

**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 (Federal 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 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excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course.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:
  1. Generating and communicating ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information,
  2. Gathering and assessing information relevant to a question,
  3. 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 in regional, national, and global communities by:
  1. Demonstrating intercultural competence,
  2. Identifying civic responsibility,
  3. 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:
  1. Reading, understanding and affirming agreement and acceptance of principles, guidelines and requirements set forth in the “Statement of Personal Responsibility of Students” (Attached)
  2. Evaluating choices and actions and relating consequences to personal decision-making
  3. Accepting personal responsibility for decisions and actions taken or not taken.

## Government 2306 Instructor Syllabus

### Course Description

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: Britt Bearden

**Email:** bbearden@southplainscollege.edu

**Office:** Reese Center, Building 3, Room 316E

**Office Hours:** Reese MW: 12:30PM – 2:30PM | TTH: 1:00PM – 2:30PM | F: 8:30AM – 9:30AM

**Biography:** BA Texas Tech University; MA Texas Tech University. Congressional Intern and Student of The Fund for American Studies, 2013. Fellow Field Manager for the Texas Democratic Party, 2014. South Plains College Assistant Professor of Government since 2017.

**Textbook Title:** Governing Texas 5th Edition

Authors: Champagne and Harpham

Publisher: Norton

ISBN: 9780393539226

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

#### **Technology:**

Reliable access to computer or laptop.

Reliable internet connection

### Course Grade and Assignments

**Exams = 45%**

**Discussions = 20%**

**Essay = 20%**

**Attendance and Participation = 10%**

**Syllabus Quiz / State of Texas Quiz / Public Opinion Poll= 5%**

### Exams

You will have a total of 2 exams: a midterm and a final exam. Exams will consist of 50 multiple choice questions.

### Discussions Postings

Three times throughout the semester you will write a discussion post which will be your reaction to an article/podcast related to Texas government and reply to a classmate's discussion.

#### **Instructions:**

- These original posts must be at least 400 words in length.
- Additionally, you must also reply (150 words) to one of your fellow classmates' posts.
- Use citations.
- Make sure to cite reliable sources when writing your discussions.  
No Wikipedia
- You are expected to use the article and slides/book. You can find these in Course Content in their respective weekly folder and in the "Assignments" folder. This includes using the article to answer the prompt.
- Write in academic English, paragraph style prose, as you would a research essay
- You must post your DISCUSSION POST BEFORE viewing classmates' discussions. Failure to do so will drop your grade 20 points. If you post a blank, I will assume you are attempting to plagiarize.

- **A full rubric and instructions can be found at the end of this syllabus.**

## Essay

In Blackboard there will be a number of topics from you to choose from. This assignment is separated into two parts:

### 1. Topic Selection, Thesis, and Preliminary Sources (5%)

- Submit using Turnitin on Blackboard

Must include:

- the topic you chose
- A thesis statement about what your essay will be about
- At least 5 sources you plan on using
- **An example can be found on Blackboard**

### 2. Essay (15%)

#### Instructions:

- Double spaced
- 12 point font
- Times New Roman
- 1 inch margins
- at least 1000 words in length (that is NOT including headers, footers, citations, etc.)
- Uses citations (APA or MLA)
- These will be turned in using Turnitin on Blackboard.
- You will use Turnitin on Blackboard to turn in this assignment.
- **A full rubric and instructions can be found at the end of this syllabus.**

## Attendance

Students are expected to attend class regularly and be prepared to participate in discussion. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late you will be counted absent. If you leave early without telling me beforehand, you will be counted absent. If you sleep during class, you will be counted absent. If you are on your phone or not paying attention, you will be counted absent.

## Syllabus Quiz

This is a “built-in bonus” quiz over the syllabus and a syllabus agreement. You will have an unlimited amount of attempts and time to achieve full credit. This assignment can be found in Course Content, “Week 1” folder and in the “Assignments” folder.

## State of Texas Quiz

You will have 60 minutes to answer 10 questions about the State of Texas. You will have an unlimited amount of attempts and time to achieve full credit. This assignment can be found in Course Content, “Week 1” folder and in the “Assignments” folder.

