



**Government 2306-012IN
Texas Government
Spring 2024
INTERNET COURSE
1/16/2024-5/8/2024**

Instructor Information

Name: Mr. John Presnall

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Student/Office Hours: MTWTH 10:00-11:00 AM, MW 12:30-2:00 PM, M 3:00-3:30 PM

Office Location: COM Learning Resource Center, (Bldg. #8), Suite A, Rm. 215C
D2L Brightspace

Required Textbook: Ken Collier, Steven Galatas, and Julie Harrelson-Stephens, Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation in Texas, 8th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2024).

ISBN 978-1-0718-7560-5

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 is an online course consisting of three (3) Units in which each Unit will be open for approximately five (5) weeks. Each Unit is self-paced, but students should log into D2L Brightspace at least four or five times a week. Students can complete the assigned work on their own time, but they must remain mindful of the course outline and due dates. Please keep abreast of posted announcements.

Course Requirements

Lesson Activities: There are 12 sets of lesson notes (3 per unit). Within each lesson notes section there are a series of activities. These are for self-assessment and study purposes only. The notes and activities do not count toward the grade, but they provide helpful study materials supplemental to the textbook readings. These activities can be found under Content.

Course Discussion Boards: Discussion represents the interactive component of this course. There will be three discussion assignments with specific opening dates and closing dates for each. Please be mindful of the closing due dates. The discussions are a way of exchanging information and insight with your fellow students. Your grade will be based on your full and thoughtful participation, and not on the content of your ideas and opinions. They will be found under Discussion Boards.

Content from each Discussion topic will be on the Unit Exams.

For each topic you are required to post 1 initial response to the topic (at a minimum of 300 words). You must also make at least 2 comments to other students' initial responses (at a minimum of 150 words). Points will be deducted for insufficient initial responses, as well as for comments (e.g., "You're right!" "I agree." Are not sufficient comments.) Please write in clear prose, and refrain from using text speech, net speech, and online slang.

DO NOT WAIT until the due date to begin posting. Post throughout the window between the opening dates and closing due dates.

Follow the discussion guidelines posted in the Getting Started section of the course.

Short Papers: Throughout the course you will complete three (3) two-page papers (at a minimum) over a selected topic. Additional information regarding paper length, format, citations, etc. will be provided in the assignment file. Content from each paper topic will be on the Unit Exams. Papers will be found under Assessments.

Course Exams: There will be 3 Unit Exams and 1 comprehensive and cumulative Final Exam. Each exam will cover the required textbook chapter readings and lecture notes for that unit. The exams will consist of multiple-choice questions. Unit Exams and the Final Exam will be found under Assessments.

Research Paper: Write a Position Paper on a specific controversy in current public policy discourse and debate in the state of 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 Texas in scope, and not an issue that pertains to the entire nation. The paper can cover an already existing policy or a proposed policy.

In your paper you must—Describe the issue and explain it in detail (what is the question or controversy at hand?). Explain and describe the policy or proposed policy (what is the law, the executive action, the administrative regulation, or the judicial ruling that has determined or could determine the policy?). Explain and describe how the policy or proposed policy relates to and deals with the issue. (What does the policy do or intend to do?) Take a position on the policy or proposed policy (whether in favor of it or against it) and make an argument in defense of the position. Also, respond to the most common objections to this position. Formulate an argument based on evidence found in the research.

Conduct research on the topic, citing at least three sources from credible and reliable publications, web sites, journals, books, etc. The COM Library has a database to assist in research on many topics.

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

The paper should be near 1200 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).

The Research/Position Paper will be found under Assessments.

Determination of Grade

Unit Exams—	45% (15% each) toward final grade.
Discussions—	15% (5% each) toward final grade.
Papers—	15% (5% each) toward final grade.
Research Paper—	20% toward final grade.
Final Exam—	5% toward final grade

Grading Timeframe: I will grade on Mondays after each due date, and grades will appear in Gradebook during that week. Discussion grades will not appear until after the closing due date for each discussion. Your grade will be based on the totality of your initial response posts and your two comments.

