Introduction:

You have enrolled in an asynchronous online class taught through Blackboard; thus, the course is delivered completely online. The class is radically different from the traditional classroom based on instructor lectures and face to face contact on a regular basis. You have considerable leeway in choosing the times you spend “in class;” however, you will need to establish a system for interacting with course materials, responding to deadlines, and keeping up with the lessons & assignments spread throughout the semester. **Online classes require that students act with discipline and actively participate through Blackboard. Successful online students monitor the class multiple times throughout the week and the successful student will not be a passive participant in the class.** Communicating with the instructor is important and it will be your responsibility to contact me should you have questions and concerns.

Communication:

I will communicate with the class via email, Blackboard, and the Blackboard announcements page. You must be able to login and interact with the ASU Blackboard platform. Students are responsible for checking their ASU email account and Blackboard on a regular basis throughout every week for class announcements. I will communicate with individual students via ASU email address.

Instructor Contact information:

I check my email account regularly throughout the day. I usually respond fairly quickly to emails (unless you email after 5:00pm cst). I do check for emails after 5:00pm, but there is no guarantee I will email back that night. Generally, I check my email account at least once on Sundays during the semester. Generally, I will respond to students within 12 hours after contact.

Technology Requirements:

Hardware

With this online course, you must have access to an internet-enabled laptop or desktop computer with a high-speed internet connection, a built-in microphone and webcam. Please note that tablets and smartphones may not be supported thus be sure to check
with the Technology Service Center if you have questions about your technical hardware.

**Software**

You will need a browser and operating system, generally the most recent, that is compatible with ASU Blackboard. With regards to browsers, the use of Chrome is highly recommended. Note that if you use Safari, Firefox, or MS Edge, you should be prepared to use Chrome as a backup. Online courses typically use Acrobat Reader, Flash, Java, Windows Media Player, and Real Media Player.

You should have the necessary computer skills to navigate around the internet, webpages, and Blackboard. While I might be able to help with some basic technical issues, students who have computer technology issues should contact the ASU Technical Service Center (IT Helpdesk) at 325-942-2911 or 1-800-942-2911. You can also email them at helpdesk@angelo.edu. **Note that you are ultimately responsible for solving your computer technology issues.**

Students will not be penalized during the semester for technical issues caused by ASU or acts beyond their control. However, be sure to create back up files that are time stamped as you work throughout the semester.

**Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course

**Course Description:**

This course serves as an introduction to Texas government and politics. It is designed to acquaint you with the fundamental ideas, institutions, and actors that make up the Texas political system. This course is the second half of a two-sequence course program with Political Science 2305 being the first course which combined will satisfy the 6 Sch ASU Core Curriculum requirements that pertain to federal and state government. Political Science 2306 is designed to introduce the student to the political system of the state of Texas. This introductory survey course covers the origin and development of the Texas constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and inter-governmental relations, political participation, linkage institutions, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas. Overall, it provides an introduction to the Texas state system of government.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Critical Thinking (CT): to gather, analyze, evaluate and synthesize information relevant to a question or issue.
2. Communication (CS): to develop, interpret and express ideas through effective written communication.
4. Personal Responsibility (PR): to demonstrate the ability to evaluate choices, actions and consequences as related to ethical decision-making.

Note: Don’t accept any assertion of fact on its face. Try to step back from ideology, opinion & argument; listen carefully to different sides in a debate being prepared to see the logic in what people of different viewpoints have to say.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Student will demonstrate knowledge about Texas government and politics.
2. Student will explain the origin and development of the Texas Constitution.
3. Student will explain the origins and evolution of the Texas political system, with a focus on growth of political institutions, the key components of the Texas political system, and federalism.
4. Student will describe the ways in which different political systems divide and share power between the state, local governments, and national government.
5. Student will demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.
6. Students will evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, political parties, campaigns and elections in the Texas political system.
7. Students will describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens and be able to comment on the role of civic engagement in Texas politics.
8. Student will analyze political issues, demonstrate critical thinking skills, and develop a critical approach to the study of policies and political culture of Texas.

Method of Assessing Learning Outcomes:

- Learning outcomes will be assessed via examinations and Discussion Board assignments.

Course Requirements:

Basic Structure

This online course is organized by chapter modules that cover the fundamental aspects of the study of Texas government. Each module consists of textbook chapter reading, study questions, and possible supplemental materials. I am going to provide ppt lecture slides and short-recorded oral lectures. The course content is divided into several segments-periods, approximately three chapters in length. At the conclusion of each period, you will take an exam that covers the content material covered during the particular period. In addition, you will have to complete two discussion board assignments for the semester.