## Public Opinion Poll

You will be given a link on Blackboard for a Google Form to complete. These will consist of opinion questions regarding politics. Be sure to refrain from looking anything up or guessing. Give the most accurate responses to reflect your own opinion and understanding. Be sure to provide your SPC email so that you can receive credit.

**Note: Expect written assignments to be graded within a business week of the due date.**

## Course Requirements, Expectations, and Policies

### **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. Please always start early and finish early to avoid problems.

Exams can only be made up with proper documentation such as a doctor's note.

### **Make Up Exam**

If you miss an exam and do not have proper documentation, you will be able to take a comprehensive exam during finals week for half credit. Students will have to schedule a time during my office hours, during finals week in order to take advantage of this opportunity. There are no exceptions.

### **Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend class regularly and be prepared to participate in discussion. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late you will be counted absent. If you leave early without telling me beforehand, you will be counted absent. If you sleep during class, you will be counted absent. If you are on your phone or not paying attention, you will be counted absent.

### **Technology**

**No cell phone, Apple Watch, iPod, headphones etc. usage during class.** The use of cellular/mobile phones is prohibited in the classroom. If you are expecting a call or need to leave early, notify me immediately or before class and I will make an exception for you. Students may use a laptop computer during class but are not permitted to instant message others, check social network updates, email, etc. The usage of the laptop computers is meant for taking notes and considered a privilege, not a right, given to you by me and can be taken away at any time. **If you use ANY electronic device during an exam, it will automatically be taken up and you will be given a zero.**

### **Extra Credit**

You will NOT have the opportunity to earn extra credit points during the course, so do not ask.

### **Drop Policy**

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. Other than that, it is your responsibility to drop the course.

### **Disruption of Classroom Environment**

Your professor will not tolerate any disruption of the classroom environment. This includes any problems your facilitator encounters with you AND hateful/disrespectful remarks made in the classroom, on discussion postings, email, or chat. I will drop you with an F for violation of this policy.

### **Emailing Your Professor**

I require students to send a professional email when contacting me. If you send an unprofessional email to me, I will respond asking you to retype your email. In addition, do not attempt to argue with me over a grade you receive, if you do I will either lower your grade further, or drop you with an F. When emailing, please include what course you are enrolled in (Example: GOVT 2305.156).

**DO NOT attempt to communicate with me through Blackboard. I only communicate through email, preferably your SPC email.**

**Unless there are unforeseen circumstances, you can expect me to reply to emails within 24 hours. If I do not, don't be afraid to email me again or forward your message to me.**

### **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism is the taking of credit for something that is not the work of the owner. It is cheating and will not be tolerated. See the General Catalog for more information on plagiarism. Cheating or dishonesty of any type in this course will result in the student being dropped from this course with an "F."

### **Academic English**

South Plains College requires all students to become proficient in "academic English," a form of English 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.

### **Diversity Statement**

In this class, the teacher 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.

### **SPC Standard Disability 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 at Levelland (Student Health & Wellness Office) 806-716-2577, Reese Center (Building 8) & Lubbock Center 806-716-4675, or Plainview Center (Main Office) 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611.

### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

South Plains College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Vice President for Student Affairs, South Plains College -1401 College Avenue, Box 5, Levelland, TX 79336, 806-894-9611

### **Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations Statement**

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 Crystal Gilster, Director of Health and Wellness at 806-716-2362 or email [cgilster@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:cgilster@southplainscollege.edu) for assistance.

### **Campus Concealed Carry**

Campus Concealed Carry - Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in South Plains College buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and South Plains College policy, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the SPC policy at: ([http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human\\_resources/policy\\_procedure/hhc.php](http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human_resources/policy_procedure/hhc.php)) Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all South Plains College campuses. Report violations to the College Police Department at 806-716-2396 or 9-1-1.

### **Syllabus Contract/Amendments**

All content within this syllabus is subject to change at any time and is completely up to the discretion of the professor. Students will be notified of such change(s) with appropriate time to adapt. By enrolling in this course you agree to follow all guidelines in this syllabus and be fully responsible for the grade you earn.

