



GOV 306C: Politics and Government in Contemporary Texas

Texas Common Number: GOVT 2306

Course Format: Online, Self-Paced

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

Course Credits: 3

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 in-depth 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. Instructional material in the course focuses on how politics in Texas shapes the operation of Texas political institutions, with particular attention to the interplay between public opinion, conflict among elites, and the policy environment in the state.

Required Materials

- *Texas Politics*, online webtext. Soomo Publishing. A direct purchase link for this textbook is provided within the course website.

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 13 modules. Each module contains a set of common components, which includes: an introduction, a *Texas Politics* webtext reading assignment, a textbook quiz, lecture videos and quizzes, and Texas Insiders materials and quizzes. In addition, every 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.

The following groups of assignments will constitute the graded work of the course. You must receive a grade on all assignments in a module before the next module will open.

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

The Texas Politics webtext includes “Get the Gist?” study questions. Research suggests that engaging in this kind of practice testing is an effective learning technique and helpful for mastering the information presented.

Students are required to respond to all of these review questions. You will receive credit for all correct answers with unlimited attempts. A numerical score based on the percentage of total questions answered correctly will constitute your Texas Politics reading grade for each chapter. You can earn up to 10 points per chapter. Keep track of your “Get the Gist” chapter grades via Canvas’ Gradebook. Your final grade for this group will be the sum of all chapter scores, tallied by your instructor.

Computer-Graded Texas Politics’ Textbook Quizzes

Students are required to complete and submit a computer-graded quiz for each chapter unit in the Texas Politics webtext. These quizzes are in addition to the “Get the Gist” study questions. Students should approach the Gist questions as practice quizzing for the graded textbook quizzes.

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

This assignment group contains a mix of interactive activities. These assignments require students to complete structured short answer questions that develop applied understanding of the material.

These question sets 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 306C. **You must make a passing grade on the final to pass the course.** While the final exam is cumulative, it will be weighted more on the material you engage with in the second half of the course. 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.

Course Outline

Module	Topic	Assessments
1	The Political Culture and History of Texas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 1▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 2▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 3▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 4▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 5
2	Public Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 6▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 7▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 8▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 9
3	Voting, Campaigns, and Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 10▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 11▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 12▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 13▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 14

Module	Topic	Assessments
4	Political Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 15 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 16 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 17 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 18 ▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 19
5	Interest Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 20 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 21 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 22 ▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 23
6	Texas Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 24 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 25 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 26 ▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 27
7	Executive Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 28 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 29 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 30 ▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 31
8	The Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 32 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 33 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 34 ▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 35
9	The Legislature: Actors and Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 36 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 37 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 38 ▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 39
10	The Legislature: Process and Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 40 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 41 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 42 ▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 43
11	The Judicial Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 44 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 45 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 46 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 47 ▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 48
12	Intergovernmental Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 49 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 50 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 51 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 52 ▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 53

Module	Topic	Assessments
13	The Policy Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 54 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 55 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 56 ▪ Computer-Graded Assignment 57 ▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 58 ▪ Instructor-Graded Assignment 59
FINAL EXAM		

Grade Calculation

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

- Texas Politics “Get the Gist?” study questions: 15%
- Texas Politics textbook quizzes: 10%
- Lecture quizzes: 10%
- Texas Insiders quizzes: 10%
- “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:

A	100-93%	B+	89-87%	C+	79-77%	D+	69-67%	F	59-0%
A-	92-90%	B	86-83%	C	76-73%	D	66-63%		
		B-	82-80%	C-	72-70%	D-	62-60%		

Getting Help

- Video 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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