



GOV 106C: Politics and Government in Contemporary Texas

Course Format: Online, Self-Paced

Course Instructor: Stephanie Garza, M.A. 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. 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 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 modules. Each module contains a set of common components, which includes an introduction, a reading assignment, a textbook quiz, and lecture videos and quizzes. In addition, for most of the course, every two modules containing readings and lectures are followed by a “Putting It All Together” module. These modules contain short answer exercises, which are interactive assignments that ask you to synthesize what you've learned in the preceding modules. Students must receive a grade on all assignments in a module before the next module will open.

There will be one proctored cumulative final exam. In addition to the exam, grades will be derived from assignments, quizzing and practical applications aimed at reinforcing students' knowledge base. Self--assessment exercises are incorporated into each module to provide students an opportunity for reinforcement through ungraded quizzes. Course assignments are designed to be a roadmap to help prepare students for the final 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 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 Texas Politics Webtext Chapter 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.

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

Module	Topic	Assessments
1	The Political Culture and History of Texas	Computer-Graded Assignment 1 Computer-Graded Assignment 2
2	The Texas Constitution	Computer-Graded Assignment 3 Computer-Graded Assignment 4
3	Putting it All Together	Instructor-Graded Assignment 5 Instructor-Graded Assignment 6
4	Public Opinion	Computer-Graded Assignment 7 Computer-Graded Assignment 8
5	Elections, Voting, and Campaigns	Computer-Graded Assignment 9 Computer-Graded Assignment 10
6	Putting it All Together	Instructor-Graded Assignment 11

		Instructor-Graded Assignment 12
7	Political Parties	Computer-Graded Assignment 13 Computer-Graded Assignment 14
8	Interest Groups	Computer-Graded Assignment 15 Computer-Graded Assignment 16
9	Putting it All Together	Instructor-Graded Assignment 17 Instructor-Graded Assignment 18
10	The Governor	Computer-Graded Assignment 19 Computer-Graded Assignment 20
11	Executive Branch	Computer-Graded Assignment 21 Computer-Graded Assignment 22
12	Putting it All Together	Instructor-Graded Assignment 23 Instructor-Graded Assignment 24
13	The Legislature: Actors and Organization	Computer-Graded Assignment 25 Computer-Graded Assignment 26
14	The Legislature: Process and Politics	Computer-Graded Assignment 27 Computer-Graded Assignment 28
15	Putting it All Together	Instructor-Graded Assignment 29 Instructor-Graded Assignment 30
16	The Judicial Branch and the Criminal Justice System	Computer-Graded Assignment 31 Computer-Graded Assignment 32 Computer-Graded Assignment 33
17	Putting it All Together	Instructor-Graded Assignment 34 Instructor-Graded Assignment 35
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	15%
Lecture 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:

A 100-93% B+ 89-87% C+ 79-77% D+ 69-67% F

A- 92-90% B 86-83% C 76-73% D 66-63%
B- 82-80% C- 72-70% D- 62-60%

Getting Help

- Technical Support: uextechsupport@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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