

**Statement of the SPC Social Science Department's
Government/Political Science Division for
GOVT 2306 Common Course Syllabus**

*(As required by the Texas Legislature and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
and approved by Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and SPC)*

Department: Social Sciences

Discipline: Government

Course Number: GOVERNMENT 2306

Course Title: Texas Government (Texas Constitution and Topics)

Credit: 3 Lecture, 0 Lab

Satisfies a core curriculum requirement? Yes, Social Science and ALL Undergraduate Degrees

Prerequisites: TSI compliance in Reading

Available Formats: Conventional, INET, ITV

Campus: Levelland, Reese, ATC, Plainview

Textbook: Varies according to instructor, (but for ALL dual credit classes: Governing Texas: An Introduction to Texas Politics; Champagne and Harpham; Publisher Norton; current edition.) Refer to each instructor's instructions for textbook requirements.

Course Specific Instructions: Each instructor will attach his/her course with specific instructions.

Course Description: This course is a study of the functions performed in the American system of state governments, with special reference to the development of governance in Texas and its Constitutions. This course satisfies the Legislative requirements for teacher certification.

Course Purpose: Government 2306, as taught at South Plains College, is a reading intensive course designed to acquaint the learner with the origin and development of the Texas Constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and inter-governmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas. This course meets the statutory requirements as set forth by the state of Texas.

Approval Number: 45.1002.51 25

Course Requirements: To maximize a student's potential to complete this course, he/she should attend all class meetings, complete all homework assignments and examinations in a timely manner, and complete all other projects or papers as assigned in the instructor's specific instructions.

Course Evaluation: See the instructor's course information sheet for specific items used in evaluating student performance.

Attendance Policy: Whenever absences become excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course. Each instructor will have additional information about attendance on his/her course information sheet.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students who have completed this course will be expected to:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas Constitution.
2. Demonstrate and understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.
3. Describe 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.

Fundamental Component Areas (FCA):

Students will be expected to perform satisfactorily in four FCA.

1. Critical Thinking Skills – to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information by:
 - a. Generating and communicating ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information,
 - b. Gathering and assessing information relevant to a question,
 - c. Analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information.
2. Communication – to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral or visual communication by:

Developing, interpreting, and expressing ideas through written, oral, or visual communication.
3. Social Responsibility Skills – to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively I regional, national, and global communities by:
 - a. Demonstrating intercultural competence,
 - b. Identifying civic responsibility,
 - c. Engaging in regional, national, and global communities.
4. Personal Responsibility – to include the ability to connect choices, action, and consequences to ethical decision-making by:
 - a. Reading, understanding and affirming agreement and acceptance of principles, guidelines and requirements set forth in the “Statement of Personal Responsibility of Students” (Attached)
 - b. Evaluating choices and actions and relating consequences to personal decision-making
 - c. Accepting personal responsibility for decisions and actions taken or not taken

Government 2306 Online

Instructor Syllabus

Course Description: Government 2306. Texas Government: Origin and development of the Texas constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism, and inter-governmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas.

Instructor Information

Name: Professor Jimmie McGee

Messages for Professor: Use "Messages" found on your left under course tools. Do not use SPC email only message me through the course.

Office: No summer office hours.

Office Phone: (806) 716-2198 Please leave a message and it will be routed to my personal phone. Please understand that I will get back to you in a reasonable amount of time but I am NOT on demand 24/7. I am more than likely not available at the last minute when an assignment is due.

Biography: AA Texarkana College; BA University of Texas at Austin; MA Texas State University; Additional Courses: Texas Tech University and Texas A&M University. Twenty-four Years at South Plains College as Professor of History and Government. 18 years Internet and ITV experience.

Textbook

Title: Governing Texas: An Introduction to Texas Politics Second Edition

Authors: Anthony Champagne and Edward J. Harpham

Publisher: Norton

ISBN: 978-0-393-936841-1

You can purchase this text at either South Plains College Bookstore (Reese or Levelland).

Please note: You can purchase a text directly from Norton and even better you can purchase an Ebook from Norton at 1/3 the price. nortonbooks.com.

Assignments

Note that all assignments can be found in Course Modules (Assignments) located on the tool bar to your left.

Course Grade

Your grade is determined by the number of points you earn on the four parts of the course: Discussion Postings, Chapter Exams, Module Exams, and the Final Exam. 2790-3100=A; 2480-2789=B; 2170-2479=C; 1860-2169=D; Less than 1860=F.

