

GOVT 2306–005: Texas Government
Texas A&M University—San Antonio
Spring 2026

Time: 9:30–10:45 am, Tue/Thu
Location: Classroom Hall 201

Instructor:
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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: Tue/Thu 11:00 am — 12:15 pm or by appointment.

[Schedule Office Hours meeting](#)

I will be holding office hours via Microsoft Teams every Tuesday and Thursday from 11 am to 12:15 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, email me to set up an appointment that works with your schedule. Click the link above to schedule a meeting.

Class Resources

- [GroupMe](#): Everyone in the class is welcome to join the GroupMe chat for informal discussion, asking questions, and/or general ranting about the course. I will be in the chat to answer any questions that come up about course materials or assignments. This is a great place to ‘think out loud’ and get feedback. This has been a great resource, and I highly encourage everyone to join.

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

To receive full credit for the course, your participation must be made and your work submitted by the stated deadlines. 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%. No late submissions will be accepted for the Discussions, Midterm, or Final Papers; late work will be accepted for all other assignments for 48 hours after original deadline, with 30% being taken off for the first day and 40% for the second. No assignments will be accepted more than 48 hours late.

Grade breakdown:

- 5% Course Quizzes
- 5% Peer-Assessments
- 10% Self-Assessments
- 30% Discussions
- 30% Writing Assignments
- 10% Midterm
- 10% Final

Course Requirements

- **BlackBoard:** I will use BlackBoard for class announcements and course updates; students are expected to check BlackBoard and their A&M-SA email regularly. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they have regular BlackBoard and email access.
- **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:** All assigned materials are required reading and integral to your success in this course. Readings for each class period should be completed prior to beginning the weekly assignments.

Assignment Requirements

- **Discussions:** Discussion Assignments will take place in accordance with the schedule posted in this syllabus. On the weeks that Discussions are scheduled, questions will be posted on BlackBoard that are due no later than the start of class on Thursdays. Submissions entered after this time or if you are not in class for the discussion will not receive credit for the assignment. There is no set word count requirement, just ensure that you adequately respond to all topics of the discussion. Submissions for Discussions 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. Writing Assignments will be graded in accordance with the rubric posted on BlackBoard.

- **Self-Assessments:** Following some Writing Assignments, you will conduct a Self-Assessment review of 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.
- **Peer-Assessments:** Following some Writing Assignments, you will conduct a peer assessment of your classmates' work. The peer-assessment process is an opportunity to provide feedback to classmates on their written communication by assisting them in identifying writing strengths as well as areas for development.
- **Course Quizzes:** Beginning in Week 12, you will have a weekly multiple-choice quiz. There will be four quizzes in total. Each quiz is a "Mastery" style test—this means you can take the quiz as many times as you need to get 100%. These are not the chapter quizzes from your textbook.
- **Midterm:** Your midterm exam will consist of a take home, short response essay.
- **Final – 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: *Governing Texas*

Publisher: Norton

Link to the e-book is available on BlackBoard in the Course Content folder. The textbook was paid for with your tuition—do not purchase the textbook separately.

Course Schedule and Readings

Each week, your assignments will be posted in the "Course Content" folder on the BlackBoard menu. Classes begin January 20th.

Week 1 (January 19 – 25):

- Read the syllabus thoroughly and familiarize yourself with the BlackBoard course.
- Thoroughly review the Self-Assessment Guidelines and grading rubrics.
- Ensure access to the textbook.

Week 2 (Jan 26 – Feb 1):

- Reading Assignment: (Chapter 1) The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas

Week 3 (Feb 2 – 8):

- Reading Assignment: (Chapter 2) The Texas Constitution
- Writing Assignment #1 due Sunday, Feb 8

Week 4 (Feb 9 – 15):

- Reading Assignment: (Chapter 4) Public Opinion and the Media
- Self-Assessment #1 due Sunday, Feb 15

- Discussion due Thursday before class

Week 5 (Feb 16 – 22):

- Reading Assignment: (Chapter 5) Political Parties
- Writing Assignment #2 due Sunday, Feb 22

Week 6 (Feb 23 – Mar 1):

- Reading Assignment: (Chapter 6) Campaigns and Elections
- Peer-Assessment #1 due Sunday, Mar 1
- Discussion due Thursday before class

Week 7 (Mar 2 – 8):

- Reading Assignment: (Chapter 7) Interest Groups and Lobbying

Week 8 (Mar 9 – 15): NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

Week 9 (Mar 16 – 22):

- Reading Assignment: (Chapter 8) The Legislature
- Discussion due Thursday before class
- Take-home Midterm Assignment due Sunday, Mar 22

Week 10 (Mar 23 – 29):

- Reading Assignment: (Chapter 11) Local Government
- Writing Assignment #3 Due Sunday, Mar 29
- In-class discussion due Thursday

Week 11 (Mar 30 – Apr 5):

- Reading Assignment: (Chapter 9) The Executive Branch
- Self-Assessment #2 due Sunday, Apr 5

Week 12 (Apr 6 – 12):

- Reading Assignment: (Chapter 9) The Plural Executive and the Bureaucracy in Texas
- Writing Assignment #4 due Sunday, Apr 12
- Discussion due Thursday before class
- Course Quiz #1 due Sunday, Apr 12 via Blackboard

Week 13 (Apr 13 – 19):

- Reading Assignment: (Chapter 10) The Judiciary
- Peer Assessment #2 due Sunday, Apr 19
- Course Quiz #2 due Sunday, Apr 19 via Blackboard

Week 14 (Apr 20 – 26):

- Reading Assignment: Cybernetics and the Experience Machine (handout)
- Writing Assignment #5 due Sunday, Apr 26
- Discussion due Thursday before class
- Course Quiz #3 due Sunday, Apr 26 via Blackboard

- Final Paper assignment available

Week 15 (Apr 27 – May 3): LAST WEEK OF CLASSES

- Reading Assignment: The End of Forgetting (handout)
- Self-Assessment #2 due Sunday, May 3
- Discussion due Thursday before class
- Course Quiz #4 due Sunday, May 3 via Blackboard

Week 16 (May 4 – 10): NO CLASS/FINALS WEEK

- Work on Final Paper.

FINAL PAPER DUE NO LATER THAN MAY 8th @ 11:59 PM