



GOVT 2306 Texas Government Course Syllabus: Dec Intersession 2016

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

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Office Hours	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Online
	By appt.	By appt.	By appt.	By appt.	By appt.	By appt.

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

Required Textbook(s):

The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy, 1st Edition

By Sherri Mora, William Ruger, and Edward Mihalkanin

Publisher: McGraw/Hill Higher Education.

ISBN Number: 1259279189 (Be sure it has CONNECT code)

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:

1. Students will analyze and articulate the theoretical principles that guide political life in Texas.
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 Texan political processes and institutions.

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.

Lectures & Discussions:

I have divided the semester into three units; each unit is broken down according to Chapters/Days. Begin each week by opening the appropriate module on Blackboard. Then proceed through each lesson in order (top to bottom).

Evaluation/Grading Policy:

Final grades are based upon a weighted grading system, and final letter grades are given based upon a standard scale.

Weighted Grading:

25% LearnSmart Readings

25% Assignments and Discussion Boards

50% Exams

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.

Unless noted, quizzes and exams will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. Students will be tested on assigned readings from the text. Previous arrangements must be made when it is necessary to miss a quiz/exam. In the case of an emergency where prior notification is unavailable, students must provide proof of an excused extenuating circumstance in order to make up the test.

Over the course of the semester, students are required to engage in three 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 (Minimum of 200 words.)
2. The second and third substantive post must be responses to other students' posts (at least 200 words in length).
3. In order to receive full credit, all posts must be respectful in tone, thorough, substantive, 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.

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

A = 90-100

B = 80-89.99

C = 70-79.99

D = 60-69.99

F = Below 60

****Please note: I do not round up. There is plenty of extra credit in this course to “round up” your own grade based on merit****

Tests/Exams:

******See full schedule of activities at end of syllabus******

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.

Assignments:

******See full schedule of activities at end of syllabus******

All assignments have been loaded into each week’s folders. **Late work is not accepted with official deadlines being the last day of the week. Work is assigned daily as a suggested guide. The official due date is the last day of the week (usually a Saturday)**. Students should give themselves enough time before the final due date time to complete all assignment activities. Some weeks have more assignments than others. Students are responsible for managing their time accordingly.

Student Responsibilities/Expectations:

Since the lecture-discussion method will be employed in this class, regular attendance is highly encouraged. Students who have not attended class by the 12th class day will be removed from the course.

From time to time, students may be offered extra credit. These optional assignments will be announced via Blackboard. Typically, extra credit will be added to exam grades.

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 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. All excuses for make-up work must be verified by the instructor. 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.

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. To access the course website on Blackboard, follow these steps:

1. Log on to the NTCC My Eagle Portal at mycampus.ntcc.edu.
2. Your portal Login name is your first name initial + your last name + last 3 digits of your social security number. The Password is your date of birth in an 8 digit format mmddyyyy.
3. Under the "Launch Pad" click on the Blackboard Icon.
4. After logging in, under the My Courses list, select the link associated with this class.
5. Blackboard Mail is found on the left-hand side of the course home page.

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 arrange an appointment

with a College counselor to obtain a Request for Accommodations form. For more information, please refer to the NTCC Catalog or Student Handbook.

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.

Schedule of Activities

*****SUBJECT TO ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS. PLEASE CHECK BLACKBOARD FOLDERS FOR EXACT ASSIGNMENTS.*****

DAY 1	Dec 21
Chapter 1	Chapter 1. Introduction to Texas History and Politics
Chapter 1	Reading Assignment - Political Subcultures
Chapter 1	Matching: Distinguishing Political Cultures
Discussion	Introduction and Political Compass Test
DAY 2	Dec 22
Chapter 2	Chapter 2. The Texas State Constitution and the American Federal System
Chapter 2	Chapter 2 Essays
Chapter 2	Texas Constitution Assessment
Chapter 2	Categorizing: Separation of Powers
Chapter 2	Categorizing: Texas Political Culture
Discussion	Texas v. Johnson 1989
DAY 3	Dec 23
Chapter 3	Chapter 3. The Texas Legislature
Chapter 3	Categorizing: Major Bills and Minor Bills
Chapter 3	Categorizing: Powers of the Speaker and the Lieutenant Governor
Chapter 3	Chronological Order: Milestones in the Fight for Equity of Representation
Chapter 3	Classification: Legislators' Qualifications