Exams

Students will be required to take four non-cumulative exams that cover the content materials of the respective period. The exam will cover the chapter readings and lecture materials provided through the ppt slides and short video lectures. Each exam
will consist of 50 multiple choice questions and you will have 50 minutes to complete the exam. Given that the time for taking the exam is limited, you will not be able to spend much time searching the textbook or chapter modules for answers. Thus, you will need to prepare and thoroughly study the chapter materials before you begin the exam.

The exam will be administered online on the designated exam dates posted in the schedule below. You will have a 24 hour window in which to take the exam. Note that once you begin the exam you will need to complete the exam within the allotted time and you will not have an opportunity to stop and start the exam at a later time. In addition, there is no opportunity for multiple submission of the exam. Thus, you may not retake the exam. Please be sure that you have access to a reliable wifi connection when you log in to take the exam. It is important that you close all apps while taking the exam and that you take only one exam at a time. If you experience problems while taking the exam, call the IT Service Center at 325-942-2911 immediately so they can help assist you.

If you have a university-defined and approved excuse (e.g., a medical or personal emergency) that prevents you from taking the exam at the appointed time, please notify me immediately so that arrangements can be made for an alternative time.

**Discussion Board Assignments**

You are required to complete two Discussion Board assignments spread throughout the semester. You are responsible for posting response threads to questions posted for the two assignments. For each assignment, a specific topic will be identified and a specific question(s) will be posted to the Discussion Board in Blackboard. The topic will pertain to a current events issue, drawn in most cases from a newspaper article, blog, or other appropriate item. In your response thread, you will need to address all parts of the question(s). You should provide a suitable response in which you identify and briefly discuss the relevant issue(s) raised by the respective article. You should link your response to the appropriate course materials. You may wish to provide positive or negative reactions to the readings, and/or brief thoughts on the topic. The goal for this assignment is to be able to apply course materials to current event issues, while engaging in critical thinking and analysis. The response thread should be approximately 650 words in length. Additional information will be provided.

**Grading Methodology**

Your semester grade is based on the number of points earned for each component element of the course requirements – the four examinations and Discussion Board assignments. The total sum of points earned will be used to determine your overall course grade. The table below outlines the grading scale for the course based on the number of points earned for each component part of the course requirements.

**Grading Breakdown by Points**

Exams (4 total) ............................................. 400 points
Discussion Board Assignments (2 total) ..... 100 points
Total Points .................................................. 500 points

**Grading Scale**

- 450-500 ................. A
- 400-449 ................. B
- 350-399 ................. C
- 290-349 ................. D
- Below 290 ............. F

According to the University Calendar, the last day to drop this course is **Friday, April 30, 2021**. Withdrawal grades will be indicated by the letter W.

**Exam Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Exam</td>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Exam</td>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Exam</td>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>May 12</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reading Materials**


**Internet Sources**

texastribune.com
cnn.com
nytimes.com
washingtonpost.com
wsj.com
politico.com
realclearpolitics.com
nationaljournal.com

**Course Organization – Chapter Modules and Schedule:**

**Course Schedule**

[Note: The course syllabus is a general plan for the semester. The schedule is a tentative and may be updated or changed throughout the semester as necessary.]

**Chapter One: Introduction to Texas History and Politics (January 25 – February 1)**

The chapter provides an introduction to the study of the Texas political system. It provides a brief explanation of Texas history, transformation of Texas economy, demography, and the political culture of Texas. Relevant topics are:
1. The Texas political community
2. Historical periods in Texas politics
3. Transformation of Texas economy
4. Texas political culture
5. Readings: Mora, Chapter 1

Suitable questions to consider. What makes for a political community at the state level? What is the history of Texas politics and what shapes it? What is meant by political culture? What are current challenges in Texas political environment?

Chapter Two: The Texas State Constitution (February 3 – February 8)

This chapter provides an introduction to the constitutional foundations of Texas government. Relevant topics are:

1. Education policy and constitutionalism in Texas
2. Analysis of Texas constitutions – number of constitutions that have governed Texas
3. The Constitution of Texas
4. The need for a new constitution in Texas
5. Readings: Mora, Chapter 2

Suitable questions to consider. How did Texans deal with the tasks of creating a viable constitutional government? What are the component parts of the Texas constitution? What are the patterns of constitutional change? Do Texans need a new constitution?

