

South Plains College

GOVT 2306

Section 201

Fall 2017

Texas Government

Traditional Course

Name: Professor Britt Bearden

Biography: BA Texas Tech University; MA Texas Tech University; Additional Courses: South Plains College and George Mason University. Congressional Intern: Office of Congressman Pete Gallego, Summer 2013; Field Representative: Texas Democratic Party, 2014.

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Room: Reese Center 323

Office: Reese Center, Building 3, Room 316E

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday: 12:45pm-2:15pm, Friday: 12:15pm-2:15pm. Professor is unavailable from noon on Friday till 7AM on Monday as well as on college holidays.

Common Course

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, 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:

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

INSTRUCTOR SYLLABUS

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.

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Required Textbook:

- Champagne, Anthony, Edward Harpham, and Jason Casellas. 2017. *Governing Texas: Third Edition*. W.W. Norton & Company.
- Other Readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Course Grade: Your grade is determined by your performance on the four parts of this course: Attendance (1), Discussion Postings (2), Quizzes (3), and three Exams (4):

Grading Scale

100 – 90% A

89 – 80% B

79 – 70% C

69 – 60% D

59% and below F

Note: Calculating Your Grade: "My Grades" shows the grades you receive throughout the course. Your professor will not calculate your grade for you. You will NOT have the opportunity to earn extra credit points during the course.

Coursework:

Assignment Overview:

- (1) 10% Attendance
- (2) 25% Discussions (4)
- (3) 25% Quizzes (5)
- (4) 40% Exams (3)

(1) Attendance: Attendance and participation in this course is crucial. This portion of the course for 10% of your grade. You must be in your seat at the scheduled start of class and remain in the room till the end of class to receive credit. Also, I will interact with several students each day by asking questions. If you refuse to participate, then you will be counted absent. It is in your best interest to be prepared for class by reading the appropriate materials before you come to class. This will help you discuss material and create a better learning environment.

(2) Discussion Postings: Four times throughout the semester you will write a discussion post which will be your reaction to an article related to U.S. government and reply to a classmate's discussion. Each week these posts are assigned, 5 articles will be posted on Blackboard that Monday by 12pm CST, it is the student's choice of which article they which to write about. These discussions are due Sunday of that week at 12am CST. This portion of the course accounts for 25% of your grade.

- Your posting must begin with the title of the article. 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).

- Additional information will be given regarding these assignments later on.

(3) Quizzes: Five times throughout the semester you will be given an in-class quiz. These will be distributed during the last 12 minutes of class. Quizzes will be short and consist of 10 multiple choice questions regarding current topics from both readings and lectures. Since ample time is given to answer these questions, students will not be allowed to stay after class to finish these

quizzes. If a student is absent, they will not be allowed to make-up their quiz (see Policies). This portion of the course will account for 25% of your grade.

(4) Exams: Three times throughout the semester students will be given an in-class exam. This includes your final exam. These exams will consist of 25 multiple choice questions, three short answer questions, and one short essay. Further instruction and question weight will be given when exams are distributed. These exams will account for 40% of your grade.

Course Requirements, Expectations, and Policies

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend class regularly and prepared. This means fully completing the weekly readings and homework before arriving to class. No late work will be accepted without a note from a medical doctor.

Drop Policy: If you miss 6 TT/MW class meetings or 9 MWF class meetings, you will be dropped from the course. Otherwise, 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, mail, or chat. I will drop you with an F for violation of this policy. If you are habitually late to class I will drop you from the class with an X. If you are using your cell or your cell "rings" in class, you will be asked to leave the class. Silence or turn off your phone during my class.

Technology: Please no cell phone, pager, iPod, etc. usage during class. Please be respectful of others and power down your cellular devices, pagers, iPods, etc.

The use of cellular/mobile phones is prohibited in the classroom. If caught, the professor will ask you to stow it away. If a phone rings in class, Professor Bearden will ask you to leave class.

Texting is a neat method of communicating but will not be tolerated in the classroom. It is obvious when a student is texting and if/when a student is spotted, he/she will be asked to stow it away. If a student is caught a second time, they will be asked to leave.

If you are expecting a call or have children in daycare, notify me immediately 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.

Technology Problems: If you have an unreliable server or computer, please go to a public computer to do your work. If for some reason the professor of 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 on assignments and finish early to avoid problems.

