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 (not the hard copy!)**

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*. During some weeks there will be assigned readings from outside the textbook, posted on BB. There are 3 exams, 6 Learn Smart Modules, and 5 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 of the first 2 exams covers new material, and the final is 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 typically a sign-in sheet will be passed around. 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: 15%
- Final Exam: 30%
- Learn Smart Modules: 24%
- Discussion Boards: 16%

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-90</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>79-70</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>69-60</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59-</td>
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**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](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 Sections 020 and 050

---Week 1: Texas Intro---

1/14   Texas Intro                  Syllabus, Ch. 1
1/16   Texas Intro                  Chapter 1
1/18   NO CLASS

---Week 2: Texas Intro---

1/21   NO CLASS
1/23   Texas Intro                  Chapter 1

**Chapter 1 Learn Smart Module Due Wednesday at 11:59pm**

1/25   Texas Intro                  Chapter 1

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

1/28   Texas Constitution           Chapter 2
1/30   Texas Constitution           Chapter 2
2/1    Texas Constitution           Chapter 2

---Week 4: Texas Legislature---

2/4    Texas Legislature            Chapter 3
2/6    Texas Legislature            Chapter 3

**Chapter 3 Learn Smart Module Due Wednesday at 11:59pm**

2/8    Texas Legislature            Chapter 3

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

2/11   Texas Executive Department and Governor  Chapter 4
2/13   Texas Executive Department and Governor  Chapter 4
Chapter 4 Learn Smart Module Due Wednesday at 11:59pm

2/15  Texas Executive Department and Governor  
Chapter 4

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

2/18  Exam 1

2/20  Texas Court System  
Chapter 5

2/22  Texas Court System  
Chapter 5

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

2/25  Texas Court System  
Chapter 5

2/27  Local Governments in Texas  
Chapter 6

3/1  Local Governments in Texas  
Chapter 6

---Week 8: Voting and Political Participation in Texas---

3/4  Local Governments in Texas  
Chapter 6

3/6  Voting and Political Participation in Texas  
Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Learn Smart Module Due at 11:59pm

3/8  Voting and Political Participation in Texas  
Chapter 7

Spring Break

---Week 9: Elections and Campaigns in Texas---

3/18  Voting and Political Participation in Texas  
Chapter 7

3/20  Elections and Campaigns in Texas  
Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Learn Smart Module Due at 11:59pm

3/22  Elections and Campaigns in Texas  
Chapter 8
---Week 10: Political Parties in Texas---
3/25  Elections and Campaigns in Texas  Chapter 8
3/27  Exam 2
3/29  TBD

---Week 11: Political Parties in Texas ---
4/1    Political Parties in Texas  Chapter 9
4/3    Political Parties in Texas  Chapter 9
4/5    Political Parties in Texas  Chapter 9

---Week 12: Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas ---
4/8    Interest Groups in Texas  Chapter 10
4/10   Interest Groups in Texas  Chapter 10
4/12   Interest Groups in Texas  Chapter 10

---Week 13: Criminal Justice System in Texas---
4/15   Criminal Justice in TX  Chapter 12
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---
4/22   Public Opinion in TX  Chapter 14
4/24   Public Opinion in TX  Chapter 14
4/26   Public Opinion in TX  Chapter 14

---Week 15: Documentary on TX Politics—
4/29  TBD
5/1  TBD
5/3  TBD

*****Final Exam Week*****
Check university scheduled time slot for the class period
### Reading Assignments and Due Dates for Section 070

---Week 1: Texas Intro---

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<tr>
<td>1/15</td>
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---Week 2: Texas Intro---

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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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<td>---Week 7: Local Governments in Texas---</td>
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<td>---Week 8: Voting and Political Participation in Texas---</td>
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<td>3/21</td>
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<td>---Week 10: Political Parties in Texas---</td>
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---Week 12: Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas---

4/9 Interest Groups in Texas  Chapter 10
4/11 Interest Groups in Texas  Chapter 10

---Week 13: Criminal Justice System in Texas---

4/16 Criminal Justice in TX  Chapter 12

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

4/18 Criminal Justice in TX  Chapter 12

---Week 14: Public Opinion and the Media in Texas---

4/23 Public Opinion in Texas  Chapter 14
4/25 Public Opinion in Texas  Chapter 14

---Week 15: Documentary on TX Politics---

4/30 TBD
5/2 TBD

*****Final Exam Week*****

Check university scheduled time slot for the class period
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.