Addendum: The American Federal System (February 10 – February 15)

This section provides a brief introduction to the study of American federalism. Relevant topics are:

1. Federalism today – contemporary issues
2. Three types of governmental systems
3. The scope of powers in American federalism
4. Different types of federalism in the U.S.
5. Readings: Mora, Chap 2

Imagine being faced with the task of laying the constitutional foundations for a brand-new federal system of government. How is power separated between the national government and the states? How do you resolve differences regarding structures and powers between the national government and individual state governments? What constitutes the American federal system?

**Wednesday, February 17: Exam #1**
Chapter Three: The Texas Legislature (February 19 – February 26)

This chapter describes one of the institutions of Texas government – the legislature. Relevant topics are:

1. Characteristics of the Texas legislature
2. Structure of the legislature
3. Legislative redistricting
4. The legislative process
5. Readings: Mora, Chapter 3

The Texas Constitution creates three major institutions of Texas government – legislature, executive branch, and courts. What are the characteristics of the Texas legislature as an institution of government? What is meant by congressional reapportionment and redistricting? What is the impact of congressional reapportionment upon the Texas legislature? What constitutes the legislative process in the Texas legislature?

Chapter Four: The Executive Department and the Office of the Governor of Texas (March 1 – March 5)

This chapter explains the structure and function of the executive branch of Texas government. Relevant topics are:

1. Structure of the Texas executive branch
2. Powers of the governor
3. The Texas bureaucracy
4. Readings: Mora, Chapter 4

Suitable questions to consider. What constitutes the executive branch at the state level of government? How does the governor influence the activities of state government and the policymaking process? What are the powers of the Texas governor in a comparative context?

**Monday – March 8: Discussion Board Assignment #1 Due**

Chapters Five & Six: The Court System & Criminal Justice System in Texas (March 10 – March 17)

These chapters describe the structure and function of the judicial branch of Texas government, plus the criminal justice system. Relevant topics are:

1. State law in Texas – Civil vs Criminal
2. Texas court organization – court levels and jurisdiction
3. Categories of Crimes and Punishments
4. Judges and the administration of justice
5. Readings: Mora, Chapters 5 and 6
Suitable questions to consider. What is the structure of the Texas judicial system? What are some of the problems of the Texas judicial system? Is the Texas system of justice in a state of crisis?

**Friday, March 19: Exam #2**

Chapter Seven: Local Governments in Texas (March 22 – March 29)

This chapter describes the local political systems in Texas. Relevant topics are:

1. Introduction to local government
2. Municipal/city government
3. County government
4. Special district governments
5. Local government elections
6. Readings: Mora, Chapter 7

One reason for the federalist system was the framer's desire to provide the states with a measure of political autonomy and sovereignty. States are granted exclusive sovereignty with regards to establishing local governments. Local governments are the most pervasive forms of government in Texas. What are the most common forms of local government in Texas? What activities are associated with local political systems.

Chapter Eleven: Political Parties in Texas (March 31 – April 7)

This chapter provides an introduction to study of political institutions and describes political parties in Texas. Relevant topics are:

1. What are political parties?
2. Political parties and their functions in Texas politics
3. Texas party machinery – temporary and permanent organizations
4. Readings: Mora, Chapter 11

Political parties exist not only at the national level but also at the state level. They provide a vital link between personal values & aspirations and policy makers, as a result they are identified as a linkage institution. Political parties offer alternative avenues for political participation. What is the evolution of political parties in Texas?

Chapter Twelve: Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas (April 9 – April 14)

This chapter continues the study of linkage institutions by focusing on the role of interest groups in the Texas political system. Relevant topics are:

1. What are interest groups?
2. Types of interest groups in Texas
3. Most powerful interest groups in Texas
4. Strategies of interest groups
5. Readings: Mora, Chapters 12
Linkage institutions like interest groups also exist at the state level. They provide a vital link between personal values & aspirations and policy makers. Interest groups offer alternative avenues for political participation. What role do interest groups play in the Texas political environment?

**Friday, April 16: Exam #3**

**Monday – April 19: Discussion Board Assignment #2 Due**

Chapter Nine: Voting and Political Participation in Texas (April 21 – April 28)

This chapter explains political participation in Texas and discusses voting and other forms of political participation in Texas. Relevant topics are:

1. Political participation in Texas – voting
2. Types of political participation
3. Readings: Mora, Chapter 9

Democracies depend upon political participation. Public policy ultimately responds to participation. How is political participation achieved at the state level? What are other forms of political participation besides voting?