Discussions Postings

During the time allotted for each module you will make **four** discussion postings. **Two** of your postings for each module will be your reaction to two different articles related to Texas state, county or local government that you read on the approved websites: *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Austin American Statesman*, *The Fort Worth Star Telegram*, or *The Houston Chronicle*. Links to the websites are on the left tool bar. **Please do not ask to use another website...these are the only approved sites.** Your posting must begin with the title of the article and the date you read it. These original posts must be at least 400 words in length. The first paragraph must be a brief overview telling about the contents of the article and then the second paragraph must be an extensive reaction (your thoughts about the topic).

Later during the time allotted for the learning module, read postings by other students/or your professor and then make a **third and fourth** posting agreeing or disagreeing with another student. Write a long paragraph (at least 200 words in length) for these reply posts. (200 points for each module).

Postings must be made on at least two separate days. In other words, do not do all of your work on one day.

Please note that one Module Discussions may be replaced with a research paper (same point value)

Chapter Exams

When you are ready to take the chapter exams found in the Learning Module, you will have 30 minutes to take the exam that has 25 questions. You may take the exam twice and the highest grade will be recorded. Each exam is worth 100 points. Save your answers before submitting.

Module Exams

Each module concludes with a module exam. It has questions from each chapter and there will be a random selection of questions from each chapter. There are a total of 50 questions and you will be allowed an hour to take the exam. You will find it impossible to locate all the questions in the text during the allotted time. You must know the material. Each module exam will be worth 150 points. You may take the exam twice and the highest grade will be recorded.

Final Exam

The Final Exam will cover all the chapter material that you have read, studied, and previously been tested over in the course. It will consist of 100 questions selected randomly from all chapters. You will have 1 hour and 30 minutes (90 minutes) to take the exam. Each question will count 4 points for a total of 400 points. The exam will be organized so as to hamper your ability to locate the answers in the text. You may take this exam twice and the highest grade will be recorded.

Late Policy and Technology Problems

THE PROFESSOR WILL ACCEPT NO EXCUSE FOR LATE WORK. The system is programmed to prevent your submission of late work. Start early and finish early. If you have an unreliable server or computer, please go to a public computer to do your work. If for some reason the professor or the Blackboard server has made a mistake, you will not be penalized. Be aware that when something only happens to you, it is your problem. The professor is not responsible for natural events or acts of terrorism. Please always start early and finish early to avoid problems. Resetting of exams will be done on a case by case basis and never more than once for the entire course for a student.

Determining Your Grade

"My Grades" shows the grades you receive throughout the course. If you wish to calculate your current grade: Divide your current points to date by the number of possible points you could have made to this point less the syllabus exam. Your professor will not calculate your grade for you.

Release of Grades

Your assignment grades will be released after the period to complete the assignment has ended. Normally that will be within 48 hours. If there is some delay, I will let you know.

SOUTH PLAINS COLLEGE & CLASS POLICIES (Professor McGee's Policies)

Attendance, drops and withdrawals, and academic integrity:

Class Attendance: Students are expected to attend all classes in order to be successful in a course. The student may be administratively withdrawn from the course when absences become excessive as defined in the course syllabus.

When an unavoidable reason for class absence arises, such as illness, an official trip authorized by the college or an official activity, the instructor may permit the student to make up work missed. It is the

student's responsibility to complete work missed within a reasonable period of time as determined by the instructor. Students are officially enrolled in all courses for which they pay tuition and fees at the time of registration. Should a student, for any reason, delay in reporting to a class after official enrollment, absences will be attributed to the student from the first class meeting.

Students who enroll in a course but have "Never Attended" by the official census date, as reported by the faculty member, will be administratively dropped by the Office of Admissions and Records. A student who does not meet the attendance requirements of a class as stated in the course syllabus and does not officially withdraw from that course by the official census date of the semester, may be administratively withdrawn from that course and receive a grade of "X" or "F" as determined by the instructor. Instructors are responsible for clearly stating their administrative drop policy in the course syllabus, and it is the student's responsibility to be aware of that policy.

It is the student's responsibility to verify administrative drops for excessive absences through MySPC using his or her student online account. If it is determined that a student is awarded financial aid for a class or classes in which the student never attended or participated, the financial aid award will be adjusted in accordance with the classes in which the student did attend/participate and the student will owe any balance resulting from the adjustment.

Professor McGee will drop you with the grade of X if you do not do an entire module in this online course.

Drops and Withdrawals: From the SPC College Catalog page 21, "Any student withdrawing from all classes on the Levelland Campus must report in person to the Advising Center in the Student Services Building for a withdrawal form. Instructions for obtaining a clearance from some departments of the college will be given at this time. Students who wish to drop a course or withdraw from classes at the SPC Reese Center must report, in person, to the Advising Center at the SPC Reese Center building 8 for a withdrawal form. Students at the Byron Martin Advanced Technology Center should contact the advisor at the center for the withdrawal from. Students at the Plainview Extension Center must contact the Counseling Office in person for a withdrawal form.