Discussion	Picking a Bill
LAST CHANCE TO TURN IN DAYS 1-3 IS SATURDAY DEC. 24	
DAY 4	Dec 26
Chapter 4	Chapter 4. The Executive Department and the Office of the Governor of Texas
Chapter 4	Multiple Choice: Exercising Gubernatorial Powers
Chapter 4	Multiple Choice: Impeaching a Governor
Assignment	Wendy Davis v. Greg Abbott
DAY 5	Dec 27
Chapter 5	Check all that Apply: Judicial Federalism
Chapter 5	Chapter 5. The Court System in Texas
Chapter 5	Check all that Apply: How Texas Courts Must Function
Chapter 5	Multiple Choice: Level of State Courts
Chapter 5	Sentence Completion: Juveniles in the State of Texas
Chapter 5	True/False: Crime and Punishment in Texas
Chapter 5	Essay: Issues in Texas Judicial Selection
Chapter 5	Categorizing: Minor Courts
DAY 6	Dec 28
Chapter 6	Chapter 6. Local Governments in Texas
Chapter 6	Check All That Apply: Voter Turnout in Texas Municipal Elections
Chapter 6	Matching: Election Methods in Texas
Chapter 6	Essay: Democratic Control and Special Purpose Districts
Chapter 6	True/False and Multiple Choice: Special District Governments
Chapter 6	True/ False and Multiple Choice: The Weaknesses of Texas County Government
Chapter 6	Matching: Creating a City and Who's Who in County Government
DAY 7	Dec 29
Assignment	City Building
DAY 8	Dec 30
Exam	Midterm Exam

DAY 9	Dec 31
Chapter 7	Chapter 7. Voting and Political Participation in Texas
Chapter 7	Text Sequencing: Popular Forms of Political Participation in Texas
Chapter 7	Matching: Types of Political Participation
Chapter 7	Short Answer: Voter Turnout in Texas
LAST CHANCE TO TURN IN DAYS 4-9 IS SATURDAY DEC. 31	
DAY 10	Jan 1
Chapter 8	Chapter 8. Elections and Campaigns in Texas
Chapter 8	Check All That Apply: The Federal Voting Rights Act
Chapter 8	Fill In the Blank: Historic Special Elections in Texas
Chapter 8	Check All That Apply: Absentee and Early Voting in Texas
Chapter 8	True/False and Multiple Choice: Ballots in Texas Elections
Chapter 8	True/False and Multiple Choice: PAC Money in Texas State Campaigns
Chapter 8	Check All that Apply: The Federal Voting Rights Act
DAY 11	Jan 2
Chapter 9	Chapter 9. Political Parties in Texas
Chapter 9	Multiple Choice: Permanent Party Organization in Texas
Chapter 9	Check All That Apply: The Failure of Third Parties in the U.S.
Chapter 9	Essay: Political Reforms and the Weakening of Political Parties
Chapter 9	Check All That Apply: Texas Conservatism and Presidential Elections
Chapter 9	True/False and Multiple Choice: Fifty States, Fifty Party Systems
DAY 12	Jan 3
Assignment	Game Day: ReDistricting
DAY 13	Jan 4
Chapter 10	Chapter 10. Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas
Chapter 10	Classifying: Interest Group Types in Texas
Chapter 10	Classifying: Interest Group Types in Texas
Chapter 10	Check All That Apply: Interest Group Strength
Chapter 10	Multiple Choice and Essay: The Big Business of Lobbying and Electioneering
Chapter 10	True/False and Multiple Choice: Interest Group Focus: Labor Unions
DAY 14	Jan 5

Chapter 11	Chapter 11. Public Policy in Texas
Chapter 11	True/False and Multiple Choice: Immigration Policy
Chapter 11	Essay: Criminal Justice in Texas
Chapter 11	Sentence Completion: Access to Higher Education: Milestone Court Decisions
Chapter 11	Classifying: State Rankings on Policy Liberalism Indices
Chapter 11	True/False and Multiple Choice: Policy Liberalism Indices
Chapter 11	Text Sequencing: The Policy Cycle
Discussion	Public Policy
DAY 15	Jan 6
Chapter 12	Essay: A Personal Income Tax in Texas?
Chapter 12	True/False and Multiple Choice: Government Expenditures in Texas
Chapter 12	Text Sequencing: Major Expenditure Items, State of Texas 2012-13 Biennial Budget
Chapter 12	True/False and Multiple Choice: Local Taxes in Texas
Chapter 12	Essay: What is the Best Tax Structure?
Chapter 12	Matching: Regressive and Progressive Taxes
Chapter 12	Check All That Apply: Texas State Revenue Sources
Chapter 12	Matching: Source of State Revenue
Chapter 12	Matching: Government Services
Exam	Final Exam
LAST CHANCE TO TURN IN DAYS 4-9 IS <u>FRIDAY JAN 6</u>	