



GOVT 2306: Texas Government
Course Syllabus: Spring 2019

"Northeast Texas Community College exists to provide responsible, exemplary learning opportunities."

Ned Muse

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Office Hours	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Online

The information contained in this syllabus is subject to change without notice. Students are expected to be aware of any additional course policies presented by the instructor during the course.

Course Description: 3 credit hours

Lecture /Lab/Clinical: Three hours of class each week.

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.

Please note: This course is designed as a hybrid classroom course with a high level of online activity. Assignments, quizzes and exams require access to the class's Blackboard site. It is assumed that by enrolling in this course that the student understands these requirements and has adequate compute skills, hardware and internet access to meet the course requirements. All students are required to be familiar with Blackboard as used at NTCC. If a student does not possess the requisite skills, it is solely the student's responsibility to develop those skills.

Course Purpose: A good government is one that is derived from its virtuous citizens for the purpose of promoting and protecting the rights of those citizens. A citizen's relationship to his or her government is chiefly a relationship between fundamental rights and personal responsibility. Due to our federal system, American government is divided between a national government and regional governments. A citizen thus has a unique relationship (of rights and responsibilities) with each of these levels of government. In this course, we are primarily concerned with a citizen's relationship between the rights granted by and the responsibilities to his state and local governments. Despite the federal design of our system of government that elevates the state and local civic relationship above the relationship with the national government, most citizens know of and care very little for their state and local government.

As an introduction to state and local government, this course is designed to provide the student with the information, the concepts, and some tools of critical thought necessary for understanding his fundamental civic relationship to state and local government. We are primarily interested in examining the powers of the states as they relate to each other and the national government, the evolution of these powers, and a citizen's responsibility in properly retaining, exercising, and regulating these powers. We will be focusing on political issues that represent contemporary challenges or opportunities facing Texas. It is expected that after this course the student will have not only a better understanding of Texas state and local government and of news relating to it, it is also expected that the student will intelligently participate in these levels of government by exercising responsibly and intelligently his or her rights. Any level of government in a Federal Republic is not a concept a citizen should merely understand; rather, it is an entity of which all citizens must play an active part.

Required Textbook:

Mora, Sherry, author | Roger, William, author. *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., Publisher: McGraw-Hill Education, 2017

ISBN Number: 978-1-259-54821-5

Recommended Reading(s): Dallas Morning News, Wall Street Journal, other newspapers, political magazines, view FOX, CNN or other television news programs and the internet

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.
2. Describe 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. Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas.

Lectures & Discussions Schedule: GOVT 2306 is designed to introduce the student to the history, theory, structure, and evolution of the state and local governments in general and the state government of Texas specifically. The introductory purpose of the course and the immense number of political topics preclude the possibility of thoroughly studying one section or historical era of Texas state government. The following course schedule reflects the introductory aim of the course. However, the practical reality is more likely that not all topics listed below will be addressed. To meet the purpose of the course while also giving weight to the students' interest in each topic, the instructor and NTCC reserve the right to modify, amend, or change the syllabus (course requirements, grading policy, etc.) as the curriculum and/or program requires.

I have divided the term into six units:

1. Federalism and the U. S. Constitution;
2. Texas History and Politics
3. Public Policy and Financing State Government;
4. Participants in Texas Politics;
5. The Branches of Texas Government; and
6. Local Government.

Each unit is broken down according to Lessons. Begin every Lesson by reading the Introduction. Then explore the Overview of Assignments. The required activities are listed under each lesson: readings, assignments, resources, etc. Readings are always found in the textbook. Assignments, and Resources links can be found in the Lesson under the Table of Contents provided at the bottom of the screen OR you can page through the Lesson by clicking on the arrows in the top right-hand corner of the screen where you see the page numbers listed.

The schedule for the course is included in this Syllabus. Students are expected to have completed all assignments relating to each unit prior to the class meeting related to that unit.

Course Schedule

The initial class meeting will be January 23, 2019. The class will meet each week on Wednesday nights unless otherwise announced by the instructor.

