

GOVT 2306 – 001: Texas Government

Texas A&M University – San Antonio

Fall 2025

Instructor: Carlos S. Markham

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Location: Classroom Hall. Room #110

Date/Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the institutions and political processes of the Texas state government. Topics to be covered include constitutionalism, Texas political culture, civil rights and civil liberties, bureaucracy, political parties, interest groups, and the role of the media, among others. We will survey the general institutions and cultural underpinnings of the Texas state government as structures that shape public policy and political experience.

Throughout the semester, we will attempt to answer several core questions concerning government: What are the critical institutions of Texas state government and how do they shape our political life? What is the nature of Texas political culture and how does it affect our politics? Ultimately, the goal of this course is to help each member of the class arrive at a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the forces that shape government and politics, so that he or she may be both a more discerning student and critic of the system and a more informed and reflective participant in it.

Office Hours:

Time: T/Th 1:00 pm — 2:00 pm or by appointment.

[Schedule Office Hours meeting](#)

I will be holding office hours at the above-listed times, exclusively face to face. There will be no online or virtual meetings. You are highly encouraged to utilize my office hours throughout the semester to discuss any ideas you have – big or small – pertaining to this course or your overall course of study. If you cannot make the designated time, please do not hesitate to email me to set up an appointment at cmarkham@tamusa.edu.

Student Learning Objectives

After completing GOVT 2306 students will be able to do the following:

Demonstrate the ability to read and evaluate government documents and data critical to the study of Texas government and politics.

Articulate contrasting points of view on one or more major political issues.

Demonstrate the political knowledge to understand what is being reported/discussed in the media.

Describe and evaluate the impact of government on the lives of individuals and society as a whole.

Understand the institutions of the state of Texas and how they function.

Identify and evaluate information sources for political news, data, and opinion.

Grading

This is a face-to-face course. This means that this class will be conducted exclusively in person. Attendance for both Tuesday's and Thursday's class is obligatory and will consist of lecture and discussion. Exams and writing assignments will be accomplished outside the classroom.

Your grade for this course will be based on the following: Course Quizzes (10%), Discussion Assignments (20%), Writing Assignments (20%), Module Exams(25%) and a Final Exam (25%). Submissions with vague and generic language that omit the specific issues/questions raised in the assignment prompt and class lectures will get a maximum grade of 49%. To receive credit for the course, your participation must be made and your work submitted by the stated deadlines: late work will NOT be accepted. It is the students' responsibility to ensure a working internet connection for all exams. In the event of technical problems, email notification must be made to the instructor PRIOR to the deadline for submission.

Grade breakdown:

10% Chapter Quizzes

20% Discussion Assignments

20% Writing Assignments

25% Module Exams

25% Final Assignment

Course Requirements

- **Attendance:** "Students are expected to attend all scheduled activities for all of the classes for which they are registered" ([A&M-SA attendance policy](#)). You will need paper and pen for each class meeting.

- **Readings:** Readings for each class period should be completed prior to beginning the weekly course meetings. You are responsible for all required reading materials.

- **Discussion Assignments:** Discussion Assignments will take place in class throughout the semester. Students must be familiar with the subject matter prior to the start of class..

- **Writing Assignments:** Posted on BlackBoard and due no later than 9:00 pm on the posted deadline. Writing assignments should be double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch

margins, and at least 500 words in length to be considered for full credit. Responses for Writing Assignments should address each topic/item in the assignment prompt, labeled by number and in order (e.g. #1, #2, etc.).

- **Module Exams:** A total of 4 module exams will be given, and students will have one attempt with time restrictions. These exams will consist of multiple-choice questions. The test will be taken outside the classroom, and the lowest grade will be dropped.

- **Final Assignment:** The final assignment will be a written essay with the specific details given to students towards the end of the semester.

Required Books

Title: *The Texas Experience: Lone Star Politics, Policy, and Participation* Publisher: Pearson

Link to the e-book is available on BlackBoard in the Course Content folder. The textbook can be purchased through Pearson, from the A&M-SA bookstore, or online. Older versions are acceptable.

Course Schedule and Readings

Each week, your assignments will be posted in the “Course Content” folder on the BlackBoard menu.

Week 1 (August 26 – 30):

- Review the syllabus and familiarize yourself with the BlackBoard course and textbook. -
- Reading Assignment: Chapter 1 – Texas Society and Political Culture
- Complete the Chapter Questions
- Be prepared to discuss current events relative to the Government

Week 2 (August 31 - September 6):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 3 - Voting and Elections in Texas
- Complete the Chapter Questions
- Be prepared to discuss current events relative to the Government

Week 3 (September 7 – 13):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 4 – Political Parties in Texas
- Complete the Chapter Questions
- Complete Module Exam #1, due Friday, September 12

- Writing Assignment #1 due Saturday, Feb 13 via BlackBoard
- Be prepared to discuss current events relative to the Government

Week 4 (September 14 – 20):

- Discuss / Review Module Exam and written assignment
- Reading assignment Chapter 2, Federalism and the Texas Constitution
- Complete the Chapter Questions
- Be prepared to discuss current events relative to the Government

Week 5 (September 21 – 27):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 11 Local and County Governments and Special Districts in Texas
- Complete the Chapter Questions
- Be prepared to discuss current events relative to the Government

Week 6 (September 28 – October 4):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 5 - Interest Groups in Texas Politics
- Complete the Chapter Questions
- Be prepared to discuss current events relative to the Government

Week 7 (October 5 – 11):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 8 - The Governor in Texas
- Complete the Chapter Questions
- Complete Module Exam #2, due Wednesday, October 8
- Be prepared to discuss current events relative to the Government

Week 8 (October 12 - 18):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 7, The Texas Legislature
- Complete the Chapter Questions
- Be prepared to discuss current events relative to the Government

Week 9 (October 19 – 25):

- Writing Assignment #2 due Wednesday, October 22 via BlackBoard
- Discuss the written assignment
- Be prepared to discuss current events relative to the Government

Week 10 (October 26 – November 1):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 10 – The Texas Court System
- Complete the Chapter Questions
- Be prepared to discuss current events relative to the Government

Week 11 (November 2 – 8):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 9 – The Plural Executive and the Bureaucracy in Texas
- Complete the Chapter Questions
- Complete Module Exam #3, due Friday, November 7
- Be prepared to discuss current events relative to the Government

Week 12 (November 9 – 15):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 6 – The Media and Public Opinion in Texas
- Complete the Chapter Questions
- Be prepared to discuss current events relative to the Government

Week 13 (November 16 – 22):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 12 – Criminal Justice Policy in Texas
- Complete the Chapter Questions
- Writing Assignment #3 due Friday, November 21, via BlackBoard
- Be prepared to discuss current events relative to the Government

Week 14 (November 23 – 29):

- Discuss the written assignment
- HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Week 15 (November 30 – December 6): LAST WEEK OF CLASSES

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 13 – Public Policy, Finance, and Budgeting in Texas
- Complete the Chapter Questions
- Complete Module Exam #4, due Friday, December 5
- Be prepared to discuss current events relative to the Government

Week 16 (December 7 - 13): NO CLASSES: FINALS WEEK

- Final Assignment, due Friday, December 12

*******This syllabus is subject to revisions*******

FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 12th @ 10:00 PM