

BLINN COLLEGE • BRYAN • SOCIAL SCIENCE • GOVERNMENT - GOVT



TEXAS GOVERNMENT

GOVT-2306
Section SECTION_335
CRN-11356
3 Credits
Fall 2014
08/27/2014 to 12/16/2014
Modified 08/25/2014

MEETING TIMES

Lecture

Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 10:45 AM to 11:35 AM, Academic 114

CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Dustin Tarver

Email: Dustin.Tarver@Blinn.edu

Office Hours:

Monday, Wednesday, 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM, Location TBA
Office Hours and location are subject to change. Meeting times can also be arranged via e-mail.

DESCRIPTION

Government 2306 is a study of the organization, functions, and administration of the several branches and bureaucracy of the Texas state and local government, including a study of the numerous Texas constitutions. The primary factors considered relate to the three branches of government -- judicial, executive, legislative -- current Texas Constitution, events that shaped the state, and current events. Emphasis will be placed on the interaction of these subsystems.

Requisites

Student must be college reading ready according to Texas Success Initiatives Standards (TSI). Please see the Catalog section under Texas Success Initiative.

CORE CURRICULUM STATEMENT

Through the Texas Core Curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge in human cultures and the physical and natural world, develop principles of personal and social

responsibility for living in a diverse world, and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning. For details relating to this core course, please see:

http://www.blinn.edu/academics/core_curriculum.html

OUTCOMES

Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.

Describe state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.

Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.

Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.

Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.

Analyze the state and local election process.

Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

Analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas.

MATERIALS

Champagne & Harpham: Governing Texas. 1st ed, W.W. Norton, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-393-92035-2

Course Packet

Course packet contains readings selected by the instructor to supplement the text book as well as review materials for each exam.

Price: \$10.00

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Exams: There will be two exams in this class, a midterm and a final. The exams will consist of a mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions. Each exam is worth 20% of the students final course grade. The exams are not cumulative and will only cover material covered since the previous exam.

Presentations: There will be one group presentation over a topic approved or assigned by the instructor. Presentations should make use of some form of electronic media such as power point and should be no less than 20 minutes in length. Groups will be assigned by the professor in week 4 of class and presentations will begin in week 13. The group presentation will be 20% of the student's total course grade.

Final Paper: Each student will complete a final paper of no less than 5 pages and no more than 7. The student will have the opportunity to pick his or her own topic but topics must be approved by the instructor no later than the date of the midterm exam. The paper must cover a current dilemma in Texas politics and must make use of scholarly sources (not wikipedia) and include a citations page. Papers should be edited carefully and students should endeavor to submit papers that are both legible and original. Students who have problems coming up with topics or writing their papers are welcome to discuss issues regarding the paper with the instructor during office hours or via e-mail. The final paper is 20% of the student's total course grade.

Participation: This course will be conducted seminar style. ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE. Students should actively ask questions and contribute to class discussion. The instructor will make note of students who do not participate. If a student has a problem or disability that they feel prevents them from participating in class they must notify either the instructor or student disability services. We will discuss controversial and difficult topics in this class, constructive debate is encouraged but insulting or threatening other students is prohibited. Participation is 20% of the student's total course grade.

EVALUATION

Criteria

90% - 100%: A

80% - 89%: B

70% - 79%: C

60% - 69%: D

Below 60%: F

Breakdown

Mid Term Exam: 20% of final course grade

Final Exam: 20% of final course grade

Presentation: 20% of final course grade

Final Paper: 20% of final course grade

Participation 20% of final course grade

BLINN COLLEGE POLICIES

Blinn College policies on civility, class attendance; scholastic integrity; students with disabilities; final grade appeals; and electronic devices as stated in the Blinn College Faculty Handbook, Blinn College Catalog and specific technical program handbooks. All policies, guidelines and procedures in the Faculty Handbook, the Board Policy and Administrative Procedure Manuals are applicable to this course.

Civility Statement

Members of the Blinn College community, which includes faculty, staff and students, are expected to act honestly and responsibly in all aspects of campus life. Blinn College holds all members accountable for their actions and words. Therefore, all members should commit themselves to behave in a manner that recognizes personal respect and demonstrates concern for the personal dignity, rights, and freedoms of every member of the College community, including respect for College property and the physical and intellectual property of others.

Civility Notification Statement. If a student is asked to leave the classroom because of uncivil behavior, the student may not return to that class until the student arranges a conference with the instructor; it is the student's responsibility to arrange for this conference.

This statement reflects step one in a possible four step process. The Incivility Protocol is detailed in the [Blinn College Administrative Procedure Manual](#).

Attendance Policy

The College District believes that class attendance is essential for student success; therefore, students are required to promptly and regularly attend all their classes. The faculty shall require students to regularly attend class and shall keep a record of attendance from the first day of classes and/or the first day the student's name appears on the roster through final examinations. If a student has one week's worth of unexcused absences during the semester, he or she will be sent an e-mail by the College District requiring the student to contact his or her instructor and schedule a conference immediately to discuss his or her attendance issues. Should the student accumulate two weeks' worth of unexcused absences, he or she will be administratively withdrawn from class.

