

POLS 2306.14 TEXAS GOVERNMENT

Spring Semester 2017

Professor: Dr. John C. Domino

Location: Online

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COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The objectives¹ of the course are to gain factual information about and think critically concerning the following principles, concepts, and institutions of Texas government.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas
2. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.
3. Describe the state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.
4. Describe the separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas
5. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government
6. Explain the criminal justice system and due process rights of the accused.
7. Evaluate the role of political parties and types and functions of elections in Texas.

COURSE TEXTBOOK:

Governing Texas, Second edition*, by Anthony Champagne and Edward J. Harpham. ISBN 978-0-393- 93684-1.

* This book is required and necessary to the course. It is the student's responsibility to obtain this book immediately. I, the professor, am not involved in the process of obtaining the book or responsible for any passwords or codes for the e-book.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

A. Assignments:

1. Exams:

- You are required to take five (5) online exams in this course (500 points total).
- The exams are multiple choice/short answer/true-false format.
- You take the exams online on the scheduled day and time.
- Exams are found in the units.

¹ See detailed unit objectives below and posted on BlackBoard.

2. Quizzes:

- There are nine (9) 25 point online multiple choice chapter quizzes required and 1 ungraded syllabus quiz* covering the chapters indicated in the course schedule (225 total points).
- Quizzes are found in the units.
- These quizzes are intended to ensure comprehension of the readings and materials covered in class. These are also preparation for the types of questions on your exams.
- All quizzes are multiple choice. Blackboard will allow you to take each quiz twice, recording the highest score.

*The Syllabus Quiz that serves as a practice run at using the **Respondus Lockdown Browser** software (which is required for all exams). *The Syllabus Quiz must be completed in order to gain access to the Course Units (Lecture/Reading material). It does not count toward your grade.*

3. Discussion Board Activities:

- There are four of these activities. 40 points each (160 points total).
- They appear in the units.
- They are short essays with a brief response to another student's post.

B. Your final course grade will be based on the following:

Exam 1	100points
Exam 2	100 points
Exam 3	100 points
Exam 4	100 points
Exam 5	100 points
Quizzes (9 x 25)	225 points total
<u>Discussion Board Activities (4 x 40)</u>	<u>160 points</u>
Total	885 points

C. Testing and Grading Policies:

1. THE EXAMS AND QUIZZES MUST BE TAKEN DURING THE SCHEDULED TIME:

- All students are treated fairly and evenly. Students have the same “test window,” that is the same number of hours that each exam is available; and the number of available minutes to take the exam.
- I will not “re-open the exam” for you simply because you missed it or forgot.
- On the course outline/schedule you will see a date due for each quiz and exam. That means that on the date due (e.g., due 9/15) the quiz or exam will be available at the beginning of that day (12:01 a.m.) and close at the end of the day (11:59 p.m.)
- Quizzes are open for multiple days before closing on the day they are due.
- Exams are open only on the day they are due.

2. No end of semester extra credit or rounding or additional assignments or grading curves are used. No re- grading for extenuating circumstances or hardships.

3. Letter Grade Scale:

A= 796-885
B= 708-795
C= 620-707
D= 531-619
F= 000-530

Note: Your final grade is based on this point system, not on percentages or averages or any other formula. For further clarification:

1. Suppose you score a 90 on each of the 5 exams. ($90 \times 5 = 450$)
2. Then, suppose that you score a 24 on the 9 quizzes. Your total points for the quizzes would be 216 ($9 \times 24 = 216$).
3. Finally, you score 39 for each Discussion Question. ($39 \times 4 = 156$)
4. Your points are as follows:

Exams:	450
Quizzes:	216
DQs:	156
Total:	822

5. On a scale of 885 possible points an 882 is an A. To check the status of your grade throughout the semester, project out what you will need to score on all of the remaining assignments to get to your goal of 708 or 796, for example. A method that will give you an approximate grade is to divide your current points accrued by the total points available to date. For example, (let’s say that at a given date you have 500 points out of 550 points available. Divide 500 by 550 = 90 %).

4. For status of your grade during the semester please check “My Grades” or email me at pol_jcd@shsu.edu

5. Make-up Policy:

Make up exams are allowed *solely at the professor’s discretion*. To qualify for a make-up exam you

must produce a note or document from a healthcare provider, supervisor, university official, court official, or other person who in his/her official capacity can document why it was necessary to miss the exam. I may follow up with that person. You must contact me within three days of missing the exam or three days prior to the exam if you anticipate missing it.