First Class Meeting

January 23, 2019

Introduction

Reading from Course Blackboard Site:

Syllabus

Start Here Folder Documents

Unit 1: Federalism and the U. S. Constitution

January 28, 2019

Assignment Due by 11:59 p.m.:

1. Quiz 1 material from chapters 1 and 2
2. Syllabus Acknowledgement Quiz
3. Student Learning Outcome Quiz

Lesson 1: The United States Constitution and Federalism

Reading: *The United States Constitution* <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution>

Reading: *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., chapter 2

Lesson 2: Introduction to Texas Politics and History

Reading: *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., chapter 1

Unit 2: Texas Public Policy and Financing

February 4, 2019

Assignment due:

1. Quiz 2 covering material from Chapters 11 and 13 due by 11:59 p.m.

Lesson 3: Public Policy in Texas

Readings: *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., chapter 11

Readings: *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., chapter 13

Unit 3: Texas Political Participation, Elections, and Political Parties

February 11, 2019

Assignment due:

1. Quiz 3 covering material from Chapters 7, 8, and 9 due by 11:59 p.m.

Lesson 4: Political Parties and Elections in Texas

Readings: *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., chapter 7

Readings: *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., chapter 8

Readings: *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., chapter 9

Unit 4: Participants in Texas politics

February 18, 2019

Assignment due:

1. Quiz 4 covering material from Chapters 3,10, and 14 due by 11:59 p.m.

Lesson 5: Participation and Interest Groups in Texas Politics

Readings: *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., chapter 10

Readings: *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., chapter 14

Unit 5: The Branches of Texas Government

Lesson 6: The Texas Legislature

Readings: *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., chapter 3

February 25, 2019

Assignment due:

1. **Quiz 5 covering material from Chapters 4, 5, and 12 due by 11:59 p.m.**
2. **Special Assignment due by 11:59 p. m.**

Lesson 7: The Executive Department and the Office of the Governor of Texas

Readings: *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., chapter 4

Lesson 8: The Court System in Texas

Readings: *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., chapter 5

Lesson 9: The Criminal Justice System in Texas

Readings: *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., chapter 12

Unit 6: Local Governments in Texas

March 4, 2019

Lesson 10: Local Government in Texas

Reading: *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*. 3rd ed., chapter 6

March 11, 2018

Assignment due:

Final Exam Due

Evaluation/Grading Policy

Grading Methodology:

The course grade is calculated by combining points earned from all assignments divided by the total points available. As designed, the following points are available for each assignment:

Syllabus Acknowledgement Quiz:	10 pts.
Student Learning Outcome Quiz:	10 pts.
Class Participation Points:	50 pts.
Current Event Assignment	100 pts.
Quiz Total:	100 pts.
Special Assignment:	100 pts.
Final Exam:	<u>100 pts.</u>
TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE:	470 pts.

As an example, a student who earns the following will receive a grade of 89% (a "B" on the scale):

Syllabus Acknowledgement Quiz:	10 pts.
Student Learning Outcome Quiz:	10 pts.
Class Participation Points:	80 pts.
Current Events Assignment	80 pts.
Quiz Total:	80 pts.
Special Assignment:	80 pts.
Final Exam:	<u>80 pts.</u>
TOTAL POINTS EARNED:	420 pts.

Grading Scale:

90 -100% =**A**
80 - 89% = **B**
70 - 79% = **C**
60 - 69% = **D**
0 -59%=**F**

Explanation of Grading Scale:

A = The letter grade of **A** represents that, in all areas of evaluation, the student has demonstrated an excellent understanding of the course subject matter and an exemplary ability to effectively communicate it. The student has also excelled in the ability to educate himself/herself. Through all assignments and discussions, the student has consistently demonstrated accurate factual knowledge, analytical skill, interdisciplinary association, and practical application of the subject matter to daily living habits and problems.

B = The letter grade of **B** represents that, in some areas of evaluation, the student has demonstrated competency of the subject matter. The student could improve in one or all of the following areas: the accuracy of factual recollection, the aptitude to critically analyze a text, an awareness of the association of the subject matter, the communication and consistent application of his/her knowledge.

C = The letter grade of **C** represents that the student has demonstrated an average knowledge of the basic facts of the subject matter and has demonstrated a rudimentary ability to gain knowledge through his own study. The student requires further education and practice of critical thinking skills. The student also needs to strengthen his/her ability to explain the subject matter clearly and effectively.

D = The letter grade of **D** represents that the student requires further educational instruction in basic content, application, and communication of the subject matter. The student's factual knowledge and skills in communication and application are adequate for the attainment of a degree at NTCC, but further education is necessary for the mastery of the subject.

