



GOVT 2306 Texas State Government (Online)
Course Syllabus: Spring 2019

NORTHEAST TEXAS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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

Bryan Francis

Office Hours: You may attempt to contact me at any time.

Phone: 903-746-4600 (You may call or text)

Email: bfrancis@ntcc.edu

Office Hours	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Online
(by phone)	You may contact me via phone call, text or email at any time. My actual work schedule varies greatly. I will do my best to get back to you as quickly as possible. Please give me your full name in any voicemail, text or email.					

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: 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.

Required Textbook(s):

The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy, 3rd Edition
 By Sherri Mora, William Ruger, and Edward Mihalkanin

Publisher: McGraw/Hill Higher Education.

ISBN Number: 9781259548215 (Be sure it has CONNECT code)

In the effort to save students money, your course materials are delivered through Exclusive Access. You have already paid for your course materials with your tuition and fees. Below is the required course materials:

978-1-259-75344-2 MORA / STATE OF TEXAS DIGITAL TEXT W/CONNECT

To access your course materials, click on the Course Materials Access link within the Start Here folder on Blackboard.

For additional information on Exclusive Access, please access the textbook information provided on the portal (student tab, click on Academics then Textbooks.)

Recommended Reading(s):

Dallas Morning News, Wall Street Journal, Houston Chronicle, National Public Radio. Students are highly encouraged to read newspapers online and start listening to political commentary.

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.

Course Objectives:

1. Students will analyze and articulate the theoretical principles that guide political life.
2. Students will critically evaluate the content, causes, and effects of politically significant information gained through the news media.
3. Student will demonstrate an understanding of basic political processes and institutions.

Assignments, Discussions, Exams, & Research Paper:

The semester is divided into 5 weeks of assignments. The assignments and associated due dates can be found below or on the Black Board site under the title "Schedule and Due Dates." You must follow the week to week schedule in Black Board. All work for the week is due Sunday of that week at 11:59pm unless otherwise stated. I will not accept any late work for this course. The research paper must be turned in on or before due date in Black Board via "turnitin.com" link. No late research papers will be accepted. Papers must be submitted through turnitin on the research paper tab in Black Board. Email submissions will not be accepted. Papers should be submitted in a format accepted by turnitin (MS Word).

CONNECT Assignments: Each chapter includes a number of McGraw-Hill CONNECT assignments. These are included in your weekly folders. In order to complete these sections, you must have purchased a code pass with your textbook. Your grade for this section will be a composite of your performance for all these assignments.

Discussion Board: Over the course of the semester, students are required to engage in discussion board posts. The boards offer an opportunity to engage with classmates and strengthen critical thinking skills. Each discussion board week, you are required to write three substantial posts. The final post must be made by the due date in order to receive points. Late posts will not receive points. A substantive post consists of analytical questions, intelligent comments, illustrations of pertinent personal experiences, etc. Simple written agreement concerning an issue or repetition of ideas does not count as a substantive post. Discussion board posts must also abide by the following rules:

1. The first substantive post must be your original response to the forum topic, questions, and article. (See discussion page for specific instructions)
2. The second and third substantive post must be responses to other students' posts.
3. In order to receive full credit, all posts must be respectful in tone (this does not mean you cannot argue a point), thorough, substantive, objective, and written according to the rules of proper English grammar and spelling. No texting language. Failure to abide by these rules will result in academic penalties. **Please make sure you follow the instructions for the individual Discussion Assignment. Each discussion assignment is different.**

Research Paper: One research paper will be required for this course. For this paper you will identify an issue in state government or local government that you are particularly concerned about or interested in. The issue can be one that has gained attention recently or it can be any issue you feel is important, as long as it is relevant to the course. **Please see assignment for instructions!** After clearly identifying the issue, you will write a persuasive paper on the issue explaining the issue and then argue your opinion. You must be specific and factual. The

research paper must be turned in before or on the due date in Black Board. Papers can be submitted at any time throughout the semester up until the due date listed. Papers shall be submitted through turnitin on the research paper tab in Black Board. Papers shall be submitted in a format accepted by turnitin (MS Word). No late research papers will be accepted!

Quizzes & Exams: Unless noted, quizzes and exams will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. Students will be tested on assigned readings from the text. All tests must be completed by the due date.

Each Unit will culminate with an online test. The questions may be multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank, true/false or short answer. Students will have two hours to complete each test. Students need to have a thorough understanding of the material before taking the exam. While you may use your textbook you will simply not have enough time to look for all the answers.

Students need to have reliable internet access as a test will not be restarted because of technical error. It is also recommended that students not wait until the very last moment to take a test as this can cause a great deal of traffic on the server and could slow things down or lead to technical malfunctions.

Evaluation/Grading Policy:

Weighted course grades:

- 30% CONNECT assignments
- 20% Discussion boards (four discussion boards)
- 30% Exams (three exams worth 10% each)
- 20% Writing assignment (Research Paper)

The final grade for the class will follow a standard grade scale based on the weighted percentages noted above.

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = Below 60

Student Responsibilities/Expectations:

Students are expected to complete all assignments by the due date and time stated. All assignments and exams 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 for this course.

Since this course is an online course, the attendance policy is the following: a student must log in at least once a week (7 day period) for the duration of the course. If a student does not sign in for a week (7 day period), the instructor may begin drop procedures for a student. 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 are expected to check daily the campus email account and the course Blackboard for any course changes, announcements, and assignments. Failure to check regularly the campus email and the course Blackboard may result in missed work and academic penalties.

Late Work Policy:

No late work will be accepted for credit in this course. There are no exceptions to this policy.

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 also 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.

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.

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 Shannin Garrett, Academic Advisor/Coordinator of Special Populations located in the College Connection. 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.