Students who stop attending a class should go through the procedure for dropping a course; otherwise they may be administratively withdrawn for lack of attendance and their record will show an "X" or "F" instead of a "W." Failure to follow college policy by withdrawing according to this procedure will be reflected on a student's transcript by the presence of "X" or "F" marks, as determined by the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to verify administrative drops for excessive absences through his or her student online account with Campus Connect.

A mark of "W" will be given for student-initiated drops or withdrawals that occur prior to and through "The Last Day to Drop" as indicated in the online academic calendar.

A student who quits attending class and is administratively withdrawn from class will receive a grade of "X" or "F" as determined by the instructor through "The Last Day to Drop" as indicated in the online academic calendar.

A student administratively dropped by the instructor may be reinstated, with the approval of the appropriate instructor. A student must initiate a request for reinstatement within seven (7) calendar days of the official date of drop by personally contacting the course instructor.”

Your individual attendance policy statement that is in accordance with the college policy:

Dropping the course

- YOU must drop this course at the SPC registrar’s Office (there is **no on-line drop system** so on-line students must take care of this in person at the registrar’s office). This is an official procedure which is described in the SPC Catalog. No one but YOU can initiate the drop and it must conform to the procedure for dropping a course. Failure to initiate and finalize the drop procedure will result in an F grade on your transcript. The drop cannot be made retroactive. The drop date can be found on the SPC calendar.
- **Dropping an on-line class: You must contact Andrew Ruiz, Registrar (806-716-2371)**
 - option 1:** if the student is in Lubbock or Levelland they will need to go to the admissions office (Levelland or Reese Campus) to drop the class.
 - option 2:** if the student is in does **not** live in Lubbock or Levelland they should contact the Registrar’s Office (806-716-2371) for further instructions.

You will need the following:

1. Statement indicating which class you want to drop
2. Student’s Name
3. Student’s Date of birth
4. Student ID# or last 4 digits of social security #
5. Telephone #
6. Student signature
7. Photo ID (usually a driver’s license)
8. payment of drop fee
9. **If you follow these instructions you do NOT need my signature.**

academic integrity

- Anything that borders on cheating, plagiarism, or affects the academic integrity of the assignment or of the course will be dealt with using the harshest measures possible -- the least thing that could happen to you is dismissal from my class roster with a failing grade.
- Cheating includes group work on the chapter exams.
- Your work must be *in your own words* and it must be original (cheating and plagiarism -- that is copying your friend’s work or copying from another source -- will be dealt with in the harshest manner: you will be dropped from the class with an “F”)
- Your work must be turned in on schedule to receive credit – neither chapter exams nor major exams and assignments can be turned in after the due date and time have expired. There are no exceptions to this provision.

Cheating and Plagiarism: from the SPC Catalog: It is the aim of the faculty of South Plains College to foster a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own any work which he or she has not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a most serious offense and renders the offender liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension.

Cheating: Dishonesty of any kind on examinations or on written assignments, illegal possession of examinations, the use of unauthorized notes during an examination, obtaining information during an examination from the textbook or from the examination paper of another student, assisting others to cheat, alteration of grade records, illegal entry or unauthorized presence in an office are examples of cheating. Complete honesty is required of the student in the presentation of any and all phases of course work. This applies to quizzes of whatever length, as well as to final examinations, to daily reports and to term papers.

Plagiarism: Offering the work of another as one's own, without proper acknowledgment, is plagiarism; therefore, any student who fails to give credit for quotations or essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines and other reference works, or from the themes, reports or other writings of fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism.

My statement on plagiarism: Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a morally repugnant choice. At SPC we take the offense of plagiarism very seriously.

Plagiarism is a very simple thing to spot: a failing student all of a sudden writes an essay that ought to be published – and guess what it usually is published! A mediocre student all of a sudden starts to use words and phrases that if asked to explain what the word or phrase means the offender cannot do so. But what you probably do not know is that having read widely in almost all of the areas I have you write on I have read most of the works that have been used in on-line sources. I am not a novice when it comes to the scholarly material nor am I a novice when it comes to how students your age should write. You are young students with little experience and I expect you to write like it – I have never asked you to write and think like professional historians and I certainly have not graded your work from that benchmark.

Secondly, plagiarism is the theft of another person's work. If you copy something from an internet source and present it as your own that is cheating, copying, and it is against the rules. In the "old days" before the internet, students had to at least go to the library and find a book to copy from; the internet has unfortunately made that a very simple (too simple, perhaps) process. If you take anything from this letter remember this: all anyone has to do to check for plagiarism is take a random phrase from an essay, copy it, and paste it into a Google search and the source comes up. Unlike the old days, I don't have to go to the library in search of the proof – I have access to the same sources as you! The internet has made plagiarism much easier but it has also made catching it much easier, too!