F = The letter grade of **F** represents that the student has not demonstrated an elementary level of knowledge of the subject matter. The student also has not demonstrated the skills or discipline necessary to learn the subject matter. A student may receive a letter grade of **F** if they fail to complete one or more of the assignments including exams, special assignments, analytical questions, etc.

Midterm Grade

NTCC requires the posting of a Midterm Grade so that both students and instructors are aware of the progress the student has made. We will follow that practice by posting a Midterm grade that includes the grades on all material and assignments due date for midterm grades.

If you have failed to turn in an assignment for any reason your grade on the Midterm will reflect a grade of "0" for that assignment.

Assignments**1. Syllabus Acknowledgement Quiz and Student Learning Outcome Quiz**

Each student is required to complete both of these quizzes by the deadline shown in the schedule that is part of this Syllabus. The content of the student's response will not be graded. Points are awarded for merely completing the assignment by the deadline, however, these points are included in the final grade calculation.

2. Class Participation:

Attendance and participation in the classroom portion of this course is required. These points will be allocated by the instructor based on the student's attendance, preparation, timely completion of assignments, etc.

3. Newspaper, Periodical and Internet Project

I believe that a student cannot successfully participate in this government class or the actual governmental process if he is ignorant of contemporary national, state, and local political events. To educate students concerning current political facts and to facilitate intelligent political participation, we will discuss contemporary political and governmental issues in class each class meeting. To facilitate and stimulate these discussions, each student is expected to bring an article concerning a current event related to state and/or local government from a newspaper, periodical, professional publication, etc. to class each class period. A total of ten (10) articles from each student is required. If a student fails to bring an article to class or misses a class for any reason, they may not submit their article at a later date.

Each student will be expected to be prepared to present their article to the class, give a summary of the issues illustrated and give their opinion about the issue(s) presented. All students are then expected to participate in a discussion analyzing these issues.

Each student is expected to turn in a copy of their article accompanied by a one-page summary of the issue(s) addressed by the article and their opinion about the issue(s). No late articles will be accepted.

All discussions will take place in the classroom during scheduled classes. Each student is expected to come to class prepared to participate in these discussions.

The discussion is another opportunity to practice critical thinking. The student should not merely give their opinion regarding the topic or the statements made in the discussion posts. The student should not simply agree with a classmate's position. If he does so, he will not receive full credit, if any, for his participation. The student should critically analyze the article and be prepared to explain his or her opinion by providing valid and well-reasoned arguments for the position.

Each discussion will account for a portion of the student's grade. The assignment will make up a total of 100 points for the term.

In order to assist with this assignment, the Learning Resource Center has arranged for students to have free access to the Dallas Morning News online. To get the paper online, go to the following website:

<https://nieonline.com/dallas2/> and log in using the following:

Teacher Last Name: Muse

Password: 75455

Once you log in, you can read the entire paper and select and print an article to bring to class.

4. Quizzes

Five timed, open book quizzes will be given over factual information of Texas State and Local Government gleaned from the assigned reading of the textbook and supporting material. The quizzes are located on the course website under the Assessment tab found under the Course Tools. Quizzes cover certain chapters and are due at specific times. These chapters and times can be found below and on the course website.

Note: These quizzes are designed, in part, to measure whether or not the student has prepared for class by reading and becoming familiar with the reading assignments. The quizzes will be completed prior to the scheduled class meeting. No credit will be given for late submission of the quizzes.

Each quiz will only last for 60 minutes and the quiz will automatically close after that time. The chapters must be read thoroughly, and knowledge of the facts must be retained because there is not enough time allotted to look up each answer. All quizzes must be completed by midnight on the assigned due date listed in the syllabus. Each quiz will be worth 20 points. The cumulative value for all quizzes is 100 points of the final grade.

More information can be found in the Quiz Submission Procedure document in the Start Here Folder on the course website. All quizzes are due by 11:59 pm on the due date listed in the course schedule. and in the table below. The material from the textbook covered by each quiz is:

Quiz 1: Chapter 1 and 2

Quiz 2: Chapter 11 and 13

Quiz 3: Chapters 7, 8, and 9

Quiz 4: Chapters 3, 10, and 14

Quiz 5: Chapters 4, 5, and 12

5. Special Assignment

Each student will be required to prepare an approximately five (5) page term paper on a subject selected by the instructor. All students should be prepared to present their paper to the class.

Details on the subject, due date, etc. will be presented in class and on the course Blackboard site.