- 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. Keep abreast of posted announcements.

Attendance Policy: Frequent attendance is required. In a sixteen-week online course, this means you should log into D2L Brightspace at a minimum of four or five times a week. Please keep abreast of posted announcements.

You should expect to spend at least three hours a week in D2L Brightspace reviewing lesson activities, notes and videos, completing unit discussions and exams, and completing other course materials.

Much of the textbook reading and studying can be done outside of D2L Brightspace. Each Unit is self-paced. Students can complete the assigned work at their own most convenient time, but they must remain mindful of the course outline and due dates.

Communicating with your instructor: All communication with the instructor must be through your COM email. **Please use the D2L Brightspace email tool to contact the instructor.** 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		Exam

of the legislative, 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 appropriate disciplinary 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 appropriate disciplinary 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

Tuesday, January 16, 2024-Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Introduction—Tuesday January 16

Required Reading

Read Me First and Syllabus

Required Assignments

Complete Initial Tasks—Email and Discussion Board Introduction
Post

DUE: 11:59 PM, Sunday, January 21

Unit 1—Texas Political Foundations—Tuesday January 16—Sunday, February 18

Required Reading (Found in Textbook and Content)

Chapter 1 and Notes—Texas Political History and Political Culture

Chapter 2 and Notes—Texas Constitution

Chapter 11 and Notes—Local Government

Required Assignments

Discussion 1 (Found in Discussion Board)

Post Initial Discussion and 2 Responses

DUE: 11:59 PM, Sunday, February 18

Paper 1 (Found in Assessments)—Opens Tuesday, January 16

DUE: 11:59 PM, Sunday, February 18

Unit 1 Exam (Found in Assessments)—Opens Tuesday,
January 16

DUE: 11:59, Sunday, February 18

Research Paper (Found in Assessments)—Opens Tuesday
January 16

DUE: 11:59 PM, Wednesday, May 8

Unit 2—Political Participation in Texas—Monday, February 19—Sunday, March 31

Required Reading (Found in Content)

Chapter 8 and Notes—Voting, Campaigns, and Elections in Texas

Chapter 9 and Notes—Political Parties in Texas

Chapter 10 and Notes—Organized Interests in Texas

Required Assignments

Discussion 2 (Found in Discussion Board)

Post Initial Discussion and 2 Responses

DUE: 11:59 PM, Sunday, March 31

Paper 2 (Found in Assessments)—Opens Monday, February 19

DUE: 11:59 PM, Sunday, March 31

Unit 2 Exam (Found in Assessments)—Opens Monday,
February 19

DUE: 11:59, Sunday, March 31

**Unit 3—Political Institutions—Monday, April 1—Wednesday,
May 8**

Required Reading (Found in Content)

Chapter 3 and Notes—Texas Legislature

Chapters 4 & 5 and Notes—Texas Executive Branch

Chapters 6 & 7 and Notes—Texas Judiciary and Justice

Required Assignments

Discussion 3 (Found in Discussion Board)

Post Initial Discussion and 2 Responses

DUE: 11:59 PM, Wednesday, May 8

Paper 3 (Found in Assessments)—Opens Monday, April 1

DUE: 11:59 PM, Wednesday, May 8

Unit 3 Exam (Found in Assessments)—Opens Monday,
April 1

DUE: 11:59 PM, Wednesday, May 8

Final Exam (Found in Assessments)—Opens Monday,
April 1

DUE: 11:59 PM, Wednesday, May 8

Research Paper (Found in Assessments)—Opens Tuesday,
January 16

DUE: 11:59 PM, Wednesday, May 8

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 [Student Handbook 2022-2023 v4.pdf \(com.edu\)](#). *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 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 Kimberly Lachney at 409-933-8919 or 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 only permitted to withdraw six times during their college career according to state law. The last day to withdraw is April 22.

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 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.

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.