Chapter Ten: Elections and Campaigns in Texas (April 30 – May 7)

This chapter describes political campaigns in Texas and explains the election process at the state level. Relevant topics are:

1. Campaigns and elections in Texas
2. Primary election versus general election
3. Different types of elections
4. Readings: Mora, Chapter 10

At the heart of the democratic political system is the election of freely chosen representatives by the majority of the people in competitive elections. For democracy to work there must be meaningful campaigns among candidates and meaningful participation among the voters. How are campaigns and elections distinguished at the state level? What is the difference between a primary election and general election in Texas? What concerns are raised today by changes in funding political campaigns?

**Wednesday, May 12: Final Exam**
Course Schedule and Assignments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Module</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
<th>Assignment Due Dates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One</td>
<td>1/25 — 2/1</td>
<td>Mora, Chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter Two</td>
<td>2/3 — 2/8</td>
<td>Mora, Chapter 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Addendum</td>
<td>2/10 — 2/15</td>
<td>Addendum</td>
<td>Exam #1 – Feb 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter Three</td>
<td>2/19 — 2/26</td>
<td>Mora, Chapter 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter Four</td>
<td>3/1 — 3/5</td>
<td>Mora, Chapter 4</td>
<td>DB Assignment #1 – March 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapters Five &amp; Six</td>
<td>3/10 — 3/17</td>
<td>Mora, Chapters 5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>Exam #2 – March 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter Seven</td>
<td>3/22 — 3/29</td>
<td>Mora, Chapter 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter Eleven</td>
<td>3/31 — 4/7</td>
<td>Mora, Chapter 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter Twelve</td>
<td>4/9 — 4/14</td>
<td>Mora, Chapter 12</td>
<td>Exam #3 – April 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter Nine</td>
<td>4/21 — 4/28</td>
<td>Mora, Chapter 9</td>
<td>DB Assignment #2 – April 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
<td>4/30 — 5/7</td>
<td>Mora, Chapter 10</td>
<td>Exam #4 – May 12</td>
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</tbody>
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ASU Academic Policies

General Policies related to this course:

All students are required to follow the policies and procedures presented in these documents:

Angelo State University Student Handbook
Angelo State University Catalog

Academic Honesty

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with the university Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions of the ASU Student Handbook. See the Current Student page on the ASU homepage (URL address: http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/) and click on Academic Honor Code. Acts of academic dishonesty and misconduct as referenced in Angelo State University's Student Handbook will be referred to the Dean of Students.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious topic covered in ASU’s Academic Integrity policy in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism is the action or practice of taking someone else’s work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one’s own. Plagiarism is literary theft.

In your discussions and/or your papers, it is unacceptable to copy word-for-word without quotation marks and the source of the quotation. It is expected that you will summarize or paraphrase ideas giving appropriate credit to the source both in the body of your paper and the reference list.
Papers are subject to be evaluated for originality via Turnitin. Resources to help you understand this policy better are available at the ASU Writing Center.

**Accommodations for Disability**

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation.

The Student Affairs Office is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting the Student Affairs Office, Suite 112 of the Houston Harte University Center, at 325-942-2047 (phone) or 325-942-2211 (fax) or by e-mail at studentservices@angelo.edu to begin the process. The Student Affairs Office will establish the particular documentation requirements necessary for the various types of disabilities.

**Student absence for religious holidays**

Student absence for observance of a religious holy day will be treated in accordance with OP 10.19 of ASU’s Operating Policies and Procedures.

**Title IX at Angelo State University**

The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU 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 ASU’s Office of Title IX Compliance and the Title IX Coordinator in the Mayer Administration Building, Room 210 at 325-942-2022.

You may also file a report online 24/7 at [www.angelo.edu/incident-form](http://www.angelo.edu/incident-form).

If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the University Health Clinic at 325-942-2171, Counseling Services at 325-942-2371 or the ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345.

For more information about Title IX in general you may visit [www.angelo.edu/title-ix](http://www.angelo.edu/title-ix).
COVID-19 Statement

As a member of the Texas Tech University System, Angelo State University has adopted the mandatory Facial Covering Policy to ensure a safe and healthy classroom experience. Current research on the COVID-19 virus suggests there is a significant reduction in the potential for transmission of the virus from person to person by wearing a mask/facial covering that covers the nose and mouth areas. Therefore, in compliance with the university policy students in this class are required to wear a mask/facial covering before, during, and after class. Faculty members may also ask you to display your daily screening badge as a prerequisite to enter the classroom. You are also asked to maintain safe distancing practices to the best of your ability. For the safety of everyone, any student not appropriately wearing a mask/facial covering will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. The student will be responsible to make up any missed class content or work. Continued non-compliance with the Texas Tech University System Policy may result in disciplinary action through the Office of Student Conduct.

Copyright Policy

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