### **COVID**

Consistent with the latest CDC recommendations, we have revised our guidance for students, faculty, and staff who have a known exposure or have tested positive. Anyone with a known exposure should wear a mask for 10 days and should seek a COVID-19 test on day five after exposure.

If you test positive or develop symptoms, you should immediately self-isolate and seek a COVID-19 test. Please immediately notify your instructor, supervisor, and DeEtte Edens, Associate Director of Health and Wellness, any time you test positive for COVID-19.

Anyone who tests positive is required to self-isolate for five days. Following the five-day isolation period, if you are asymptomatic or your symptoms are resolving, you may return to work or class but should wear a mask for five additional days.

If you are still symptomatic, please contact DeEtte Edens at [atdedens@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:atdedens@southplainscollege.edu) or 806-716-2376 prior to your return date.

[Course Schedule and Readings: Here is an overview of the course. Complete readings and assignments in the order presented below](#)

**Section 1**

**Week 1**

- **Read**
  - Syllabus
  - Chapter 1
- **Assignments**
  - Syllabus Quiz
  - Texas Quiz
  - Public Opinion Poll

**Week 2**

- **Read**
  - Chapter 1
  - Chapter 2
- **Assignments**
  - Discussion 1
- **Assignments Due January 28<sup>th</sup> by 5:00PM**
  - Syllabus Quiz
  - State of Texas Quiz
  - Public Opinion Poll

**Week 3**

- **Read**
  - Chapter 2

**Week 4**

- **Read**
  - Chapter 3
  - US Constitution

**Week 5**

- **Read**
  - Chapter 5

**Week 6**

- **Read**
  - Chapter 4
- **Assignments**
  - Discussion 2



## **Week 7**

**Catch up on assignments**

## **Week 8**

- **Section 1 Exam: March 9<sup>th</sup>**
  - Chapter 1
  - Chapter 2
  - Chapter 3
  - Chapter 5
  - Chapter 4
- **Assignments Due March 11<sup>th</sup> by 5:00PM**
  - Discussion 1
  - Discussion 2
  - Topic Selection, Thesis, and Preliminary Research

## **Section 2**

## **Week 9**

- **Read**
  - Chapter 7

## **Week 10**

- **Read**
  - Chapter 8
- **Assignments**
  - Discussion 3

## **Week 11**

- **Read**
  - Chapter 8

## **Week 12**

- **Read**
  - Chapter 9

## **Week 13**

- **Read**
  - Chapter 10

## Week 14

- **Read**
  - Chapter 11

## Week 15

- **Assignments Due May 6<sup>th</sup> by 5:00PM**
  - Discussion 3
  - Essay

## Finals Week

- **Final Exam: May 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:00PM**
  - Chapter 7
  - Chapter 8
  - Chapter 9
  - Chapter 10
  - Chapter 11

## Concise Calendar and Due Dates

- Syllabus Quiz: Due: **Due January 28<sup>th</sup> by 5:00PM**
- State of Texas Quiz: **Due January 28<sup>th</sup> by 5:00PM**
- Public Opinion Poll: **Due January 28<sup>th</sup> by 5:00PM**
- Section 1 Exam: **March 9<sup>th</sup>**
- Discussion 1: **Due March 11<sup>th</sup> by 5:00PM**
- Discussion 2: **Due March 11<sup>th</sup> by 5:00PM**
- Topic Selection, Thesis, and Preliminary Research: **Due March 11<sup>th</sup> by 5:00PM**
- Discussion 3: **Due May 6<sup>th</sup> by 5:00PM**
- Essay: **Due May 6<sup>th</sup> by 5:00PM**
- Final Exam: **May 9<sup>th</sup> at 1:00PM**