6. Final Exam

The Final Exam is worth 100 points of your final grade. The date and nature of the Final Exam will be announced in class.

Student Responsibilities/Expectations

Assignment Requirements:

Students are expected to complete all assignments the due date and time stated in the syllabus. Quizzes, the Special Assignment, and the Final Exam are due by 11:59 pm on their scheduled date. No late work will be accepted for credit and no make-up work will be permitted except for medical emergencies, official college activities, or personal emergency situations. A medical emergency is defined as sickness requiring hospitalization or isolation. All medical emergencies must be verified by a doctor's note. An official college activity is any activity that the college has mandated for students. A personal emergency is limited to death of a relative or unforeseeable and immediate hardship. The instructor must verify all excuses for make-up work. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor to schedule make-up work due to a medical or personal emergency. The instructor may permit or deny make-up work.

Cell Phones

All cell phones are to be turned off upon entering the classroom. No exceptions. Texting or emailing during class is not acceptable. Violations may result in the student being dropped from the class.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is necessary. You must be present physically and mentally in class. In addition, you must actively participate in class discussions and activities. More than two (2) absences during the semester may result in removal from the course. Two "tardies" equals one absence.

Because this course is an eight-week course, the attendance policy is the following: a student is expected to attend all class meetings and to log in to the course website at least four days a week for the duration of the course. If a student does not attend class meetings and log into the course website at least four days a week, the instructor may begin drop procedures for a student.

If you have special circumstances that will prevent you from meeting these attendance expectations, it is your responsibility to make the instructor aware of them as soon as they arise. Please note that failure to attend a class or tardiness resulting from job requirements, other class obligations, transportation issues, or other similar matters will not excuse the student from his or her attendance or participation responsibilities.

The instructor will keep records of attendance. If the attendance policy is broken, the instructor will examine the reasons for the student's absences, the student's work in the class, and determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in the class. If the student breaks the attendance policy, the instructor may begin withdrawal procedures (up to the college's withdrawal deadline) or may fail the student for the course (after the college's withdrawal deadline has passed).

Students who discontinue attending class will be given an "F" unless they officially withdraw from the course. The instructor reserves the right to remove a student from the class for excessive absences or for behavior that is disruptive to the learning process.

Email and Blackboard Policy:

Students are expected to regularly check their NTCC Email account and the course Blackboard Mail for any course changes, announcements, and assignments. Failure to check daily the campus email and the course Blackboard Mail may result in missed work and academic penalties. Your NTCC Email and your course Blackboard can be accessed through your My Eagle Portal found on www.ntcc.edu.

NTCC Academic Honesty Statement:

Students are expected to complete course work in an honest manner, using their intellects and resources designated as allowable by the course instructor. Students are responsible for addressing questions about allowable resources with the course instructor. NTCC upholds the highest standards of academic integrity. This course will follow the NTCC Academic Honesty policy stated in the [Student Handbook](#).

Academic Ethics:

The college expects all students to engage in academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuit. Academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, and collusion is unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action. Refer to the student handbook for more information on this subject.

Any student who is caught cheating on any assignment will automatically receive an "F" for the course.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is defined as using or imitating another's words, ideas, or work in general *without proper citation of that source*. Plagiarism is easy to commit and easy to catch. Although students generally plagiarize due to academic laziness or naïveté, plagiarism is always inexcusable. Instances of plagiarism will be dealt with on an individual basis. The instructor may penalize the student for the specific assignment by assigning a grade of zero, or he may fail the student for the entire course. The discipline regarding plagiarism is up to the discretion of the instructor.

ADA Statement:

It is the policy of NTCC to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals who are students with disabilities. This College will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations. An appointment can be made with Katherine Belew, Academic Advisor/Coordinator of Special Populations located in the Student Services. She can be reached at 903-434-8218. For more information and to obtain a copy of the Request for Accommodations, please refer to the [NTCC website - Special Populations](#).

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's educational records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the

rights have transferred are considered “eligible students.” In essence, a parent has no legal right to obtain information concerning the child’s college records without the written consent of the student. In compliance with FERPA, information classified as “directory information” may be released to the general public without the written consent of the student unless the student makes a request in writing. Directory information is defined as: the student’s name, permanent address and/or local address, telephone listing, dates of attendance, most recent previous education institution attended, other information including major, field of study, degrees, awards received, and participation in officially recognized activities/sports.