

GOVT 2306, Texas Government; Blackboard

Term: Winter 2020/21

Instructor: Daniel Bunye

Office: Reese Center, Bldg. 3, #316I

Office Hours: N.A. for Winter term

Phone: (806) 894-9611 #2467 [I will NOT be in my office between fall and Spring, so it is best to not use this number; contact me via Blackboard]

Text: Governing Texas, 4th edition. Champagne, Harpham, and Casellas.
ISBN: 978-0-393-644302

Purpose: The objective of this course is to acquaint the undergraduate student with the structure, organization, and functions of the Texas State Government. This course is designed along the lines of an independent study course, and thus relies heavily on the student's efforts. Further, GOVT 2306 meets statutory requirements as set forth by the state of Texas.

Course Requirements: This is a reading intensive course! Only those students with strong reading and comprehension skills, along with considerable resolve and dedication, should enroll in this course. The student is *strongly* advised to dedicate significant effort to the readings required for this course, and not fall behind. The requirements for this course are extensive, but should not be excessively difficult if granted appropriate attention.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Example Grades</u>
Chapter Quiz Ave.	50%	80 x .20= 40.0
Essay Ave.	30%	85 x .30= 25.5
Discussion Ave.	20%	95 x .20= <u>19.0</u>
		84.5, B

Grades: The grading scale for this course is as follows:

100-90= A
89-80= B
79-70= C
69-60= D
59-00= F

There is **no** curve for this course, nor for any assignment. You will be graded only by your own efforts. No extra credit is available. Additionally, rounding up of final grades will occur for a maximum of one (1) point (thus, a 78.9 will *not* be rounded up to a 'B').

Attendance: Aside from ensuring course participation in the first week of each semester, attendance will not be checked for this course. However, students who fail to complete a total of three (3) assignments (quizzes, discussions or essays) will be withdrawn with a grade of 'F' or 'U'/'X'.

Dishonesty: Cheating and/or plagiarism will *not* be tolerated! Either may result in failure of the course. Violators may be removed from South Plains College. Assisting another to cheat or plagiarize may also result in course failure. While this course is conducted over Blackboard/internet, it is *not* a group effort. Honesty and integrity are expected at all times. A plagiarism tab with further explanation may be found at the opening menu (left side of screen) of this course.

Foundation Skills: This course will attempt to accomplish the following academic skills:

Basic Skills: Reading (F-1), Writing (F-2)

Thinking Skills: Creative Thinking (F-7), Decision Making (F-8), Problem Solving (F-9), Knowing How to Learn (F-11), Reasoning (F-12)

Personal Qualities: Responsibility (F-16), Self-Esteem (F-14), Self-Management (F-16), Integrity/Honesty (F-17)

Statement of Nondiscrimination: It is the policy of this instructor not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status, particularly veterans of the Vietnam era. In addition to complying with federal and state equal opportunity laws and regulations and/or resolutions of professional organizations in education and psychology, my diversity policy declares harassment based on individual differences to be inconsistent with my instructional mission and educational goals.

Student Support: If you are having any problems with Blackboard, please contact Brooke Walker at (806) 716-2180 or at: blackboard@southplainscollege.edu

Pop-up Blockers: Students are encouraged to disable all pop-up blockers, as these can interfere with the taking of the chapter quizzes. This problem seems to be more pronounced with laptop use, but has also occurred with desktop PC's.

ADA Statement: 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 through the Guidance and Counseling Centers at Reese Center (Building 8) [716-4675](tel:716-4675), or Levelland (Student Services Building) [716-2577](tel:716-2577).

Pregnancy: If you are pregnant, or have given birth within six months, under Title IX you have a right to reasonable accommodations to help continue your education. To activate accommodations you must submit a Title IX pregnancy accommodations request, along with specific medical documentation, to the Director of Health and Wellness. Once approved, notification will be sent to the student and instructors. It is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor to arrange accommodations.

Contact Chris Straface, Director of Health and Wellness, at (806) 716-2362, or email at cstraceface@southplainscollege.edu for assistance.

