

# GOVT 2306: TEXAS GOVERNMENT

**Fall 2025 (Condensed 10-Week Session)**

**Professor:** Dr. Amanda Gatewood

**Office:** Online

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**Course Dates:** August 25, 2025 – October 31, 2025

**Format:** Online, asynchronous

## **Course Description:**

Texas has emerged as one of the most populous and diverse states in the nation. These demographic shifts present considerable challenges for both the government and the residents of Texas. By examining the structure and function of Texas' state and local government, students can gain a deeper understanding of how government impacts their lives and how they can influence government in return. This course aims to introduce students to the origins and development of the Texas Constitution, the structure and powers of state and local government, the principles of federalism and intergovernmental relations, political participation, the electoral process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas..

**This is an online, self-paced sprint course, condensing 16 weeks of material into 10 weeks. All instruction, activities, and assessments are virtual, with no scheduled meeting times.** You can access PowerPoint presentations and supplemental materials on Blackboard in the weekly sections. **Due to the accelerated pace, it is crucial to stay current with the material;** falling behind is not recommended. Your progress through the semester will depend on your comprehension, allowing you to advance as you master the content.

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## **State Learning Outcomes for Texas Government.**

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas Constitution.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.
3. Describe the separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.
6. Analyze the state and local election process.
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.

## Required Course Material:

Revel: You are required to purchase the Revel version of Texas Tribune, The Texas Experience: Lone Star Politics, Policy, and Participation, 1e for this course. While access to Revel is required, the printed version of this text is optional - see purchasing options below. There are two ways to purchase Revel access. Choose the option that works best for you:

Option #1: Purchase a Revel access code from the campus bookstore.

Option #2: Online Instant Access: If you decide not to purchase Revel from the bookstore, you can buy Revel access online. You will see this as an option after clicking on the course invite link listed below.

Course Materials | Pearson When you register (via access code or online instant access), you also have the option of adding the print upgrade for \$19.99 extra (no shipping cost). Follow these steps to get started or watch a short video ([www.pearsonhighered.com/Revel/students/registration](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/Revel/students/registration)) on how to register for Revel:

To access course content go to the course content link on Blackboard and then click the Open Pearson link. If you encounter any issues, support materials are available at [www.pearsonhighered.com/Revel/students/support/index.html](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/Revel/students/support/index.html), including a call-in number: 855 875-1801. Access to a computer or mobile electronic device (tablet or smartphone) with internet access is required to complete your Revel assignments.

## Grading and Assessments

- Exam 1 – 100 points (25%)
- Exam 2 – 100 points (25%)
- Exam 3 – 100 points (25%)
- Weekly Discussion Activities (WDAs) – 100 points (25%)

**Exams:** Exams are based on class lectures, discussions, and chapter readings. See the class schedule below for details on which chapters will be covered on each exam.

**Weekly Discussion Activities(WDAs):** Students will be required to submit 11 assignments via Blackboard during the semester. Assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on the due date (not accepted late). You can always submit work early, but never late. Details about the rules of each assignment are listed in the course overview section of this syllabus, as well as under the prompt on blackboard. If you have a question about an assignment, please email me at least two hours before the due date if you expect a response before the deadline.

# Course Policies and Resources

**Posting of Grades** – Grades will be posted in your course site within 5 days after an assignment or project is due, barring any unforeseen circumstances. If you do not have a grade posted for an assignment or project you have submitted, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor to discuss your concerns. You have 48 hours after a grade is posted to discuss the grade in writing (via-email). I reserve the right to determine whether or not to round up based on the individual's performance in the class as a whole. Factors, such as the degree and quality of participation, may be considered. Finally, I will not tolerate frivolous requests for regrades (e.g., requests of the "I need a good grade to go [business/law/med] school!" or of the "I need a good grade because I'm on probation!" variety). This means that grades may span the full A-F grading scale. In the limit, I reserve the right to reduce your participation score in response to excessive grade grubbing. I do not accept late work PERIOD only in extreme circumstances.

**You can always submit work early but NEVER late.**

**Class/Online Etiquette** Please use respectful language in all correspondence with me and in the class open discussion post, as well as assignments. There is a zero-tolerance policy in my class for racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, or any other highly offensive or violent rhetoric.

