Course Description: This is a survey course on Texas state and local government. As part of ASU’s core Curriculum, it is designed to provide students with the basic knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts related to the roles of state-level governmental and non-governmental political institutions.

Student learning objectives (SLOs):
Critical Thinking (CT1): Promote students’ ability to think critically about politics, the roles and authority of government institutions and officials, and the dynamic nature of the Texas political system. Thinking critically means more than simply memorizing information, it is the ability to gather, analyze, and synthesize information that is factual and relevant to a question, issue, or event.

Communication (CS1 & CS2): Students will develop the ability to express their knowledge and understanding of concepts through effective written and oral communication.

Social Responsibility (SR2 & SR3): Gain an understanding of the contexts that shape and influence the state government’s actions and decisions on public policy. The study of the Texas political system allows for a greater appreciation of civic responsibility and ability to engage others in civil discourse.

Personal Responsibility (PR1): Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to understand and evaluate political choices and outcomes.


Angelo State policies: As outlined in ASU’s student handbook, students are responsible for regular and punctual attendance at all scheduled classes. The university reserves the right to deal with individual cases of non-attendance. The handbook also outlines the university’s Academic Honor Code, the parameters of academic integrity, and students’ responsibilities.

Decisions on Incompletes will be made after consulting with the Office of Student Affairs.

Blackboard: This course has a Blackboard site where you can obtain a copy of the syllabus and your grades. When necessary, I will post announcements or send emails about any changes to the course schedule.

Lecture outline, assignments, and exams: Depending on the pace of class discussion or unforeseen events (weather related cancellations, illness, etc.), the course outline is subject to change. Exam dates will only be changed in the event the university closes due to weather conditions or other unplanned event.

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to contact me about the material that was discussed and make arrangements to acquire a copy of a classmate’s lecture notes because I no longer provide students with copies of my lecture slides or movies.

Policies on examinations: Prior to an exam all students will be required to turn off all cell phones and computers, and place all belongings under their seat. Anyone caught cheating will immediately forfeit their exam and receive and automatic “F” for the assignment.

It is your responsibility to contact me if you miss an exam due to a university-related event or illness to schedule a make-up exam. Make-up exams must be taken within the two weeks following the original exam date. Failure to schedule a make-up exam within this time frame will result in an automatic “F” for that exam.

Excuses: The professor is the sole judge of all excuses. No excuse will be accepted after the fact or for students’ personal convenience. In the case of an emergency or extended absence, notification from the Office of Student Affairs will be required.

Accommodations: Any student who needs accommodations due to a disability, participation in university-related activities, religious observances, family matters, or a difficult life event should contact the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible so they can assist you with making arrangements and notifying your
professors. The office is located in the Houston Harte University Center, Room 112, and additional information can be found on ASU’s website.

**Assignments and Exams**

**Exams (100 points each):** All three exams will consist of two sections; short answer and fill-in-the-blank. The chapters covered on Exams 1 and 2 are noted in the Course Outline section of the syllabus. The Final Exam is comprehensive and will consist of new material and terms from the two previous exams.

**State Legislature and Public Policy Worksheet and In-Class Discussion (100 points):** This assignment is designed to familiarize students with official, online sources for information about state government laws, and discussing state policy issues with peers. A worksheet and a review of the instructions will be provided in class. The worksheet will not be available on Blackboard. Anyone who is absent the day the worksheet is distributed or needs an additional copy must see me after class or during my office hours.

- This assignment is worth 100 points and is due at the beginning of class on **Thursday, October 17.** Emailed submissions will not be accepted. Late assignments will have 10 points deducted for each day past the due date.
- The follow-up in-class discussion is scheduled during **Week 10, October 29 - 31.** Students must attend both classes to earn full credit for this part of the assignment. Anyone who is late more than 15 minutes late on this day will automatically be docked 25 points. Exceptions will only be made if I am formally notified by the Office of Student Affairs, a faculty advisor, or athletic office. This date is subject to change pending time constraints or schedule changes due to unplanned events (weather cancellations, instructor illness, etc.)

