GOV 105: Texas Government

Course Format: Online, Self-Paced

Course Instructor: Jeffery Patterson, Ph.D. Contact using the Inbox tool in Canvas.

Course Credits: 1

Prerequisites: None

How This Course Works
This course is online and is self-paced. Students have five months from their date of enrollment to complete the course. All coursework and proctored exams are submitted or taken online.

While this course is self-paced in terms of when you complete the work and submit assignments, periodic assessments are critical to ensuring that students receive adequate support and are able to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Thus, this course is organized into modules that must be completed in order. Students will only be able to move forward once they have received a grade on all assessments within a given module.

Review the course outline and assignment descriptions carefully. Computer-graded assignments are scored immediately. You can expect to receive feedback on instructor-graded assignments or exams within three business days following submission. This does not include weekends or holidays. Requests for expedited grading are not accommodated, so please plan accordingly. During certain times (end of semester, spring break, etc.), instructors may experience higher-than-usual demands on their time and may need additional time for evaluation. Students should reach out to University Extension at uex@austin.utexas.edu with any concerns regarding grading turnaround.

University Extension strongly advises students to be aware of when they may need a course grade to be recorded on their transcript. It can take up to two weeks after the final exam is complete for a grade to be officially recorded with the Office of the Registrar.

Course Overview
This course provides an orientation to the actors, processes, and institutions that make up the political system in Texas with a strong emphasis on the development of applied knowledge. It is an innovative online course that includes lecture videos, videos from Texas’ political practitioners and insiders, and a web-based textbook, Texas Politics, by a team from the University of Texas at Austin.
Required Materials

- *Texas Politics* Course Version Webtext (online textbook, purchase link available in course)
- A limited set of additional readings will be provided on the Canvas course site.

Technical Requirements

All students are required to have access to an internet-enabled laptop or desktop computer. Tablets and smartphones are not supported. Computers should meet the following requirements:

- RAM: at least 2GB
- Operating System: Modern (last 2-3 years) and updated operating system (MacOS or Windows)
- Browsers: Chrome is highly recommended (if using Safari or Firefox, be prepared to use Chrome as a backup)

Course Organization

The course is organized into nine modules. Each module contains a set of common components, which includes an introduction, a reading assignment with study questions, lecture videos and quizzes, and *Texas Insiders* materials and quizzes. In addition, about every other module ends with a “Putting It All Together” short answer exercise, which is an interactive assignment that asks you to synthesize what you’ve learned in that module. Students must receive a grade on all assignments in a module before the next module will open.

There will be a proctored final exam. In addition to the final exam, grades will be derived from quiz activities and short essays aimed at reinforcing students’ knowledge base, and should be thought of as a roadmap to help prepare for the exam. The following groups of assignments constitute the graded work of the course.

*Computer-Graded Texas Politics’ “Get the Gist?” Study Questions*

The Texas Politics webtext includes “Get the Gist?” study questions. Students are required to respond to all of these review questions. You will receive credit for all correct answers with unlimited attempts. Your final grade for this group will be the sum of all chapter scores, tallied by your instructor.

*Computer-Graded Lecture Quizzes*

A quiz follows each lecture video. The lecture videos, which average 8–10 minutes each, provide context and clarity to the topics in the course, with an emphasis on an in-depth understanding of politics in relationship to the topic being discussed. Each of these computer-graded quizzes contains multiple-choice questions that cover lecture content and are designed to reinforce your understanding of the course material.

*Computer-Graded Texas Insiders Quizzes*

Students will take a short quiz for every three-to-four *Texas Insider* videos. These short videos present political practitioners’ and insiders’ first-hand perspectives on course topics. Each of these computer-graded quizzes contains multiple-choice questions that cover Texas Insiders content designed to reinforce your understanding of the course material.
Instructor-Graded “Putting It All Together” Short Answer Exercises
These are short essay questions that ask you to synthesize the material, make connections between and among concepts, and/or work with data from, for example, public opinion polls, government websites, charts or graphics. These exercises will involve closer reading, more thinking, and more careful writing of answers to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the material.

Final Exam
A final examination is the only exam for GOV 105. The final will consist of three question types: (1) multiple-choice; (2) identifications, which you’ll define and give the significance to a set of terms; and (3) short answer questions.

You must make a passing grade on the final to pass the course.

Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assessments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Political Culture and History of Texas</td>
<td>• Computer-Graded Assignment 1&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 2&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 3&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Texas Constitution</td>
<td>• Computer-Graded Assignment 5&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 6&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 7&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 8&lt;br&gt;• Instructor-Graded Assignment 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Public Opinion</td>
<td>• Computer-Graded Assignment 10&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 11&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 12&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 13&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Voting, Campaigns, and Elections</td>
<td>• Computer-Graded Assignment 15&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 16&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 17&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 18&lt;br&gt;• Instructor-Graded Assignment 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Political Parties</td>
<td>• Computer-Graded Assignment 20&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 21&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 22&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 23&lt;br&gt;• Computer-Graded Assignment 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Assessments</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 6      | Interest Groups              | ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 25  
▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 26  
▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 27  
▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 28  
▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 29 |
| 7      | The Governor and the Executive Branch | ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 30  
▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 31  
▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 32  
▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 33 |
| 8      | The Legislative Branch       | ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 34  
▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 35  
▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 36  
▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 37  
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| 9      | The Justice System           | ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 39  
▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 40  
▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 41  
▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 42  
▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 43  
▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 44  
▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 45 |

**FINAL EXAM**

**Grade Calculation**

Final grades will be calculated using the assignment group weights below:

- Texas Politics “Get the Gist?” study questions: 15%
- Lecture quizzes: 15%
- Texas Insiders quizzes: 15%
- “Putting It All Together” short answer exercises: 30%
- Final Exam: 25%

**You must pass the final exam to pass this course.** You must also earn enough points from graded assignments and the exams to achieve a passing grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100–93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89–87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86–83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76–73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79–77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69–67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66–63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>62–60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59–0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Getting Help
- Technical Support: gatewaytechsupport@austin.utexas.edu
- Webtext Support: support@soomolearning.com
- For content questions or questions about assignment and grades, use the Inbox tool within Canvas to contact the course instructor.
- For other questions (registration, transcripts, etc.), contact University Extension.

University Extension Policies
Full University Extension policies for self-paced courses may be found on the University Extension website.

Scholastic Dishonesty
Students in this course are expected to work independently, without direct supervision, and to conduct themselves responsibly in accordance with that freedom. To obtain the greatest benefit from their course work, and for the sake of everyone enrolled in our courses, students must demonstrate the willingness to exercise self-discipline, personal responsibility, and scholastic integrity.

We expect the course work and exams that you submit for course credit to be yours and yours alone. Plagiarism and other forms of scholastic dishonesty are serious academic violations that will not be tolerated. The penalties for scholastic dishonesty include the possibility of failure in the course. Scholastic dishonesty in examinations will automatically result in a grade of F on the exam and an F in the course.

University Extension Contact Information
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512-471-2900