

GOVT 2306-600: TEXAS GOVERNMENT

Fall 2026 (16-Week)

Professor: Dr. Amanda Gatewood

Office: Online

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Course Dates: August 24, 2026–December 11, 2026

Format: Online, asynchronous

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Texas has emerged as one of the most populous and diverse states in the nation. These demographic shifts pose significant challenges for both the government and Texas residents. By examining the structure and function of Texas's 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 introduces 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, asynchronous course spanning 16 weeks. All instruction, activities, and assessments are virtual, with no scheduled meeting times. PowerPoint presentations and supplemental materials are available in the weekly sections of Blackboard. Students are responsible for completing assigned readings, activities, and assessments by the deadlines listed in Blackboard and the course schedule.

STATE LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR TEXAS GOVERNMENT

By the end of this course, students 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 the political culture of Texas.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIAL

Governing Texas, 7th Edition

Students are responsible for completing the assigned chapter readings listed in the course schedule. Access the required textbook through the course materials provided for this section and refer to Blackboard for any additional instructions regarding course materials.

GRADING AND ASSESSMENTS

- Exam 1: 100 points (25%)
- Exam 2: 100 points (25%)
- Exam 3: 100 points (25%)
- Weekly Discussion Activities: 10 WDAs × 10 points each = 100 points (25%)

Total Points Available: 400 points (100%)

Exams are based on class lectures, Weekly Discussion Activities, and assigned chapter readings. See the course schedule for details regarding the chapters covered on each exam.

Weekly Discussion Activities

Weekly Discussion Activities (WDAs) are designed to help students apply, analyze, and reflect upon concepts from the assigned chapter. Each WDA will contain one discussion question related to that week's reading.

There is no required word count for WDAs. Responses should be sufficiently developed to fully answer the assigned question and demonstrate an understanding of the relevant chapter concepts. Strong responses should use specific ideas, concepts, or examples from the assigned material rather than relying solely on personal opinion.

Each WDA is worth 10 points and must be submitted through Blackboard by the deadline listed in the course schedule.

COURSE POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Posting of Grades

Grades will be posted in the course site within five days after an assignment or project is due, barring unforeseen circumstances. If a grade has not been posted for an assignment or project that you submitted, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor to discuss your concerns.

You have 48 hours after a grade is posted to discuss it in writing via email. I reserve the right to determine whether to round a final grade based on the student's performance in the class. Factors such as the degree and quality of participation may be considered.

I will not tolerate frivolous requests for regrades, including requests based solely on needing a particular grade for graduate school, professional school, probation, financial aid, or another external reason. Grades may span the full A–F grading scale. I reserve the right to reduce a student's participation score for excessive grade grubbing.

I do not accept late work except in extreme circumstances.

You may always submit work early, but NEVER late.

CLASS AND ONLINE ETIQUETTE

Please use respectful language in all correspondence with the instructor, open class discussions, and assignments. There is a zero-tolerance policy in this course 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.

All emails must be sent from your official Jaguar email account and include:

1. A proper greeting, such as “Dear Professor Gatewood” or “Dear Dr. Gatewood.”
2. A clear explanation of your question, concern, or problem.
3. A proper closing that includes your name.

All correspondence between professors and students must occur through university email accounts. You must have a Jaguar email account that is ready and working. If your account is not working, contact the Help Desk at helpdesk@tamusa.edu or 210-784-HELP (4357). If you do not receive a response within 48 hours, contact the Help Desk again.

Course materials, announcements, and updates will be distributed through Blackboard. Students should log into Blackboard at least twice each week.

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

University Email Policy and Course Communications

All correspondence between professors and students must occur through university email accounts. You must have your Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the Help Desk at helpdesk@tamusa.edu or 210-784-HELP (4357). If you do not receive a response within 48 hours, follow up with the Help Desk.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Texas A&M University–San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

If you experience barriers to your education because of a disability or believe that you may have a disability, contact Disability Support Services. Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210.

Phone: 210-784-1335

Email: dss@tamusa.edu

Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their academic accommodations with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

ACADEMIC LEARNING CENTER

All currently enrolled Texas A&M University–San Antonio students may use the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to currently enrolled students.

Students may make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform, which is available in the Tools section of Blackboard.

Email: tutoring@tamusa.edu

Phone: 210-784-1307

Location: Central Academic Building, Room 202

Online tutoring is also available for after-hours and weekend assistance. Tutoring hours may change based on tutor schedules and availability.

COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

There may be times when personal stressors interfere with a student's academic performance or daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available through the Student Counseling Center.

To schedule an appointment, visit the Student Counseling Center's website, call 210-784-1331, or visit Madla 120 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

All mental health services provided by the Student Counseling Center are free and confidential to the extent permitted by law. Services include brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services.

Crisis support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year by calling 210-784-1331 or using the TELUS Student Support App.

The TELUS Student Support App provides mental health resources, including immediate distress and crisis support, an anonymous peer-to-peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles intended to improve mental well-being.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

JagE Alert is Texas A&M University–San Antonio's mass-notification system. During an emergency, including inclement weather, registered students, faculty, and staff may receive text messages or emails containing instructions and updates.

