Course Synopsis

Political Science 2306 is the second half of a two-sequence course, with Political Science 2305 being the first course. Combined, these 2 courses will satisfy the 6 SCH Angelo State University Core Curriculum requirements in Political Science. Political Science 2306 is designed to introduce you to Texas government and politics. It is an introductory survey course that covers the 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.

Required Text

*The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy, 3e*, Mora and Ruger

**McGraw Hill e-Book**

To purchase, go to our course Blackboard (BB) and register with Connect. If needed, instructions for how to register will be available on BB.

*Additional Readings may be assigned periodically, and will be made available on BB.*

Course Goals

We will be working on 4 Core Objectives: Critical Thinking (CT), Communication Skills (CS), Social Responsibility (SR), and Personal Responsibility (PR). Each of these Core Objectives contains its own Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), with 8 in total (listed on back page). We are going to pursue all of these objectives as we proceed through the course. Your progress towards these objectives will be assessed through your performance on the assigned material. In particular, some (but not all) writing assignments and some exam questions may be used for purposes of this assessment.
Course Format and Expectations

We are going to typically spend 1 week per assigned chapter from *The State of Texas*, with 1 exception. During week 15 there will be assigned readings from outside the textbook, posted on BB. There are 3 exams, 6 Learn Smart Modules, and 6 discussion boards.

Class Discussion. Some sections of class time will be devoted to lecture, while others will involve in-class writing and/or focused discussion. Everyone in the class is expected to come prepared to class ready to listen, to think, to write, and to participate in class discussion.

Learn Smart Reading Assignments. You will be assigned 6 Learn Smart Modules. These online assignments exercise your reading comprehension of individual chapters, and will be accessible via BB. Each Learn Smart Module should take between 45 minutes and 1 hour to complete. You are allowed to keep doing the assignment until you achieve full credit, as long as you finish prior to the assignment deadline.

Exams. There will be 3 exams, each testing your knowledge from the assigned readings, class lecture and discussion. Each exam covers new material, and none of the exams are cumulative.

Writing. Some weeks there will be an in-class writing exercise. You will be responsible for keeping a notebook or electronic file in which you keep all of your writing from these exercises. Most importantly, you will be required to post your writing from your notebook to the BB discussion board. You will typically be expected to post at least 2 paragraphs per discussion board posting. Doing this and following any accompanying instructions gets you full credit for your discussion board requirement. If you decline to follow instructions, then credit will be reduced.

You will occasionally be required to include citations from the textbook or other scholarly sources in your posting to support your thought or argument. All postings will develop your critical thinking (CT) and communication skills (CS). Some will aim to develop social and personal responsibility (SR and PR).

**EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY**: By responding to your classmates on the discussion boards, you may earn extra credit points. You can earn 1 extra credit point per board. If you reply on every new board to any (1) classmate’s posting, you will receive 2 points added to your final grade. If you reply at least on half of the boards, you will receive 1 point added to your final grade.

Why am I having you do this? First, this is meant to offer you an opportunity to work through your thoughts on various questions and problems raised by our investigation into Texas Government. It is always better to actively think, by writing and discussing, than to passively think, by listening quietly and reading quickly. Second, the revisiting of your writing from class when you later post it to BB, and the public exposure that results, will cause many of you to think about what you have written deeper and more carefully.
Attendance Policy—Please Read Carefully

I ask that you please be present and on time as much as possible. Attendance is mandatory and a sign-in sheet will be passed around each class. You are allowed 2 weeks’ worth of “free” absences (4 absences for TR classes; 6 absences for MWF classes)—these are for any reason—after which I will subtract two points per absence from your final grade point total. There are not “excused” or “unexcused” types of absences in this course, except in very serious and/or emergency circumstances.

Assignments and Grading

Grade Distribution – Exams 60%, Homework 40%

- Exam #1: 15%
- Exam #2: 20%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Learn Smart Modules: 25%
- Discussion Boards: 15%

Grading Scale

A 100-90
B 89-80
C 79-70
D 69-60
F 59-

Academic Honesty

This class strictly adheres to the university’s policy on academic honesty. Please consult the following website for guidelines on the proper citation of sources and for avoiding plagiarism: http://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/code-of-student-conduct/misconduct.php. Sanctions for a violation of Academic Policy can include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and a notation on the academic record, and suspension from the university.

Religious Observances

Every effort will be made to accommodate all forms of religious observance in compliance with ASU OP 10.19. Students who require additional arrangements to be made should make these known in good time in order that arrangements can be made.
**Make-up Policy**
Make-ups for missed exams are only allowed on a case-by-case basis. Whenever possible advance notice must be given, excuses must be documented, and grade penalties are at the discretion of the instructor.

