

**South Plains College**  
**GOVT 2306**  
**Section 006**  
**Fall 2018**  
**Texas Government**

**Traditional Course**

**Name:** Professor Britt Bearden

**Biography:** BA Texas Tech University; MA Texas Tech University; Additional Courses: South Plains College and George Mason University. Congressional Intern: Office of Congressman Pete Gallego, Summer 2013; Field Representative: Texas Democratic Party, 2014.

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**Office:** Reese Center, Building 3, Room 316E

**Office Hours:** Monday/Wednesday: 8:15am-8:45am (Texas Tech University) and 1:00pm-2:30pm (Reese) / Tuesday/Thursday: 12:30pm-2:30pm (Reese).

**Common Course**

**Department:** Social Sciences

**Discipline:** Government

**Course Number:** GOVERNMENT 2306

**Course Title:** Texas Government (Texas Constitution and Topics)

**Credit:** 3 Lecture, 0 Lab

Satisfies a core curriculum requirement? Yes, Social Science and ALL Undergraduate Degrees

**Prerequisites:** TSI compliance in Reading

**Available Formats:** Conventional, INET, ITV

**Campus:** Levelland, Reese, ATC, Plainview

**Textbook:** Varies according to instructor, Refer to each instructor's instructions for textbook requirements.

**Course Specific Instructions:** Each instructor will attach his/her course with specific instructions.

**Course Description:** This course is a study of the functions performed in the American system of state governments, with special reference to the development of governance in Texas and its Constitutions. This course satisfies the Legislative requirements for teacher certification.

**Course Purpose:** Government 2306, as taught at South Plains College, is a reading intensive course designed to acquaint the learner with the 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. This course meets the statutory requirements as set forth by the state of Texas.

Approval Number: 45.1002.51 25

**Course Requirements:** To maximize a student's potential to complete this course, he/she should attend all class meetings, complete all homework assignments and examinations in a timely manner, and complete all other projects or papers as assigned in the instructor's specific instructions.

**Course Evaluation:** See the instructor's course information sheet for specific items used in evaluating student performance.

**Attendance Policy:** Whenever absences become excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course. Each instructor will have additional information about attendance on his/her course information sheet.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students who have completed this course will:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas Constitution.
2. Demonstrate and understanding of 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. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas

**Fundamental Component Areas (FCA):**

Students will be expected to perform satisfactorily in four FCA.

1. Critical Thinking Skills – to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information by:
  - a. Generating and communicating ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information,
  - b. Gathering and assessing information relevant to a question,
  - c. Analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information.
2. Communication – to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral or visual communication by:

Developing, interpreting, and expressing ideas through written, oral, or visual communication.
3. Social Responsibility Skills – to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively I regional, national, and global communities by:
  - a. Demonstrating intercultural competence,
  - b. Identifying civic responsibility,
  - c. Engaging in regional, national, and global communities.
4. Personal Responsibility – to include the ability to connect choices, action, and consequences to ethical decision-making by:
  - a. Reading, understanding and affirming agreement and acceptance of principles, guidelines and requirements set forth in the “Statement of Personal Responsibility of Students” (Attached)
  - b. Evaluating choices and actions and relating consequences to personal decision-making
  - c. Accepting personal responsibility for decisions and actions taken or not taken

## **INSTRUCTOR SYLLABUS**

**Course Description :** This course is a study of the functions performed in the American system of state governments, with special reference to the development of governance in Texas and its Constitutions. This course satisfies the Legislative requirements for teacher certification.

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### **Required Textbook:**

- Champagne, Anthony, Edward Harpham, and Jason Casellas. 2017. *Governing Texas: Third Edition*. W.W. Norton & Company.

**Course Grade:** Your grade is determined by your performance on the four parts of this course: Essay (1), Discussion Postings (2), Quizzes (3), and Exams (4):

### Grading Scale

100 – 90% A

89 – 80% B

79 – 70% C

69 – 60% D

59% and below F

## **Coursework:**

### Assignment Overview:

- (1) 10% Essay
- (2) 20% Discussions (3)
- (3) 20% Quizzes (5)
- (4) 50% Exams (3)

(1) Essay: You will have an essay assignment for this course and will be 10% of your grade. The topic choices, instructions, and due date will be posted on Blackboard. Your grade will be determined by a rubric included at the end of the syllabus which also includes the instructions for the assignment. These will be turned in via email ([bbearden@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:bbearden@southplainscollege.edu)).