## Rubrics

### Discussions

Rubric Grading	59 points or less	60 – 69 points	70 to 79 points	80 to 89 points	90 or more points
	<p>Student Discussion does not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- answer most questions in prompt</li> <li>- Explain most important concepts</li> <li>- appear to have used article/podcast</li> <li>- Use validating evidence</li> <li>- write in paragraph prose</li> <li>- Makes a strong argument</li> </ul> <p>Student Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contains considerable grammar mistakes</li> <li>- Does not meet word count</li> <li>- Has no citations</li> <li>- Has poor sentence structure and organization</li> <li>- Has no reply</li> </ul>	<p>Student Discussion does not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- answer most questions in prompt</li> <li>- Explains most important concepts</li> <li>- appear to have used article/podcast</li> <li>- Use validating evidence</li> <li>- write in paragraph prose</li> <li>- Makes a strong argument</li> </ul> <p>Student Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contains some grammar mistakes</li> <li>- meets the word count</li> <li>- Has no citations</li> <li>- Contains poor sentence structure and organization</li> <li>- has no reply</li> </ul>	<p>Student Discussion does not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contain citations or has incorrect citations</li> <li>- Use validating evidence</li> <li>- write in paragraph prose</li> </ul> <p>Student Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Makes a strong argument</li> <li>- Contain a reply</li> <li>- answer most questions in prompt</li> <li>- Explain some important concepts</li> <li>- Use the article/podcast</li> <li>- Contain some grammar mistakes</li> <li>- Meet word count</li> <li>- Good sentence structure and organization</li> </ul>	<p>Student Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Makes a strong argument</li> <li>- Contains a reply</li> <li>- writes in paragraph prose</li> <li>- Has at least 3 sources including the article/podcast</li> <li>- answers most questions in prompt</li> <li>- Explains most of the important concepts</li> <li>- Uses article/podcast</li> <li>- has few grammar mistakes</li> <li>- Meets the word count</li> <li>- Has correct citations</li> <li>- Has good sentence structure and organization</li> <li>- Uses validating evidence</li> </ul>	<p>Student Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Makes a strong argument</li> <li>- Contains a reply</li> <li>- writes in paragraph prose</li> <li>- answers all questions in prompt</li> <li>- Has more than 3 sources including the article/podcast</li> <li>- Explains all important concepts</li> <li>- Uses article/podcast</li> <li>- has few grammar mistakes</li> <li>- Meets the word count</li> <li>- Has correct citations</li> <li>- Great sentence structure and organization</li> <li>- Uses validating evidence</li> </ul>

## Essay

### Topic Selection, Thesis, and Preliminary Sources

Rubric Grading	59 or less points	60 - 69 points	70 to 79 points	80 to 89 points	90 or more points
	No topic	Topic chosen	Topic chosen	Topic chosen	Topic chosen
	Has no thesis	Has unclear thesis	Has a partial thesis	Has a thesis	Has strong thesis
	Contains considerable grammar mistakes	Contains considerable grammar mistakes	Contains grammar mistakes	Contains few grammar mistakes	Contains few grammar mistakes
	Does not follow instructions	Follows most instructions	Follows all instructions	Follows all instructions	Follows all instructions
	Less than 3 sources	Less than 3 sources	Has between 3 – 4 sources	Has 3 – 4 sources	Has 5 or more sources

## Essay

Rubric Grading	59 or less points	60 - 69 points	70 to 79 points	80 to 89 points	90 or more points
	Has no clear thesis	Has no clear thesis	Has a partial thesis	Has a thesis	Has strong thesis
	Contains considerable grammar mistakes	Contains considerable grammar mistakes	Contains grammar mistakes	Contains few grammar mistakes	Contains few grammar mistakes
	Poor sentence structure and organization	Poor sentence structure and organization	Good sentence structure and organization	Good sentence structure and organization	Great sentence structure and organization
	Does not follow instructions	Follows most instructions	Follows all instructions	Follows all instructions	Follows all instructions
	Does not use validating evidence	Does not use validating evidence	Uses validating evidence	Uses validating evidence	Uses validating evidence
	Does not write in paragraph prose	Does not write in paragraph prose	Writes in paragraph prose	Writes in paragraph prose	Writes in paragraph prose
	Has no or incorrect citations	Has no or incorrect citations	Writes in paragraph prose	Has correct citations	Has correct citations
	Less than 3 sources	Less than 3 sources	Has correct citations	Has 3 – 5 sources	Has more than 5 sources
			Has between 3 – 5 sources		