6. Technical Problems:

- *It is your responsibility to have a reliable computer and reliable internet connection.*
- *I cannot help you with computer or internet problems. If you do have problems please contact Blackboard technical support immediately (see contact info below). My area of expertise is subject matter, not technical.*

**SHSU Online Technical
Team Email:
blackboard@shsu.edu
Phone: (936) 294-2780
Toll-free: (877) 759-
2232 Mon-Sat 7am-
Midnight**

- This information can also be found in your Course Menu: >HELP & HOW TO>Need Help?
Click on the **blue technical support** icon on the top of the menu.

7. You may *not* see the exam or quiz after you have taken it. Furthermore, this is an online class so all questions/consultations will take place via email (POL_JCD@SHSU.EDU) or phone (936-294-1463). I will respond to you no more than 24 hours after you first ask your question.

B. Other Course and University Policies:

1. Academic Dishonesty:

All students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences in and out of the classroom. Collaborating with another student on an exam or unauthorized. Do your own work. Work alone on your study guides and exams. The professor may give a failing grade to the student for that exam or the course and report such action to the University and its official representatives who may initiate further disciplinary proceedings against a student who is accused of academic dishonesty.

2. Disruptive Conduct:

Any rude behavior that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process impedes the mission of the university and is against university policy.

3. Students with Disabilities Policy:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to

discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center. Student requests for accommodations must be initiated by the student. A student seeking accommodations should go to the Counseling Center and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in a timely manner.

4. Religious Holidays:

Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from on 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from a property taxation under Section 11.20...” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

C. Changes in the Syllabus

The professor reserves the right to make minor changes to the syllabus.

COURSE OBJECTIVES, SCHEDULE, AND DATES

UNIT 1: TEXAS POLITICAL CULTURE

Week 1 (8/23-8/25)

Objectives:

- You will become familiar with Blackboard, the Course Syllabus, course schedule and course materials.
- Describe the defining characteristics of political culture in Texas
- Explain how Texas's geography has influenced its political culture and how the population of Texas has changed over time

Readings/Lecture

- Read the syllabus
- Go through the Bb Student Orientation
- Review all course materials
- Read Chapter 1 in Champagne and Harpham
- Review Chapter 1 Outline and Lecture

Assignments

- Syllabus quiz: you must take the syllabus quiz before proceeding to Unit 1. You must download Respondus lockdown browser before taking the syllabus quiz and proceeding to Unit 1.

Note on due dates:

- *After each assignment you will see the words “open” and “due.” Quizzes and exams are available only on the days in parentheses. They open at the beginning of that day (12:01 a.m.) and are due (close) at the end of the day (11:59 p.m.). Quizzes will be open for multiple days, however exams are open for one day, hence (Exam 1: opens 1/1, due 1/1).*

Week 2 (8/28-9/1)

This week we continue and conclude Unit 1, examining Texas political culture.

Readings/Lecture

- Read Chapter 1 in Champagne and Harpham
- Review Chapter 1 Outline and Lecture

Assignments

- Quiz 1 (opens 8/28, due 9/1); covers chapter 1
- Discussion Board Activity #1 (opens 8/25 due 9/1): Read “What makes Texas, Texas?” article and the complete discussion board activity

UNIT 2. THE TEXAS CONSTITUTION

Week 3 (9/4-9/8)

Unit 2 Objectives

- Identify the main functions of state constitutions.
- Describe the six Texas constitutions that preceded the current constitution.
- Explain the circumstances that led to the Texas Constitution Today.
- Analyze the major provisions of the Texas constitution today.
- Describe modern efforts to change the Texas Constitution.

Readings/Lecture

- Read Chapter 2 in Champagne and Harpham
- Review Chapter 2 Outline and Lecture

Assignments

- Quiz 2 (opens 9/4, due 9/15): covers Chapter 2

Week 4 (9/11-9/15)

This week we continue and conclude Unit 2, examining the Texas Constitution.

Readings/Lecture

- Read Chapter 2 in Champagne and Harpham
- Review Chapter 2 Outline and Lecture

Assignments

- Quiz 2 (opens 9/4, due 9/15): covers Chapter 2
- Exam 1 (opens 9/15, due 9/15): covers chapters 1 and 2

UNIT 3: TEXAS IN THE FEDERAL SYSTEM

Week 5 (9/18-9/22)

Unit 3 Objectives:

- Understand the concept and role of federalism
- Trace the major changes in national and state power over time
- Describe the sources of national and state power as they relate to federalism today

Readings/Lecture

- Read Chapter 3 in Champagne and Harpham
- Review Chapter 3 Outline and Lecture

Assignments

- Quiz 3 (opens 9/18, due 9/22): covers chapter 3

UNIT 4. THE LEGISLATURE

Week 6 (9/25-9/29)