(2) Discussion Postings: Three times throughout the semester you will write a discussion post which will be your reaction to an article related to Texas government and reply to a classmate's discussion. You must submit your post before replying to classmates, any failure to do so will result in a loss of 30 points. This portion of the course accounts for 20% of your grade.

- These original posts must be at least 400 words in length.

- Additionally, you must also reply (150 words) to one of your fellow classmates' posts to receive full credit.

- A full rubric and instructions can be found at the end of this syllabus and on Blackboard.

(3) Quizzes: Five times throughout the semester you will have a quiz. Quizzes will be short and consist of 15 multiple choice questions regarding current topics from both readings and lectures. These will be time quizzes and students will be given 15 minutes to take these quizzes, so make sure that you are prepared. This portion of the course will account for 20% of your grade.

(4) Exams: Three times throughout the semester students will be given an exam. This includes your final exam. These exams will consist of 50 multiple choice questions and you will have 50 minutes to complete. These exams will account for 50% of your grade.

## **Course Requirements, Expectations, and Policies**

**Late Work/Extra Credit:** You will NOT have the opportunity to earn extra credit points during the course, so do not ask. No late work will be accepted since you have ample time to complete assignments.

**Drop Policy:** If you have not completed an assignment before the first unit closes, you will be dropped. Likewise if you miss more than five assignments before the drop date you will be dropped.

**Disruption of Classroom Environment:** Your professor will not tolerate any disruption of the classroom environment. This includes any problems your facilitator encounters with you AND hateful/disrespectful remarks made in the classroom, on discussion postings, email, or chat. I will drop you with an F for violation of this policy.

**Emailing Your Professor:** I require students to send a professional email when contacting me. If you send an unprofessional email to me, I will not respond. In addition, do not attempt to argue with me over a grade you receive, if you do I will either lower your grade further, or drop you with an F.

**Technology Problems:** If you have an unreliable server or computer, please go to a public computer to do your work. If for some reason the professor of the Blackboard server has made a mistake, you will not be penalized. Be aware that when something only happens to you, it is your problem not mine. Please always start early on assignments and finish early to avoid problems.

### **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism is the taking of credit for something that is not the work of the owner. It is cheating and will not be tolerated. See the General Catalog for more information on plagiarism. Cheating or dishonesty of any type in this course will result in the student being dropped from this course with an "F."

### **Academic English**

South Plains College requires all students to become proficient in “academic English,” a form of English typically used in academic, professional, and business contexts. While slang, regional idioms, and informal kinds of self – expression are appropriate in some contexts, they are out of place in academic writing. Professors expect all students to demonstrate proficiency in using the conventions of academic English in all their written work, whether it is in – class exams or take home essays.

### **Diversity Statement**

In this class, the teacher will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves. By promoting diversity and intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

### **SPC Standard Disability Statement**

Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at Levelland (Student Health & Wellness Office) 806-716-2577, Reese Center (Building 8) & Lubbock Center 806-716-4675, or Plainview Center (Main Office) 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611.

### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

South Plains College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Vice President for Student Affairs, South Plains College -1401 College Avenue, Box 5, Levelland, TX 79336, 806-894-9611

### **Campus Concealed Carry**

Campus Concealed Carry - Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in South Plains College buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and South Plains College policy, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the SPC policy at:

([http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human\\_resources/policy\\_procedure/hhc.php](http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human_resources/policy_procedure/hhc.php))

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all South Plains College campuses. Report violations to the College Police Department at 806-716-2396 or 9-1-1.

**Syllabus Contract/Amendments:** All content within this syllabus is subject to change at any time and is completely up to the discretion of the professor. Students will be notified of such change(s) with appropriate time to adapt. By enrolling in this course you agree to follow all guidelines in this syllabus and be fully responsible for the grade you earn.