Register or update your information at tamusa.bbcportal.com.

Download the SafeZone App for emergency assistance.

Emergency: 210-784-1911

Non-Emergency: 210-784-1900

FINANCIAL AID AND VERIFICATION OF ATTENDANCE

Under federal regulation 34 CFR 668.21, a student may receive Title IV funds only when the student satisfies Title IV eligibility requirements, including class attendance.

If Title IV funds are disbursed to an ineligible student, including a student who fails to begin attendance, the institution must return those funds to the U.S. Department of Education within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance.

Faculty will electronically notify the Office of Financial Aid if a student has not attended by the published census date. A student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend before the census date may have the student's financial aid terminated and returned to the U.S. Department of Education.

A student who stops attending at any point during the semester may also be required to return a portion of the student's federal financial aid.

JAGUAR WRITING, LANGUAGE, AND DIGITAL COMPOSING CENTER

The Jaguar Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students, faculty, and staff.

Writing tutors help students develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise written assignments. Language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students completing assignments in Spanish. Digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects, including e-portfolios, class presentations, and other multimedia projects.

The center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. Students may schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab by selecting "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center."

Students who want to work with a tutor in real time should schedule an "Online Appointment." Students seeking asynchronous written feedback should schedule an "eTutoring" appointment.

Email: writingcenter@tamusa.edu

MEETING BASIC NEEDS

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries, accessing sufficient food, or maintaining a safe and stable place to live—and who believes that these circumstances may affect the student's academic performance—is encouraged to submit a CARE report for support.

Students are also encouraged to notify the professor if they feel comfortable doing so. This will enable the professor to direct students toward available resources.

A food pantry is available on campus.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to contact the Office of Military Affairs with questions involving federal or state Veterans Affairs education benefits.

Location: Patriots' Casa, Room 202

Email: military.va@tamusa.edu

Phone: 210-784-1397

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

Texas A&M University–San Antonio recognizes the wide variety of faiths represented throughout the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their traditions.

Students will be provided an opportunity to make up examinations, study requirements, or coursework missed because of a religious observance, provided that they notify the instructor before the end of the second week of classes for a regular academic session.

THE SIX-DROP RULE

Students are subject to the requirements of Texas Senate Bill 1231, which was passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. Senate Bill 1231 limits students to a maximum of six nonpunitive course drops during their undergraduate careers.

A nonpunitive drop does not affect a student's grade-point average. Course drops that exceed the maximum allowed under Senate Bill 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will affect the student's grade-point average.

STATEMENT OF HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Texas A&M University–San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity.

To fulfill its missions as an institution of higher learning, the university encourages a climate that values collegiality and the uniqueness of each individual within the university, state, nation, and world.

All decisions and actions involving students and employees will be based on applicable law and individual merit. In accordance with applicable federal and state law, Texas A&M University–San Antonio prohibits discrimination and harassment based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or pregnancy or parenting status.

Individuals who believe that they have experienced prohibited harassment or discrimination are encouraged to contact the university's Civil Rights Officer.

Phone: 210-784-2061

Email: titleix@tamusa.edu

TITLE IX AND SEX-BASED MISCONDUCT

Texas A&M University–San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and the university community.

If you have experienced sex discrimination or harassment—including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or sex-based stalking—help and support are available.

The university's Title IX Coordinator can support individuals affected by such conduct by helping them navigate campus life and access health services, counseling services, academic accommodations, housing accommodations, and other assistance.

Students are strongly encouraged to report such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator.

Most Texas A&M University–San Antonio employees are required to report information about sex discrimination and harassment to the university. If you disclose a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual violence, or related sex-based misconduct to a faculty member, the faculty member must share that information with the Title IX Coordinator.

Title IX Coordinator

Email: titleix@tamusa.edu

Phone: 210-784-2061

Location: Central Academic Building, Room 439K

Students who wish to speak with a confidential employee who does not have this reporting obligation may contact the Student Counseling Center at 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS

Texas A&M University–San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or an issue related to that status, to:

1. Take a leave of absence or withdraw from a degree or certificate program.
2. Limit the student's studies.
3. Participate in an alternative program.
4. Change the student's major, degree, or certificate program.
5. Refrain from joining or stop participating in a university course, activity, or program.

The university will provide pregnant students with reasonable accommodations comparable to those provided to students with temporary medical conditions. Accommodations may include maintaining a safe distance from hazardous substances, areas, or activities; excused absences for illnesses or medical appointments; modified assignment due dates; rescheduled examinations; a leave of absence; or access to instructional materials and lecture recordings for excused absences when these resources would be provided to another student with an excused absence.

Pregnant and parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with questions or concerns.

Email: titleix@tamusa.edu

Phone: 210-784-2061

Location: Central Academic Building, Room 439K

The Title IX Coordinator is also the university's liaison for current or incoming students who are parents or guardians of children younger than 18. The coordinator can provide information about support services and other available resources.

Young Jaguars may provide childcare assistance to eligible parenting students. Eligibility requirements include:

1. The student must be enrolled in classes at Texas A&M University–San Antonio during the current semester.
2. The student must be Pell Grant eligible or a single parent.
3. The student's child or children must be between 3 and 12 years old.
4. The child or children must be enrolled in Pre-K–3 through sixth grade.