Due Dates: All due dates for quizzes, essays, and discussion participation are set and are ***not*** negotiable. The student is **strongly** urged to make the necessary and appropriate accommodations to meet their obligations as far in advance as possible.

Assignment Explanations: The following is a brief explanation of all assignments for this course. Should the student have any questions, please contact the instructor immediately.

Chapter Quizzes: Below is a list of chapters that will be covered in this course. A short description follows each chapter number. All quizzes are available immediately, but please note the various due dates. Questions for these quizzes will be of Multiple-choice style. There will be twenty questions for each quiz, and a time limit of forty-five (45) minutes will apply. You will be allowed to attempt each quiz twice, with the highest score saved. Quizzes will be available from 12:00am on the first day of availability until 11:30pm on the last day of availability (but please note, you will need to start the quiz by 11:14 pm to get the full 45 minute time allowance). Students who fail to take a quiz during the availability period will receive a grade of zero (0) for that quiz.

Chapter 1: The Political Culture, People and Economy of Texas (Monday 12/21)

Chapter 2: The Texas Constitution (Monday 12/21)

Chapter 3: Texas in the Federal System (Monday 12/21)

Chapter 4: Political Parties (Monday 12/21)

Chapter 5: Campaigns and Elections (Monday 12/28)

Chapter 6: Interest Groups and Lobbying (Monday 12/21)

Chapter 7: The Legislature (Monday 12/21)

Chapter 8: The Executive Branch (Monday 12/21)

Chapter 9: The Judiciary (Monday 12/21)

Chapter 10: Local Government (Monday 1/4)

Chapter 11: Public Finance (Monday 1/4)

Chapter 12: Public Policy (Monday 1/4)

Chapter 13: Crime and Corrections Policy (Monday 1/4)

Essays: There are a total of three essays for this course. All students **must** do at least the first essay for this course this semester. If you are satisfied with your grade, you have completed this aspect of the course. If not satisfied, you may attempt essay two and/or three. Each essay will be graded, and the grade averaged with that from essay one. Each Part of the course will have two essays options; the student will select one of these. Essays should be *no less* than one (1) full page (New Times Roman, font size 12, Double-spaced), with margins not to exceed one inch when printed out. Late papers, and those which do not meet minimum length requirements, are *not* accepted for any reason. All papers should be sent to the instructor via Blackboard Messenger (Course Messages)

as a WORD Document; do **NOT** use the essay submission tool! As the essay topics are often based on one's opinion, the primary grading emphasis will be on proper presentation. Refer to the Essay Guidelines Sheet prior to composition and submission of your essays. The Due Dates for each essay are listed below, but you may turn in any essay at any time before its due date.

Essay #1: Friday, 12/18
Essay #2: Friday, 12/25
Essay #3: Friday, 1/1

Discussions: Each Part of this course has a discussion topic. Students are expected to participate in the discussion of the topic provided. You are expected to both post an original commentary, plus provide reaction to those comments of others (a *minimum* of two responses). Failure to post or respond will result in a grade of zero (if you post, but do not respond, that will also earn a grade of zero). These are "discussions", not merely a simple listing of a few statements. Several sentences expressing your agreement with another student's post will be considered Minimal Effort. Minimal effort/participation will receive grades of 50%, or at most 75%. Grading is obviously subjective, with both **quantity** (your post should be about a page long, if printed, while responses should be measured in a few paragraphs) and **quality** (respectfulness, appropriateness, spelling, punctuation, etc.) of content being considered, but is based on the following guidelines:

Outstanding, Appropriate, and/or Engaging:	100%
Moderate, Relevant, and/or Interesting:	85%
Weak, Not often Relevant, and/or Less Engaged:	75%
Minimal, Simplistic, and/or Uninvolved:	50%
Non-Existent (either post or response):	0%

If you present "average" work, you can expect an average grade. If you desire the higher grades, provide maximum effort.

The Due Dates for each Discussion are listed below:

Discussion 1: Friday, 12/18
Discussion 2: Friday, 12/25
Discussion 3: Friday, 1/1