

Dual Credit POLS 2306 – Texas Government (Texas Constitution & Topics)

Spring 2022

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Tutorials – T-F 7:50-8:15 & by appt.
Conference – 3rd Period

"I'm from Texas, and one of the reasons I like Texas is because there's no one in control."
~ Willie Nelson

"You may all go to Hell, and I will go to Texas." ~ Davy Crockett

SECTION I: Course Overview

Course Description

This course is a survey of the governing system of the state of Texas, one meant to complement the previous semester's examination of federal government. The Texas constitution will be studied alongside the edifice of state and local government it frames, including the court system, as well as its place in our federal system. Linkage institutions, such as state-level elections, parties, and interest groups, will be considered in order to develop a broad understanding of the political culture of Texas.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

The goal of a political science class is to educate students in the historical foundations of government as well as its contemporary forms so that they can think and act as informed and responsible citizens of their local communities and the broader world. As such, through a survey of the basic tenants of Texas government, its various institutions, and its broad implications for citizens, students should be able to:

- demonstrate a knowledge of important factual information about Texas government,
- identify major trends and developments in Texas government and discuss their features and consequences,
- analyze the general characteristics of government and the nature of the Texas political system,
- present conclusions about issues and problems within the course,
- understand both the rights and the responsibilities of the Texas citizen, and
- evaluate sources and develop skills in reading comprehension as well as verbal and written expression.

Course Materials

Schmidt, Shelley, Bardes, Maxwell, and Crain, *American Government and Politics Today*
Assigned primary and secondary sources to be distributed in class

SECTION II: Policies

Academic Honesty

Students shall maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits and are expected to engage in their studies in a manner that is above reproach both in and out of the classroom. Deviations from these expectations will not be tolerated. *Angelo State University defines "academic misconduct" as an action that "includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, violations of published professional ethics/standards, and any act or attempted act designed to give unfair*

academic advantage to oneself or another student.” See the “Angelo State University Student Handbook, Part II, B: Academic Integrity” for more information.

Student Disability Services

The Office of Student Affairs is the designated Angelo State University department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability, and it is the student’s responsibility to initiate such a request through the department via the counselor.

Student Absence for Observance of a Religious Holy Day

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.

SECTION III: Grading Policies

Grade Description

For the purpose of this class, an ‘A’ corresponds to work done above the average collegiate level. A ‘B’ represents work done at an average collegiate level. In general, a ‘C’ equates to below-average collegiate performance—meaning that you have demonstrated the skills and knowledge relevant to a particular assignment at a basic level of proficiency. This description does not include the weighted average you receive from Mason High School for taking an advanced course.

Assessment Breakdown

The grade for each six-weeks will count for 2/7^{ths} of the course grade. A comprehensive final exam will account for the other 1/7th. Each six-weeks grade will be tallied as follows:

Summative Grades (80%)

Daily Grades (20%)

Assessment Details

Summative Grades (80%)

There will be six summative grades, two per six-weeks grading period. Four of these grades will be exams. Specific formatting will be outlined before exams, but they will generally include multiple choice questions, identification, and short responses. Exams are to be completed within a specified amount of time. There will be no retakes.

Two of these grades will be dedicated to developing students’ research and writing skills in the social sciences. The first grade will focus on the basics of academic research itself—a series of assignments pertaining to research planning, use of the ASU Library and its associated digital resources and citations; the second will constitute a research paper. More detailed information regarding each will be distributed in class.

Daily Grades (20%)

At least three grades per six weeks will fall under this category. These may—or may not—take the form of quizzes, the content and form to be announced beforehand, responses to assigned readings, or general writing assignments. Assignments this semester

will be geared more toward preparing students for more advanced academic research work in the future. This means increased emphasis on analytical skills as opposed to just building factual knowledge, as well as the development of ancillary research skills.

SECTION IV: Course Schedule

You will receive a tentative schedule of readings and assignments at the beginning of every unit. Note that additional content may be included as the unit progresses. Changes will be announced in class. What follows is a general schedule for the class.

Unit I

Jan. 3
Jan. 5
Jan. 11
Jan. 13
Jan. 17
Jan. 19
Jan. 21

Texas History, the Texas Constitution, and Federalism

Course Introduction & History from the Perspective of Texas
Texas History: Six Flags ... How many constitutions???
Modern Texas
The Texas Constitution
The Texas Constitution
Federalism: A Retrospective
Unit I Exam

Unit II

Jan. 25
Jan. 27
Jan. 31
Feb. 2
Feb. 4

An Introduction to Research

An Introduction to Research in Political Science
What does Chicago have to do with citations?
Finding & Reading Political Science Sources (without nodding off)
Research Capstone Assignment
Research Capstone Assignment

Unit III

Feb. 9
Feb. 14
Feb. 16
Feb. 18
Feb. 23
Feb. 25
Mar. 1
Mar. 3

Institutions of Texas Government

The Executive Department and the Governor
The Executive Department and the Governor
The Texas Legislature
The Texas Legislature
The Texas Court System
The Texas Court System
Local Governments in Texas
Unit III Exam

Unit IV

Mar. 15
Mar. 17
Mar. 21
Mar. 23
Mar. 28
Mar. 30
Apr. 1

Linkage Institutions

Voting Texas-Style
Texas Political Parties
Party Functions
Elections in Texas
Interest Groups in Texas: Form and Structure
The Purpose (& Regulation) of Interest Groups
Unit IV Exam

Unit V

Apr. 5
Apr. 7
Apr. 11
Apr. 13
Apr. 18
Apr. 20

Public Policy

How Texas Makes "Policy"
Policy Areas and Texas
Policy Areas and Texas
Policy Areas and Texas
Texas Taxes & Revenues
\$\$\$: What Goes in Must Go Out

Apr. 22

Unit V Exam

Research Paper/Final Exam

Apr. 26

Buffer/Research Paper

Apr. 28

Buffer/Research Paper

May 3

Buffer/Research Paper

May 5

Buffer/Research Paper

May 9

Final Exam Study Day

May 11

Final Exam

1A – Wednesday, May 11 – 8:20 a.m. to 9:50 a.m.

2A – Wednesday, May 11 – 9:55 a.m. to 11:25 a.m.

May 13

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