

GOVT 2306 – 900: Texas Government
Texas A&M University – San Antonio
Spring 2025

Time: 2:00 – 3:15pm, Thursday
Location: CAB 218

Instructor:
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CAB 351-B
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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 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.

Virtual Office Hours:

Time: W/Th 11:00 am — 12:00 pm or by appointment.

[Schedule Office Hours meeting](#)

I will be holding office hours via Microsoft Teams every Wednesday (10:30 am to 12:00 pm) and Thursday (11:00 am to 12:00 pm). You are highly encouraged to make use of my office hours throughout the semester to discuss any ideas you have – big or small – pertaining to this course or your general course of study. If you cannot make the designated time, please do not hesitate to email me to set up an appointment. Click the link above to schedule a meeting.

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 hybrid course. This means that this class combines both in-person and online coursework, where half the weekly course load is in-person (Thursday classes) and the other half will be completed online in BlackBoard.

Your grade for this course will be based on the following: Course Quizzes (5%), Discussion Assignments (30%), Writing Assignments (30%), Self-Assessment Assignments (10%), Midterm Assignment (10%), and a Final Assignment (15%). 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 be accepted, with 5% being taken off for each day passed the assignment deadline. No assignments will be accepted more than one week late.

Grade breakdown:

5% Course Quizzes

30% Discussion Assignments

30% Weekly Writing Assignments

10% Self-Assessment Assignments

10% Midterm Assignment

15% 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. No headphones are permitted to be worn during class.
- **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. Submissions for Discussion Assignments will be graded in accordance with the rubric posted on BlackBoard.
- **Writing Assignments:** Posted on BlackBoard and due no later than 11:59 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.). Writing Assignments will be graded in accordance with the rubric posted on BlackBoard.
- **Self-Assessment Assignments:** Following each Writing Assignment, you will have a Self-Assessment Assignment to review your work. This is an opportunity to develop your writing and communication skills, and to recognize your strengths and areas for improvement. See the Self-Assessment Guidelines for detailed instructions.
- **Midterm Assignment:** Your midterm exam will consist of a take home, short response essay.
- **Final Assignment – Campaign for Governor:** Specific details for this assignment will be given towards the end of the semester but the assignment will consist of detailing the processes of running a personal campaign for governor of Texas. Due via BlackBoard.

This is a take-home paper and there is no other ‘final exam’ for this course.

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 (January 21 – 26):

- Review the syllabus and familiarize yourself with the BlackBoard course and textbook.
- Review Self-Assessment Guidelines and grading rubrics.
- Reading Assignment: Chapter 1 – Texas Society and Political Culture

Week 2 (January 27 – February 2):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 2 - Federalism and the Texas Constitution
- Writing Assignment #1 due Sunday, Feb 2nd via BlackBoard

Week 3 (February 3 – 9):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 3 – Voting and Elections in Texas
- Self-Assessment #1 due Sunday, Feb 9th via BlackBoard
- In-class discussion due Thursday

Week 4 (February 10 – 16):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 4 - Political Parties in Texas
- Writing Assignment #2 due Sunday, Feb 16th

Week 5 (February 17 – 23):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 5 – Interest Groups in Texas Politics
- In-class discussion due Thursday
- Self-Assessment #2 due Sunday, Feb 23rd

Week 6 (February 24 – March 2):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 6 - The Media and Public Opinion in Texas

Week 7 (March 3 – 9):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 7 - The Texas Legislature
- In-class discussion due Thursday
- Take-home Midterm Assignment: due Sunday, Mar 9th

Week 8 (March 10 – 16): NO CLASSES: SPRING BREAK

- No assignments due

Week 9 (March 17 – 23):

- Documentary *The Revisionaries*, accessible through in Kanopy through the university library: <https://tamusa.kanopy.com/video/revisionaries>
- Writing Assignment #3 Due Sunday, Mar 23rd
- In-class discussion due Thursday

Week 10 (March 24 – 30):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 8 – The Governor in Texas
- Self-Assessment #3 due Sunday, Mar 30th

Week 11 (March 31 – April 6):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 9 – The Plural Executive and the Bureaucracy in Texas
- Writing Assignment #4 due Sunday, Apr 6th
- In-class discussion due Thursday

Week 12 (April 7 – 13):

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 10 - The Texas Courts System
- Self-Assessment #4 due Sunday, Apr 13th
- Course Quiz #1 due Sunday, Apr 13th via Blackboard

Week 13 (April 14 – 20):

- Reading Assignment: Cybernetics and the Experience Machine (in-class activity)
- Writing Assignment #5 due Sunday, Apr 20th
- In-class discussion due Thursday
- Course Quiz #2 due Sunday, Apr 20th via Blackboard

Week 14 (April 21 – 27):

- Reading Assignment: The End of Forgetting (video in Course Content to be viewed before class on Thursday)
- Self-Assessment #5 due Sunday, Apr 27th
- In-class discussion due Thursday
- Course Quiz #3 due Sunday, Apr 27th via Blackboard

Week 15 (April 28 – May 4): LAST WEEK OF CLASSES

- Reading Assignment: Automation and the Economy (in-class activity)
- Work on Final Assignment
- Course Quiz #4 due Sunday, May 4th via Blackboard

Week 16 (May 5 – 13): NO CLASSES: FINALS WEEK

- Work on Final Paper.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE NO LATER THAN MAY 9th @ 11:59 PM