## **Course Schedule and Readings**

### **Section 1: Opened August 27th – October 14th**

#### **Texas History and Constitution / Institutions**

- Chapter 2
- Chapter 7
- Chapter 8
- Chapter 9
  
- **Assignments:**
  - Quiz 1: Chapter 2
  - Quiz 2: Chapters 7 and 8
  - Discussion 1: Texas Amendment Procedure
  - Exam 1

### **Section 2: Opened September 17<sup>th</sup> – November 4th**

#### **Federalism / Texas Political Culture / Campaigns and Elections / Political Parties**

- Chapter 3
- Chapter 1
- Chapter 4
- Chapter 5
  
- **Assignments:**
  - Quiz 3: Chapter 3
  - Quiz 4: Chapters 4 and 5
  - Discussion 2: Texas and Federalism
  - Exam 2

**Section 3: Opened October 15th – December 9th**

**Interest Groups and Lobbying / Local Government / Public Finance / Public Policy**

- Chapter 6
- Chapter 10
- Chapter 11
- Chapter 12
  
- **Assignments:**
  - Quiz 5: Chapter 6 and 10
  - Discussion 3: Budget / Public Schools
  - Essay: Due December 7th
  - Final Exam

**Rubric and Instructions:**

**Discussions:**

Rubric Grading	50% - 60%	60% - 70%	70% to 80%	80% to 90%	90% or higher
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No reply</li> <li>- Student does not grasp important concepts / does not seem to have read article /grammar mistakes</li> <li>- Does not meet word count</li> <li>-No citations</li> <li>- Poor flow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No reply</li> <li>- Student does not grasp important concepts / does not seem to have read article / grammar mistakes</li> <li>- Word count met</li> <li>-No citations</li> <li>- poor flow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reply</li> <li>- Student has some grasp of important concepts / does not seem to understand article / grammar mistakes</li> <li>- Word count met</li> <li>-No citations</li> <li>- good flow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reply</li> <li>- Student has a good grasp of important concepts / seems to understand article / grammar mistakes</li> <li>- Word count met</li> <li>- Citations</li> <li>- good flow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reply</li> <li>- Student has a good grasp of important concepts / understands article / few grammar mistakes / critical thinking is shown</li> <li>- Word count met</li> <li>- Citations</li> <li>-great flow</li> </ul>

- These original posts must be at least 400 words in length.
- Additionally, you must also reply (150 words) to one of your fellow classmates' posts to receive full credit.
- I do not care to read your personal political opinions. Remain as objective as possible in answering the prompt.
- You must submit your post before replying to classmates, any failure to do so will result in a loss of 30 points.
- Write discussions in third person, as you would a research paper.
- Make sure to cite reliable sources when writing your discussions.
- Do not email me to argue about your grade, I will not email you back. If you wish to improve and seek additional comments and suggestions, please email me and I will gladly assist you.

## Essay

Rubric Grading	50% - 60%	60% - 70%	70% to 80%	80% to 90%	90% or higher
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student does not grasp important concepts / does not seem to have read book or any research /many grammar mistakes</li> <li>- Does not follow instructions</li> <li>-No citations</li> <li>- Poor flow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student does not grasp important concepts / does not seem to have read book or any research /many grammar mistakes</li> <li>- Follows instructions</li> <li>-No citations</li> <li>- Poor flow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student does not grasp important concepts /many grammar mistakes</li> <li>- Follows instructions</li> <li>- has citations</li> <li>- Good flow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student has grasp important concepts / few grammar mistakes / includes relevant research</li> <li>- Follows instructions</li> <li>- has citations</li> <li>- Good flow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student has great grasp important concepts / few grammar mistakes / displays critical thinking / includes relevant research</li> <li>- Follows instructions</li> <li>- has citations</li> <li>- Good flow</li> </ul>

- Papers must be: double spaced, 12 point font, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins, and be least 2 pages in length (that is not including headers, footers, citations, etc.)
- I do not care to read your personal political opinions. Remain as objective as possible in answering the prompt.
- Write papers in third person, like any research paper.
- Make sure to cite reliable sources when writing your papers.
- If you are unsure about your paper, or have any questions please do not hesitate to email me and I will assist you.