**Contact policy and Email Etiquette:** I am available by appointment via email. I will do my best to respond to emails within 48 hours of receiving them. When you send me an email message, it will come with a proper greeting and closing and be sent from your official Jaguar email address. Therefore, any email that does not address me by name will go unanswered. Thus, in order to get a response, you should 1) Have a proper opening (i.e. Dear Prof. or Dr. Gatewood) and 2) a clear explication of your question/issue/problem (This book had me ROTFL—is unclear) and 3) a proper closing with your name (Thank you/Best/Something like this, John). Remember I will not answer questions about what we went over in class on the days you missed. All correspondence between professors and students must occur via University email accounts. You must have a Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at [sahelp@tamusa.tamus.edu](mailto:sahelp@tamusa.tamus.edu) or 210-784- 4357. If you don't hear back from them within 48 hours, contact them again. They have a lot of requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to check up on them. I will distribute course materials, including announcements and updates, via Blackboard, so I encourage you to log in to that system at least twice per week.

## **Academic Accommodations**

Students with disabilities requiring accommodations should contact Disability Support Services (DSS) at [dsupport@tamusa.edu](mailto:dsupport@tamusa.edu) or (210) 784-1335.

## **Academic Learning Center**

Free subject-area tutoring is available. Schedule appointments through JagWire.

### **Counseling & Wellness Services**

Confidential mental health support is available. Call (210) 784-1331 or visit [tamusa.edu/studentcounseling](http://tamusa.edu/studentcounseling).

### **Emergency Preparedness**

Sign up for JagE Alert notifications at [tamusa.bbcportal.com](http://tamusa.bbcportal.com).

### **Financial Aid & Attendance**

Attendance verification is required for financial aid eligibility. Students not attending may lose aid.

### **Jaguar Writing Center**

Offers writing assistance for assignments and presentations. Located in Central Academic Building, Suite 208.

### **Meeting Basic Needs**

Students experiencing food or housing insecurity should contact the Dean of Students at [DOS@tamusa.edu](mailto:DOS@tamusa.edu).

### **Military Affairs**

Active-duty and veteran students should communicate special circumstances in advance. Contact [military@tamusa.edu](mailto:military@tamusa.edu) or (210) 784-1397.

### **Religious Observances**

Students may request accommodations for observances if notified before the second week of class.

### **Respect for Diversity**

All members of the class community should share experiences respectfully, be open to others' views, and contribute to an inclusive environment.

### **Six-Drop Rule**

Undergraduate students may drop no more than six courses (non-punitive) during their academic career in Texas public institutions.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1 (Aug 25 – Aug 30)**

- Register for Revel; Cover Syllabus
- WDA #1 – *About the Texas Tribune* (**Worth 5 points**)

### **Week 2 (Aug 31 – Sept 7)**

- WDA #2 – *Chapter 1: Texas Society and Political Culture* (**Worth 10 points Due 9/7 by 11:59 p.m.**)
- WDA #3 – *Chapter 2: Federalism and the Texas Constitution* (**Worth 10 points Due 9/7 by 11:59 p.m.**)

### **Week 3 (Sept 8 – Sept 14)**

- WDA #4 – *Chapter 3: Voting and Elections in Texas* (**Worth 10 points Due 9/14 by 11:59 p.m.**)
- Exam 1 – Covers Chapters 1–4 (*including Chapter 4: Political Parties in Texas*) (**Worth 100 points Due 9/14 by 11:59 p.m.**)

### **Week 4 (Sept 15– Sept 21)**

- WDA #5 – *Chapter 5: Interest Groups in Texas Politics* (**Worth 10 points Due 9/21 by 11:59 p.m.**)

### **Week 5 (Sept 22 – Sept 28)**

- WDA #6 – *Chapter 6: The Media and Public Opinion in Texas* (**Worth 10 points Due 9/28 by 11:59 p.m.**)
- WDA #7 – *Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature* (**Worth 10 points Due 9/28 by 11:59 p.m.**)

### **Week 6 (Sept 29– Oct 5)**

- Exam 2 – Covers Chapters 5–8 (*including Chapter 8: The Governor in Texas*) (**Worth 100 points Due 10/5 by 11:59 p.m.**)

### **Week 7 (Oct 6 – Oct 12)**

- WDA #8 – *Chapter 9: The Plural Executive and the Bureaucracy in Texas* (**Worth 10 points Due 10/12 by 11:59 p.m.**)

### **Week 8 (Oct 13– Oct 19)**

- WDA #9 – *Chapter 10: The Texas Courts System* (**Worth 10 points Due 10/19** )

**Week 9 (Oct 20– Oct 26)**

- WDA #10 – *Chapter 11: Local and County Governments and Special Districts in Texas* (Worth 10 points Due 10/26 by 11:59 p.m.)
- WDA #11 – *Chapter 12: Criminal Justice Policy in Texas* (Worth 5 points Due 10/26 by 11:59 p.m.)

**Week 10 (Oct 27 – Oct 31)**

- Exam 3 – Covers Chapters 9–13 (*including Chapter 13: Public Policy, Finance, and Budgeting in Texas*) (Worth 100 points Due 10/31 by 11:59 p.m.)
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