

GOV 306C Politics and Government in Contemporary Texas

Christine Guo

Email: chinguo@utexas.edu

Office Hours: MWF 10am-12pm; TTH 9am-12pm, [by appointments](#)

Course Description

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 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.

Course Format

This course is completely online. It is asynchronized but NOT entirely self-paced. Course materials are organized on Canvas by Modules, which would include lecture videos, assigned readings, quizzes, assignments, and other materials related to recent events in Texas politics. Within each module, students must complete the textbook reading and chapter review quizzes before accessing the remaining assignments. Students are expected to complete 2-3 modules per week in order. Students must complete each module by 11:59 PM CDT on the assigned due date. Each module must be completed in sequential order, and the next module will become available once the student is done with the previous one. Assignments will be locked on the completion deadline as described in the schedule. Given the nature of the course, no late work will be accepted after these deadlines.

Course Materials

Textbook

Texas Politics Course Version online text is available for purchase through Canvas (\$55).

If you have already completed a course that has used the Texas Politics Webtext, you can have your payment transferred to this course by emailing Soomo Learning's Student Support at support@soomolearning.com. Please provide the course information from your previous course.

Lectures

Course lectures are recorded and accessible on Canvas page with each modules.

Texas Insider

Reading materials and video links will be posted on Canvas modules.

Second Reading

"Second Reading" podcasts links will be posted on the Canvas page. Announcements will be made when a Second Reading is scheduled.

Technical Requirements

All students are required to have access to an internet-enabled laptop or desktop computer, running either Windows or macOS operating systems. Tablets, smart- phones, and Microsoft Surface devices are not supported. Your computer should meet the following requirements:

- Modern and up-to-date operating system (macOS or Windows)
- Browser: Chrome (highly recommended), Safari or Firefox (If using Safari or Firefox, be prepared to download Chrome and use it.)
- Internet Download Speed: 5 Mbps Internet Upload Speed: 1 Mbps
- Functional webcam and microphone

- Zoom installed and configured

Confirm that your computer is able to stream video by visiting [LAITS](#).

Information and data security

All exercises, quizzes, writing assignments, and online interactions in Canvas will be saved and stored. All information will be kept for educational and general academic research. Any research or data sharing with other researchers will involve de-identifying the data, including the removal of names, UTEIDs, email addresses, or other information. To further ensure that your information is secure, please do not include identifying information in your online interactions with others. Also, remember that all information is stored on secure UT-Austin computer servers. In online interactions with the course, remember that the instructors will have access to all information.

Communications and Technical Support

Announcement

The instructor will post updates and reminders related to the course on Canvas via the Announcement page. Students should check the announcement page regularly. Please make sure to check the Announcements page daily, or set your Canvas notifications so that new Announcements are delivered directly to your primary email right away (and check your email daily)

Emails

The best way to reach me is via email at chinguo@utexas.edu. Please give me 24 hours during regular work hours Monday to Friday, 9AM-5PM before sending me a follow-up reminder. I will try my best to be responsive but cannot promise timely response outside working hours.

Office Hours

Office hours will be held online by appointments only

Technical Support: If you experience a technical problem, click on the "Online Course Tech Support" item in the left-side navigation bar on Canvas. The Online Course Tech Support chatbot, called "LAITS Bot", will assist with technical problems and can escalate your question to a human if it cannot readily answer your question.

Assignments and Grades

Webtext "Get the Gist" Quizzes	.....15%
Webtext Investigation Assignments	.....15%
Lecture Quizzes	.....20%
Texas Insiders Quizzes	.....20%
" Second Reading" Quizzes	.....10%
Putting it All Together	.....20%

The grading scale adopted in this course is as follows:

A	..... 94-100
A-	..... 90-93.99
B+	..... 87-89.99
B	..... 83-86.99
B-	..... 80-82.99
C+	..... 77-79.99
C	..... 73-76.99
C-	..... 70-72.99
D	..... 60-69.99
F	.....Less than 60

Texas Politics “Get the Gist” Quizzes

The Texas Politics Webtext includes study questions called “Get the Gist” after every page of text and other instructional material (tables, videos, etc.). Students are required to respond to all “Get the Gist” questions for each module on Canvas, and will receive credit for all correct answers. Students are provided two (2) attempts to deliver correct answers within the due date. A numerical score based on the percentage of total questions answered correctly will constitute their Texas Politics reading grades.

Texas Politics Investigations

Investigations are designed to provide students with a deeper dive into important topics. Students will complete an investigation in Canvas for each module.

Lecture Quizzes

The lecture videos 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 video set is followed by a multiple-choice question quiz designed to reinforce your understanding of the content of the lecture.

Comprehensive Investigations

Comprehensive questions that challenge students to use the knowledge they acquired over each module to interpret figures and graphs to arrive at the right answer.

Texas Insiders Quizzes:

These short videos and readings present political practitioners and insiders providing first-hand perspectives on course topics. Each video and reading set is accompanied by a multiple-choice question quiz.

”Second Reading” Quizzes

Each ‘Second Reading’ podcast will be accompanied by a quiz that will contain 2-4 multiple choice questions, based on the content of the week’s podcast, published weekly. The instructor will post an announcement when the podcast and assignment are available in Canvas, with a link to the podcast. Students will have about 5 days to complete the assignment once it has been published. The ‘Second Reading’ module will be located separately, at the top of the modules page.

Putting it All Together

These assignments contain a mix of interactive short answer activities. Putting It All Together assignments require students to complete structured short answer exercises that develop applied understanding of the material. These activities are designed to engage students in public policy and politics.

Module Schedule

Due Date	Topic
June 10	Political Culture
June 17	Elections, Voting, and Campaigns
	Political Parties
June 21	Interest Groups
	The Texas Constitution
June 24	The Executive Branch
	The Governor
June 28	The Legislature
	The Legislative Process
July 5	The Judicial Branch
	The Criminal Justice System
July 8	Local Government
	Federalism
July 11	Public Policy

University Policies

Academic Dishonesty

Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and / or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

Given the nature of the written assessments in this course, you may not engage in unauthorized collaboration or make use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software, and doing so would be considered a violation of academic integrity.

Services for Students with Disabilities: The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259 (Videophone: 512-410-6644) or their website. You do not need to disclose your particular disability to me - only to the appropriate services -, but if you do I will maintain your confidentiality.