas Political Institutions and Public Policy—Week 5

Readings:

Textbook Chapter 3—Texas Legislature
Textbook Chapters 4 & 5—Texas Executive
Textbook Chapters 6 & 7—Texas Judiciary and Justice System
Textbook Chapters 12, 13 & 14—Public Policy

Assignments:

Paper 4 Institutions of Texas Government

Unit 3 Exam

Research Paper Due Monday, July 3, 2023

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://build.com.edu/uploads/sitecontent/files/student-services/Student_Handbook_2019-2020v5.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.*

https://build.com.edu/uploads/sitecontent/files/student-services/Student_Handbook_2019-2020v5.pdf

Academic Success & Support Services: College of the Mainland is committed to providing students the necessary support and tools for success in their college career. 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 Michelle Brezina at 409-933-8124 or mvaldes1@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 only permitted to withdraw six times during their college career according to state law. The last day to withdraw is November 18.

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.

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 for us. Students will be referred to the program throughout the semester if they are having difficulty completing assignments or have poor attendance. If a student is referred to the Early Alert Program he or she will be contacted by someone in the Student Success Center. Someone from the Counseling Department will schedule a meeting with the student to see what assistance can be offered in order to meet academic goals.