**Students with Disabilities**
Students that feel that they may need special assistance for any reason should contact the Student Life Office, Rm 112 University Center.
### Reading Assignments and Due Dates for Section 020

--- Week 1: Texas Intro ---

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<thead>
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<tr>
<td>1/17</td>
<td>Texas Intro</td>
<td>Syllabus, Ch. 1</td>
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--- Week 2: Texas Intro ---

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--- Week 3: Texas Constitution & American Federalism ---

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--- Week 4: Texas Legislature ---

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--- Week 5: Texas Executive Department and Governor ---

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--- Week 6: Texas Court System ---

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--- Week 7: Local Governments in Texas ---

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---Week 8: Voting and Political Participation in Texas---  
3/5  Local Governments in Texas  
3/7  Voting and Political Participation in Texas  
**Chapter 7 Learn Smart Module Due at 11:59pm**  
3/9  Voting and Political Participation in Texas  

**Spring Break**

---Week 9: Elections and Campaigns in Texas---  
3/19  Voting and Political Participation in Texas  
3/21  Elections and Campaigns in Texas  
**Chapter 8 Learn Smart Module Due at 11:59pm**  
3/23  Elections and Campaigns in Texas  

---Week 10: Political Parties in Texas---  
3/26  Elections and Campaigns in Texas  
3/28  **Exam 2**  
3/30  NO CLASS  

---Week 11: Political Parties in Texas---  
4/2  Political Parties in Texas  
4/4  Political Parties in Texas  
4/6  Political Parties in Texas  

---Week 12: Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas---  
4/9  Interest Groups in Texas  
4/11  Interest Groups in Texas  
4/13  Interest Groups in Texas  

---Week 13: Criminal Justice System in Texas---  
4/16  Criminal Justice in TX  
4/18  Criminal Justice in TX  
**Chapter 12 Learn Smart Module Due at 11:59pm**  
4/20  Criminal Justice in TX  

---Week 14: Public Opinion and the Media in Texas---  
4/23  Public Opinion in TX  
4/25  Public Opinion in TX  
4/27  Public Opinion in TX
---Week 15: Primary Source Documents---

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*****Final Exam Week*****
MWF 9am: Wednesday, May 9th, 8am-10am
Reading Assignments and Due Dates for Sections 060 & 090

--- Week 1: Texas Intro ---
1/16 Texas Intro Syllabus, Ch. 1
1/18 Texas Intro Chapter 1

--- Week 2: Texas Intro ---
1/23 Texas Intro Chapter 1
1/25 Texas Intro Chapter 1

--- Week 3: Texas Constitution ---
1/30 Texas Constitution Chapter 2
2/1 Texas Constitution Chapter 2

--- Week 4: Texas Legislature ---
2/6 Texas Legislature Chapter 3
2/8 Texas Legislature Chapter 3

--- Week 5: Texas Executive Department and Governor ---
2/13 Texas Executive Department and Governor Chapter 4
2/15 Texas Executive Department and Governor Chapter 4

--- Week 6: Texas Court System ---
2/20 Exam 1 Chapter 5
2/22 Texas Court System Chapter 5

--- Week 7: Local Governments in Texas ---
2/27 Texas Court System Chapter 5
3/1 Local Governments in Texas Chapter 6

--- Week 8: Voting and Political Participation in Texas ---
3/6 Local Governments in Texas Chapter 6
3/8 Voting and Political Participation in Texas Chapter 7

Spring Break
---Week 9: Elections and Campaigns in Texas---
3/20 Voting and Political Participation in Texas Chapter 7

**Chapter 8 Learn Smart Module Due at 11:59pm**

3/22 Elections and Campaigns in Texas Chapter 8

---Week 10: Political Parties in Texas---
3/27 Elections and Campaigns in Texas Chapter 8
3/29 **Exam 2**

---Week 11: Political Parties in Texas ---
4/3 Political Parties in Texas Chapter 9
4/5 Political Parties in Texas Chapter 9

---Week 12: Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas ---
4/10 Interest Groups in Texas Chapter 10
4/12 Interest Groups in Texas Chapter 10

---Week 13: Criminal Justice System in Texas---
4/17 Criminal Justice in TX Chapter 12

**Chapter 12 Learn Smart Module Due at 11:59pm**

4/19 Criminal Justice in TX Chapter 12

---Week 14: Public Opinion and the Media in Texas---
4/24 Public Opinion in Texas Chapter 14
4/26 Public Opinion in Texas Chapter 14

---Week 15: Primary Source Documents---
5/1 TBD BB
5/3 TBD BB

*****Final Exam Week*****
TR 8am: Tuesday, May 8th, 8am-10am
TR 11am: Tuesday, May 8th, 10:30am-12:30pm
ASU Student Learning Objectives

Critical Thinking Skills (CT)

CT1. Gather, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information relevant to a question or issue.

CT2. Develop and demonstrate a logical position (i.e. perspective, thesis, hypothesis) that acknowledges ambiguities or contradictions.

Communication Skills (CS)

CS1. Develop, interpret, and express ideas through effective written communication.

CS2. Develop, interpret, and express ideas through effective oral communication.

Social Responsibility (SR)

SR1. Demonstrate intercultural competence.

SR2. Demonstrate knowledge of civic responsibility.

SR3. Demonstrate the ability to engage effectively in the campus, regional, national or global communities.

Personal Responsibility (PR)

PR1. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate choices, actions and consequences as related to ethical decision-making.