Email: youngjaguars@tamusa.edu

Phone: 210-784-2636

STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students' Rights

Students retain the rights guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Texas, and applicable federal and state laws.

Students have the right to:

1. Participate in a free exchange of ideas.
2. Receive a fair and impartial academic evaluation.
3. Be treated with dignity and respect.
4. Have university rules and disciplinary procedures applied fairly.
5. Receive fundamentally fair treatment in disciplinary actions arising from alleged violations of university rules.

Students' Responsibilities

Students have the responsibility to:

1. Respect the rights and property of others, including students, faculty, and administrators.
2. Become fully acquainted with the university's published rules, including those found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, university website, and university catalog.
3. Comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws, as well as university rules and regulations.
4. Recognize the potential impact of their actions upon themselves, others, and the university community.
5. Recognize the university's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
6. Check their university email for updates and official university notifications.

Students are expected to behave in a dignified, respectful, and courteous manner toward all people, regardless of sex, ethnic or racial origin, religious background, or disability. Conduct that infringes upon another individual's rights will not be tolerated.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to demonstrate a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education.

Students who engage in conduct that violates the standards of academic integrity may face academic or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct includes any act or attempted act that gives a student an unfair academic advantage.

Any specifically prohibited behavior by the instructor in the course syllabus, assignment instructions, or course discussions may also be considered academic misconduct.

Students should review the Student Code of Conduct and resources available through the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for additional information about academic misconduct policies and procedures.

IMPORTANT FALL 2026 DATES

- August 20: Tuition and fee payment deadline
- August 24: First class day
- August 31: Last day to register

- September 7: Labor Day Holiday—No Classes/University Closed
- September 9: Census date
- October 5–October 16: Midterm grading period
- November 13: Last day to drop with an automatic grade of “W”
- November 25: Study Day—No Classes
- November 26–November 28: Thanksgiving Holiday—No Classes/University Closed
- November 30: Last day to withdraw from the university
- December 4: Last day of scheduled classes for weekday classes
- December 5–December 11: Final examinations
- December 11: End of term
- December 15: Commencement
- December 16: All grades due by noon
- December 17: Grades available in JagWire

The complete academic calendar is available online.

NO USE OF GENERATIVE AI PERMITTED

GOVT 2306-600 assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups.

Students may not have another person or entity complete any portion of an assignment for them. This prohibition includes hiring a person or company to complete assignments and using artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, to generate course content.

The use of AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M University–San Antonio’s standards of academic integrity.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: August 24–August 30

- Review the syllabus and access the required course materials.
- WDA #1: About the Texas Tribune—10 points
- Due Sunday, August 30, by 11:59 p.m. CST.

Week 2: August 31–September 6

- WDA #2: Chapter 1—The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas—10 points
- Due Sunday, September 6, by 11:59 p.m. CST.

Week 3: September 7–September 13

- WDA #3: Chapter 2—The Texas Constitution—10 points
- Due Sunday, September 13, by 11:59 p.m. CST.
- **Note:** Monday, September 7, is Labor Day. The university is closed.

Week 4: September 14–September 20

- WDA #4: Chapter 3—Texas in the Federal System—10 points
- Due Sunday, September 20, by 11:59 p.m. CST.

Week 5: September 21–September 27

- Exam 1: Chapters 1–3—100 points
- Due Sunday, September 27, by 11:59 p.m. CST.

Week 6: September 28–October 4

- WDA #5: Chapter 4—Public Opinion and the Media—10 points
- Due Sunday, October 4, by 11:59 p.m. CST.

Week 7: October 5–October 11

- WDA #6: Chapter 5—Political Parties—10 points
- Due Sunday, October 11, by 11:59 p.m. CST.

Week 8: October 12–October 18

- WDA #7: Chapter 6—Campaigns and Elections—10 points
- Due Sunday, October 18, by 11:59 p.m. CST.

Week 9: October 19–October 25

- WDA #8: Chapter 7—Interest Groups and Lobbying—10 points
- Due Sunday, October 25, by 11:59 p.m. CST.

Week 10: October 26–November 1

- Exam 2: Chapters 4–7—100 points
- Due Sunday, November 1, by 11:59 p.m. CST.

Week 11: November 2–November 8

- WDA #9: Chapter 8—The Legislature—10 points
- Due Sunday, November 8, by 11:59 p.m. CST.

Week 12: November 9–November 15

- Chapter 9: The Executive Branch

Week 13: November 16–November 22

- WDA #10: Chapter 10—The Judiciary—10 points
- Due Sunday, November 22, by 11:59 p.m. CST.

THANKSGIVING BREAK: November 23–November 29

- No assignments are due this week.
- Wednesday, November 25, is a study day.
- The university is closed November 26–November 28.

Week 14: November 30–December 4

- Chapter 11: Local Government
- Chapter 12: Public Finance
- Chapter 13: Public Policy

FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD: December 5–December 11

- Final Exam/Exam 3: Chapters 8–13—100 points
- Due Friday, December 11, by 11:59 p.m. CST.