Preparedness: While this course requires no prior knowledge of American politics, there is considerable reading related to a wide range of topics. It is essential that students complete the weekly readings before class. We cover a great deal of material so it is critical that you attend class regularly, take careful notes, keep abreast of the readings, and participate fully in class discussions. If you feel you need extra help in managing the course materials, contact me and I will help you.

Exam Day Conduct: When taking exams, students need a pencil and an eraser. Cellular devices, tablets, iPods, pagers, etc., need to be either turned off or silenced – not on vibrate – and stowed away in a backpack, purse, bag, or any other packaging device. Also, all hats are to be removed upon taking an exam.

Make-up and Late Work Policy: Only one major exam can be made-up. For make-ups you will be required to be at the Reese Campus on a Saturday morning to take an extensive comprehensive exam covering the entire course. NO late work will be accepted for any other component of the course.

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. Professors expect all students to demonstrate proficiency in using the conventions of academic English in all their written work, whether it is in – class exams or take home essays.

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

Tobacco Use

Students are to follow SPC's rules and regulations on cigarette and electronic cigarette use. Also, students are not to use smokeless tobacco in class. This includes but not limited to: snuff, dip, chew, packets, etc. It is rude and distracting to do this during class and any violation will be dealt with accordingly.

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)

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.

Chatting in Discussion Postings: Discussion postings are not a format to chat with fellow students. You will receive a zero for the entire posting assignment if you violate this policy.

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.

Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1: Introduction

- 8/28: Introduction to Course
- 8/30: Textbook Chapter 2; The Texas Constitution's (1876) Bill of Rights

Week 2: Constitution and Federalism

- 9/4: NO CLASS - Labor Day
- 9/6: Textbook Chapter 2 continued; Texas Tribune Article; **Quiz 1**

Week 3: Federalism and Texas

- **Discussion Due 9/17 @ 12am Midnight**
- 9/11: Textbook Chapter 3
- 9/13: Textbook Chapter 3 continued

Week 4: Political Parties

- 9/18: Textbook Chapter 4
- 9/20: Textbook Chapter 4 continued; **Quiz 2**

Week 5: Political Parties, Continued

Discussion Due 10/1 @ 12am Midnight

- 9/25: Textbook Chapter 4 continued; <http://kut.org/post/why-texas-so-red-and-how-did-it-get-way>
- 9/27: **Exam 1**

Week 6: Structure: The Legislature

- 10/2: Textbook Chapter 7
- 10/4: Textbook Chapter 7 continued; **Quiz 3**

Week 7: Structure: The Executive

- 10/9: Textbook Chapter 8
- 10/11: Textbook Chapter 8 continued

Week 8: Structure: The Judiciary

- 10/16: Textbook Chapter 9
- 10/18: Textbook Chapter 9 continued

Week 9: Local Government

Discussion Due 10/29 @ 12am Midnight

- 10/23: Textbook Chapter 10
- 10/25: Textbook Chapter 10 continued

Week 10: Campaigns and Elections

- 10/30: Textbook Chapter 5
- 11/1: Textbook Chapter 5 continued; **Quiz 4**

Week 11: Groups and Interests

- 11/6: Textbook Chapter 5 continued
- 11/8: **Exam 2**

Week 12: Public Finance

- 11/13: Textbook Chapter 6
- 11/15: Textbook Chapter 11; **Quiz 5**

Week 13: Public Finance continued

- 11/20: Textbook Chapter 11 continued
- 11/22: **Thanksgiving Holiday (No Class Meeting)**

Week 14: Public Policy

Discussion Due 12/3 @ 12am Midnight

- 11/27: Textbook Chapter 12
- 11/29: Textbook Chapter 12 continued

Week 15: Public Policy/Crime and Corrections Policy

- 12/4: Textbook Chapter 12 continued
- 12/6: Textbook Chapter 13

Week 16: Finals Week

- **Exam 3**

Key Assignment Dates:

- September 6th: Quiz 1
- September 17th: Discussion 1 Due
- September 20nd: Quiz 2
- September 27th: Exam 1
- October 1st: Discussion 2 Due
- October 4th: Quiz 3
- October 29th: Discussion 3 Due
- November 1rd: Quiz 4
- November 8th: Exam 2
- November 15th: Quiz 5
- December 3rd: Discussion 4 Due
- Final Exam TBA