

POLS 2306: Texas Government: Summer I, 2020

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Office Hours: Instructor is available by email. Please note, I do not have internet access at home due to continuing online "harassment" activities, according to the FBI, so responses to emails will be delayed.

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.

Required Text: Rottinghaus, *Inside Texas Politics: Power, Policy, and Personality of the Lone Star State*, 2nd Edition (Oxford University Press, 2019).

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, lecture slides, course assignments, and your grades. When necessary, the course instructional designer or I will post announcements or send emails about any changes to the course schedule.

Policies on examinations: Anyone caught cheating will immediately forfeit their exam and receive an automatic "F" for the assignment.

-It is your responsibility to contact me if you miss an exam due to a university-recognized accommodation or illness to request an online exam be reopened. The makeup exam must be taken before the next exam is made available online. Failure to do so within this time frame will result in an automatic "F" for that exam.

-In the case of an emergency or events that prevent you from completing course assignments within their given timeframes, a formal 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.

Title IX: The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of sexual misconduct. Faculty members are obligated by law and university policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance. Students are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to Michelle Boone (michelle.boone@angelo.edu; 325-942-2173), Director of Title IX Compliance, Mayer Administration Building, Room 210.

Assignments and Exams

Exams (100 points each): All three exams will follow the fill-in-the-blank, or “matching,” format.

-**Exams 1 and 2:** The chapters covered on Exams 1 and 2 are noted in the Course Outline section of the syllabus.

-**Final Exam:** The Final Exam is comprehensive and will consist of new material from the chapters listed in Part III of the course outline and select terms from the first and second exams.

State Government Worksheet (100 points): This assignment is designed to familiarize students with official, online sources for information about Texas government and state public policy actions. A worksheet with detailed instructions will be provided on Blackboard.

-This assignment is worth 100 points and is due by noon on **Thursday, June 18**. Emailed submissions will not be accepted. Late assignments will have 15 points deducted for each day until Sunday, June 27; no worksheets will be accepted past this date.

Texas Quizzes (TXQ) (25 points each): Seven quizzes will be given throughout the semester and based on the assigned reading. Quizzes can only be taken during the timeframe designated on the course Blackboard site and generally stated in the Course Outline section of this syllabus.

-The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester but all quiz columns and scores will still remain visible on Blackboard. A column labelled as the quiz total column will show the points earned with the lowest quiz score dropped and will be the point total calculated into your final grade.

Extra Credit: An optional quiz that reviews course material will be posted prior to the final exam. It will follow the same format as the previous quizzes and is also worth 25 points. Points earned will be added under the Extra Credit column. This is the one and only extra credit opportunity for the course.

Final grades will follow the 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.

The Department of Political Science and Philosophy is committed to support the learning of all students. As part of maintaining the decorum of the online classroom, students are expected to behave appropriately and in a responsible manner.

Missed deadlines: Decisions regarding missed deadlines will be made at the discretion of the instructor.

If you have technical difficulties accessing course material, quizzes, or exams on Blackboard contact the university’s IT department to identify the problem, not your professors, unless instructed otherwise.

Course Outline: It is your responsibility to read the assigned textbook material, not just the lecture notes. The lecture notes are simply a guide and may not list all the terms discussed by the author.

Please pay attention to the assigned chapters for each section.

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Part I: Texas Political System

June 1-8

- Chapter 1, The Struggle for Texas
- Chapter 2, The Texas Constitution
- Chapter 3, Federalism
- Quizzes (TXQ) 1-2
- Exam 1** (covers Chapters 1-3)

Part II: Texas Government

June 9-22

- Chapter 7, The Legislature
- Chapter 8, Governors of Texas
- Chapter 9, The Plural Executive and the Bureaucracy
- Chapter 10, The Texas Judiciary
- Texas Government Worksheet (provided for download; due by noon, Thursday, June 18)
- Quizzes (TXQ) 3-5
- Exam 2** (covers Chapters 7-10)

Note: (Friday) June 19: Last day to drop a class or withdraw from 2020 Summer I classes.

Part III: Texas Elections and Political Organizations

June 23-30, July 1

- Chapter 4, Voting and Elections
- Chapter 5, Political Parties
- Chapter 6, Interest Groups
- Quizzes (TXQ) 6-7
- Extra Credit Review Quiz
- Final Exam** (covers Chapters 4, 5, and 6; plus select terms from Exams 1 and 2)