Plagiarism can also be defined as one or more students turning in the same or similar papers. I remember what I have read and can spot similar words and phrases from paper to paper, from section to section, and from semester to semester. SPC also maintains a file of every paper submitted by every student and student papers are automatically scanned for uncanny similarities.

Plagiarism also includes anything copied from an internet source, such as Wikipedia.

I am not just offended that you think so little about your own honor that you would steal from someone else, but I am disgusted that you would waste my time having to deal with this. **The consequence of plagiarism in my classes is this: the offender(s) will be receive zero credit for the entire assignment or exam or will be automatically dropped from the class with an F.**

SPC Policy regarding “standard English”: All written assignments should be presented using the conventions of Standard Written English. South Plains College requires all students to become proficient in "academic English," a form of English that is typically used in academic, professional, and business contexts. While slang, regional idioms, and informal kinds of self-expression are appropriate in some contexts, they are out of place in academic writing. Writing instructors and professors in courses across the campus expect all students to demonstrate proficiency in using the conventions of academic English in their written work, whether it is in-class exams or take-home essays.

Students with disabilities: Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at Levelland Student Health & Wellness Center 806-716-2577, Reese Center (also covers ATC) Building 8: 806-716-4675, Plainview Center Main Office: 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611, or the Health and Wellness main number at 806-716-2529.

Blackboard Accessibility Standards: Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility levels using two sets of standards: Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued from the United States federal government and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). A third party conducts audits of our software releases to ensure the accessibility of the products. For Blackboard Learn 9.1's conformance with the accessibility standards under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act using the Voluntary Product Accessibility Template® (VPAT®) tool, see the VPAT for Blackboard Learn Release 9.1. For Blackboard Learn 9.1 SP11 conformance statement for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, Level AA see Learn Accessibility Conformance Statement. To learn more about Blackboard's commitment to accessibility, see <http://www.blackboard.com/accessibility>. (These resources are available in English only.)

Student Privacy

South Plains College is bound by the Texas Open Records Law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Information regarding these topics can be found in the South Plains College Catalog. As far as this class is concerned, I will NOT release or discuss your class performance, grades, averages, or attendance with anyone but you. This means that your parents, class counselors, principals, or any other interested party will not gain this information from me – if they need this sort of information they must ask you for it. This provision does not apply to student athletes or those for whom a grade check is part of their scholarship support.

Diversity Statement: In this class, I will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn

about others, about the larger world, and about ourselves. By promoting diversity and intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

All technological questions should be directed to the SPC technology center (their information is on the opening page of Blackboard). I do not solve technological/computer problems!

Blackboard support and help: *Blackboard tutorials* can be found on MySPC under Students>Distance Education. Once on the Distance Education page, click on Blackboard Learn 9 on menu to the right. Or access the tutorials at <http://ondemand.blackboard.com/students.htm>. When you log in to Blackboard there is a module (or box) that has help information on the My Blackboard Tab. You can also **learn more about Blackboard Learn through the [On Demand Learning Center](#). The On Demand Learning Center includes short, interactive video lessons called Quick Tutorials and short documents, called Getting Started Guides, designed to get you familiar with a feature in 15 minutes.**

If you encounter technological problems *while you are taking a test*, YOU must contact Blackboard Technical Support blackboard@southplainscollege.edu. to report the problem. I can not resolve grade disputes about computers not working, Blackboard not working, the internet not working UNLESS you have reported the problem when you encounter it.

Students: email Breanne Figueroa at bfigueroa@southplainscollege.edu or call 716-2180.

For an email address that reaches everyone in the Instructional Technology department, please use blackboard@southplainscollege.edu.

You may have had or will have trouble submitting your exams. To prevent this or to solve it read the instructions below for clearing your browser if you are using Mozilla or Explorer.

Mozilla Firefox – Clear Browsing History While in Firefox, click on Tools located at the top of the screen in the menu bar.

1. From that menu, select Clear Recent History.
2. From the Time Range drop down menu, select Everything.
3. Make sure all boxes are checked – NOTE: this will delete any passwords saved by Firefox and all recent websites visited.
4. Click Delete
5. Close Firefox, reopen.

Internet Explorer – Clear Browsing History

1. While in Internet Explorer, click on Tools located at the top of the screen in the menu bar.
2. Select Internet Options at the bottom of the list.
3. In the middle of the pop up window under browsing history, click Delete.

4. Make sure all boxes are checked – NOTE: this will delete any passwords saved by IE and all recent websites visited.
5. Click Delete

Close Internet Explorer, reopen.