Unit 4 Objectives:

- Describe the bicameral organization of the legislature and the rules for membership
- Explain when the legislature meets
- Outline the legislative and non-legislative powers of the legislature
- Trace the process through which law is made in Texas
- Analyze how party leadership and partisanship affect power in the legislature
- Explain the politics of redistricting

Readings/Lecture

- Read Chapter 7 in Champagne and Harpham
- Review Chapter 7 Outline and Lecture

Assignments

- Quiz 4 (opens 9/25, due 9/29): covers chapter 7
- Exam 2 (opens 9/29, due 9/29): cover chapters 3 and 7

UNIT 5. THE GOVERNOR AND EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Week 7 (10/2-10/6)

Objectives:

- Describe the powers of the Texas governor and the limits of the governor's power
- Identify the other elected officials who make up the plural executive
- Explain the roles played by boards, commissions, and regulatory agencies

Readings/Lecture

- Read Chapter 8 in Champagne and Harpham
- Review Chapter 8 Outlines and Lecture
- Assignments_
- Discussion Board Activity #2 (opens 10/2, due 10/6)
- Quiz 5 (opens 10/2, due 10/13) cover chapter 8

Week 8 (10/9-10/13)

This week we continue and conclude Unit 5, examining the Texas governor and executive branch

Readings/Lecture

- Read Chapter 8 in Champagne and Harpham
- Review Chapter 8 Outlines and Lecture

Assignments

- Quiz 5 (opens 10/2, due 10/13) covers chapter 8

UNIT 6. THE TEXAS JUDICIARY

Week 9 (10/16-10/20)

Objectives:

- Understand the role of the Judiciary
- Describe how the Texas court system is organized
- Explain the legal process and the differences between criminal and civil law
- Evaluate the process for selecting judges in Texas

Readings/Lecture

- Read Chapter 9 in Champagne and Harpham
- Review Chapter 9 Outline and Lecture

Assignments

- Quiz 6 (opens 10/16, due 10/27): covers chapter 9

Week 10 (10/23-10/27)

This week we continue and conclude Unit 5, examining the Texas judicial branch

Readings/Lecture

- Read Chapter 9 in Champagne and Harpham
- Review Chapter 9 Outline and Lecture

Assignments

- Quiz 6 (opens 10/16, due 10/27): covers chapter 9
- Exam 3 (opens 10/27, due 10/27): covers chapters 8 and 9

UNIT 7: CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY AND DUE PROCESS

Week 11 (10/30-11/3)

Objectives:

- Understand the different types of crimes and their varying punishments and the criminal justice process in Texas
- Explain the procedural steps that occur after a person is arrested
- Examine the history of the Texas prison system
- Discuss of the main controversies surrounding Texas criminal justice and the methods the state legislature has used to reform the system
- Examine and analyze the impact of the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution on Texas criminal justice policy

Readings/Lecture

- Read Chapter 13 in Champagne and Harpham
- Review Chapter 13 Outlines and Lectures

Assignments

- Discussion Board Activity # 3 (open 10/30, due 11/6)
- Quiz 7 (opens, 10/30, due 11/3): covers chapter 13
- Exam 4 (opens 11/3, due 11/3): covers chapter 13

UNIT 8. POLITICAL PARTIES

Week 12 (11/6-11/10)

Objectives:

- Describe the main functions of state party organizations
- Trace the evolution of the party system in Texas
- Analyze how ideological divisions and demographic change affect Texas political parties

Readings/Lecture

- Read Chapter 4 in Champagne and Harpham
- Review Chapter 4 Outline and Lecture

Assignments

- Quiz 8 (opens 11/6, due 11/10) covers chapter 4

UNIT 9. ELECTIONS

Week 13 (11/13-11/17)

Objectives:

- Describe the types of elections held in Texas and how they work
- Explain how the rules for voting affect turnout among different groups of Texans
- Present the main features of election campaigns in Texas

Readings/Lecture

- Read Chapter 5 Champagne and Harpham
- Review Chapter 5 Outline and Lecture

Assignments

- Discussion Board Activity #4 (opens 11/13, due 11/20)
- Quiz 9 (opens 11/13, due 12/1) covers chapter 5

Week 14 (11/20-11/24) Thanksgiving Break

Week 15 (11/27-12/1)

This week we continue and conclude Unit 8, exploring Texas elections.

Assignments

- Quiz 9 (opens 11/13, due 12/1) covers chapter 5
- Exam 5 (final exam) (opens 12/4, due 12/4): covers chapters 4 and 5