**Pop Quizzes (25 points each):** Pop quizzes will be given throughout the semester and based on the assigned reading. Quizzes can only be taken in-class. Make-ups will only be permitted for absences related to participation in a sanctioned university event and notification by a faculty advisor. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester. The total number of pop quizzes given will be based on student preparedness and time constraints.

**Supplemental Instruction or Tutoring (50 points):** Each student is required to attend either one political science-government Supplemental Instruction (SI) session or one tutoring session with a political science-government tutor for no less than 30 minutes. You must electronically sign-in and sign-out either session. The SI and Tutoring staff advisor will provide me with monthly reports of attendance.

- No credit will be awarded to students who attend a session for less than 30 minutes or who are not on record as having attended.
- The schedule for both of these services is available on ASU’s website. For anyone unable to attend either an SI or Tutoring session due to scheduling conflicts can make an appointment with me to review the course material.

**Extra Credit:** A movie will be shown at the end of the semester. Only students who attend every class in which the movie is shown and discussed will have 15 points of extra credit added to their final grade.

**Final grades will follow Angelo State University’s Grading Scale:**

A: 100-90%; B: 89-80%; C: 79-70%; D: 69-60%; F: 59% or below

**Additional Notes: Class Etiquette and Student Conduct:** Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone caught plagiarizing or cheating on an assignment will receive an F for that assignment.

Computers will permitted in class but I reserve the right to prohibit their use by anyone.

Texting in class is prohibited. Anyone caught texting in class will be asked to leave the classroom.

The Department of Political Science and Philosophy is committed to support the learning of all students. As part of maintaining the decorum of the classroom, students are expected to behave appropriately and in a responsible manner. Comments made during class discussion should be well
thought out and not based on personal prejudice. Any student who is disruptive or engages in ad hominem attacks during class discussion will be asked to leave.

Course Outline: It is your responsibility to read the assigned material, including the examples and case studies in each chapter, prior to class. You are also expected to bring your textbook to each class for reference.

Part I: Citizenship and the Texas Political System

Week 1: August 27 - 29
(T) First day of class, review of the syllabus
(TH) Chapter 1, The Struggle for Texas

Week 2: September 3 - 5
(T-TH) Chapter 2, The Texas Constitution; U.S. Constitution (available online)

Week 3: September 10 - 12
(T-TH) Chapter 3, Federalism

Week 4: September 17 - 19
(T) Lecture wrap-up and review
(TH) Exam 1-Covers material assigned for Part I of the course outline (Chapters 1-3, U.S. Constitution)

Part II: Texas Government Institutions

Week 5: September 24 - 26
(T-TH) Chapter 7, The Legislature
(TH) State Legislature and Public Policy assignment worksheet; review of instructions and Q&A

Week 6: October 1 - 3
(T-TH) Chapter 8, Governors of Texas

Week 7: October 8 - 10
(T-TH) Chapter 9, The Plural Executive and the Bureaucracy

Week 8: October 15 - 17
(T-TH) Chapter 10, The Texas Judiciary
(TH) State Legislature and Public Policy worksheet is due at the beginning of class.

Week 9: October 22 - 24
(T) Lecture Wrap-up and Review for Exam 2
(TH) Exam 2-Covers material assigned for Part II of the course outline (Chapters 7-10)

Part III: Elections, Political Organizations, and Public Policy

Week 10: October 29 - 31
(T-TH) In-Class State Legislature and Public Policy Discussion

(TH) October 31, Last day to drop classes

Week 11: November 5 - 7
(T-TH) Chapter 4, Voting and Elections
Week 12: November 12 - 14  
(T-TH) Chapter 5, Political Parties, Texas in Blue and Red

Week 13: November 19 – 21  
(T-TH) Chapter 6, Interest Groups

Week 14: November 26 - 28  
(T) Library Day, Correct and complete Exams 1 and 2 in preparation for the Final Exam.  
(TH) No Classes, Thanksgiving Break

Week 15: December 3 - 5, Movie and Final Exam Review

Week 16: Final Exam (covers Chapters covered under Part III of the course outline, and select terms from Exams 1 & 2)  
(T) POLS 2306-060: December 10: RAS 239, 8 a.m.-10 a.m.  
(W) POLS 2306-020: December 11: RAS 112, 8 a.m.-10 a.m.  

    POLS 2306-040: December 11: RAS 112, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.