

**POLS 2306.03
Spring 2018**

**Texas Government
CHSS 252**

**CRN: 20549 (3 credit hours)
MWF 9:00am**

**POLS 2306.04
Spring 2018**

**Texas Government
CHSS 252**

**CRN: 20556 (3 credit hours)
TTh 8:00am**

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Office Hours: MW 7:30-8:00am, 10:00-11:30am

TT 7:30-8:00am, 9:30-11:00am, By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Some have defined politics as “who gets what when, and how.” In this course we analyze how the state government of Texas decides “who gets what when, and how” and why. Many factors affect how these decisions are made, factors unique to Texas (its history, culture, demographics, geography, and economy) as well as factors such as its place in national and international systems. Within this environment Texas government responds to political demands of individuals, interest groups, political parties, elites, and other governments. We examine the setting in which the government processes these demands, including the Texas constitution, elections, and the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. We analyze the impact of these factors on several policies including immigration, health/safety, environment/energy, and wildlife. Beyond learning the basics, we explore how we can influence Texas politics.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Course objectives for students include:

- 1. Analyze how Texas’ history, economy, demography, geography, culture, and social characteristics shape Texas political culture and impact politics**
- 2. Analyze the ideological and partisan foundations of Texans’ political attitudes, values and beliefs**
- 3. Analyze the dynamics of interest group and partisan influence on Texas politics**
- 4. Explain the evolution of the Texas Constitution and how its provisions shape the dynamics of politics**
- 5. Analyze the relationship of Texas to local, state, national, and international governments**
- 6. Understand the structure, function, and policy processes of Texas’ legislative, executive, and judicial institutions**
- 7. Understand individuals’ role and responsibilities as stakeholders in Texas’ political system**
- 8. Articulate their policy preferences and formulate strategies for achieving their policy goals**

COURSE READINGS AND VIDEOS:

A. Text - TEXAS POLITICS. Texas Politics Project at UT Austin. Soomo Publishing, 2018. This is an online textbook or webtext. It is required. You will take quizzes within the webtext that are automatically graded and entered into Blackboard. You must purchase a webtext. Instructions for purchasing the webtext will be posted on Blackboard and we will discuss this the first day of class.

B. Additional readings, websites, videos, and other materials as assigned. They will be posted on Blackboard for each week.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Exams: Four regular exams and a Final Exam will be given. They will consist of 40-50 multiple choice and true/false questions. You will need a Scantron 882 and a number 2 pencil for each exam. Exams 1-4 are not comprehensive. Students must take Exams 1-4. The Final Exam is optional for those who wish to attempt to raise their grade. The Final Exam grade may be used to replace the lowest grade. The Final Exam is comprehensive.

An exam review will be posted on Blackboard about 4 days before the exam.

Make Up Exam Policy: There are no make-up exams unless you are participating in a university approved activity. Those who miss Exam 1, 2, 3, or 4 must take the Final Exam. The Final Exam serves as your make up exam. It is not optional for those who have missed Exam 1, 2, 3, or 4. The Final Exam is comprehensive.

Webtext Quizzes: Each chapter in the webtext includes a quiz. You must purchase the text to take the chapter quizzes. You will take 11 webtext quizzes. The 10 highest quiz grades will count. The quizzes are worth 10 points each. The quiz grade average constitutes 20% of your course grade. You may not complete the quiz after the due date. You will receive a zero for that quiz.

COURSE EVALUATION:

Each exam is worth 100 points and constitutes 20% of the final grade. The Optional Final may be used to replace your lowest grade from exams 1-4. If the Optional Final grade is the lowest of your 5 grades, it will be dropped. The 4 exams combined are worth 400 points and 80% of the course grade. Each quiz grade is worth 10 points and 2% of the final grade. The quiz grade average of the 10 highest quiz grades is worth 100 points and 20% of the final grade.

Exam 1	100 points	20% of course grade
Exam 2	100 points	20% of course grade
Exam 3	100 points	20% of course grade
Exam 4	100 points	20% of course grade
*Optional Final replaces lowest exam grade		
Webtext Quiz	10 points each quiz for total of	2% of course grade for total of
Highest 10 quiz grades from Quizzes 1-11	100 points for quiz total	20% of course grade
Total	500 points	100%

Grading Scale:

Course Grade	Points	Average
A	450-500	90-100%
B	400-449	80-89%
C	350-399	70-79%
D	300-349	60-69%
F	Below 300	Below 60%

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class regularly, to be punctual, to be prepared, and to not be disruptive. There are neither penalties nor rewards levied on grades for student attendance.

Communication: Students should check Blackboard and their SAM email regularly. I will communicate with you via your Sam email. I will also post announcements, new assignments, and exam grades on Blackboard. You are responsible for the material posted there or sent via email to your Sam email account.

Classroom Conduct: Turn off your electronic devices. Do not text in class. Do not plan to get up in the middle of class and leave. If you find you must leave for any reason, do not re-enter the classroom. Once you leave you may not come back into class. Do not talk to each other while I am talking. I will ask you to leave if you disrupt the class.

Academic Dishonesty Policy: Students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on exams or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of

resource materials. Any student found cheating on exams or plagiarizing another's work will be given an F for the course.

Cell Phone Policy: Students are to turn off all cell phones and other electronic equipment while in the classroom. The use by students of cell phones, pagers, or similar communication devices during scheduled class-time is prohibited. All such devices should be turned off or put in a silent (vibrate) mode and should not be taken out during class.

Any use of cell phones or other electronic devices during a test period is prohibited. Even the visible presence of a cell phone or other device during the test period will result in a zero for that test. This includes the use of headphones, earphones, and earbuds. During the test these instruments should be left at home or stored securely in such a way so they cannot be seen or used by the student. If you are found to have an electronic device out during an exam you will receive an F not only for the exam but also for the course.

University policies regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act, Religious Holidays, Instructor Evaluation, Visitors in the Classroom, and the Classroom Rules of Conduct will be observed. These policies can be found at <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/> and at <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/>.

Tentative Course Outline

Week	Topics
Week 1	Intro
Week 2	Context of Texas Politics
Week 3	Political Culture
Week 4	Ideology and Partisanship
Week 5	Interest Groups
Week 6	Political Parties
Week 7	Participation
Week 8	Voting
Week 9	Texas Constitution
Week 10	Legislature
Week 11	Legislature
Week 12	Governor
Week 13	Executive Branch
Week 14	Courts
Week 15	Finals