There are four forms of excused absences recognized by the institution:

1. observance of religious holy days—The student should notify his or her instructor(s) not later than the 15th day of the semester concerning the specific date(s) that the student will be absent for any religious holy day(s);
2. representing the College District at an official institutional function-If a student is asked by the College District to be an official representative of the College District at any function approved by the institution, the student shall be excused from any classes missed and must be allowed to complete all work without penalty for that absence(s) in a timely manner as directed by the faculty member;
3. a high school student representing the independent school district at an official institutional function- If a high school student is asked by the independent school district to be an official representative of the school district at any function approved

by the institution, the student shall be excused from any class missed and must be allowed to complete all work without penalty for the absence(s) in a timely manner as directed by the faculty member; and

4. military service- If a student can prove he or she is serving on active duty to which he or she is called with the Armed Forces of the United States, the student shall be excused from attending classes and allowed to complete an assignment or take and examination from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

Other absences may be excused at the discretion of the faculty member. A student enrolled in a developmental course is subject to College District-mandated attendance policies. Failure to attend developmental classes shall result in removal from the course as defined by the College District. [Board Policy FC \(LOCAL\)](#)

It is the student's responsibility to officially drop a class he or she is no longer attending. More information on drop limits and withdrawing can be found in the [Blinn College Catalog](#). The last day to drop with a Q is according to the [Academic Calendar](#).

Scholastic Integrity

Blinn College does not tolerate cheating, plagiarism, or any other act of dishonesty with regard to the course in which you are enrolled. The following text defines the faculty member's responsibility with regard to the scholastic integrity expectation for this and all courses at Blinn College. In a case of scholastic dishonesty, it is critical that written documentation be maintained at each level throughout the process.

It is the responsibility of faculty members to maintain scholastic integrity at the College District by refusing to tolerate any form of scholastic dishonesty. Adequate control of test materials, strict supervision during testing, and other preventive measures should be utilized, as necessary, to prevent cheating or plagiarism. If there is compelling evidence that a student is involved in cheating or plagiarism, the instructor should assume responsibility and address the infraction. Likewise, any student accused of scholastic dishonesty is entitled to due process to resolve the allegation as outlined in [Blinn College Board Policy FLDB \(Local\)](#). The Scholastic Integrity Policy is located in the [Blinn College Catalog](#).

Students with Disabilities

Non-Discrimination Statement

Blinn College does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in the recruitment and admission of students, the recruitment and employment of faculty and staff, or the operation of any of its programs and activities, as specified by applicable federal laws and regulations. The designated coordinator for Blinn College's compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA) is Patricia E. Moran, M.Ed., 902 College Avenue, Brenham, TX 77833, (979) 830-4157. The College's facilities are accessible to students and visitors with disabilities. Designated parking spaces, ramps, handicapped restroom facilities, elevators, and

assistance from College employees are readily available on all campuses. The College's faculty and staff work closely with students with disabilities to meet their individual needs.

Services for Students with Documented Disabilities

Students with documented disabilities must self-identify and provide current, appropriate documentation of the disability to the Office of Disability Services (ODS) prior to receiving services. Students are encouraged to contact this office as early as possible to initiate services. Direct services to students with disabilities are provided in the following areas:

- Assessment of needs and appropriate services
- Provision of classroom and testing accommodations
- Assistance in orientation and registration procedures
- Counseling on disability related issues

Information, education, referrals, and consultation about specific disabilities are available to interested parties on request. For answers to specific questions or to request an information packet, contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) on the specific campus you will be attending.

Bryan Campus: (979) 209-7251; Brenham, Sealy, Schulenburg Campuses: (979) 830-4157

Final Grade Appeal

If a student wishes to appeal a final grade in a course, [Blinn College Board Policy FLDB \(Local\)](#), Course Grade Complaints, outlines the timeline and steps for appeal. This policy is located in the [Blinn College Catalog](#).

Electronic Devices

Cellular telephones and beepers/pagers must be disengaged while the student is in the Blinn College Library or any classroom/lab, unless otherwise instructed. Any noncompliance with this policy shall be addressed in accordance with the [Blinn College Administrative Procedure Manual- Incivility Protocol](#).

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis. Students are allowed 2 absences without losing points. After 2 absences students without a proper excuse will lose 5 points from their participation grade per absence. Students who wish to be excused from class must notify the instructor before missing class or as soon as is practical. Students who miss more than 6 classes will be subject to being dropped from

the course.

Electronic devices

Electronic devices of any kind including lap tops, pagers, cell phones, music players and tablets are not to be used in class except with the instructors prior approval. Violation of this policy will result in points being deducted from the students participation grade.

Recording devices

Recording devices of any kind are prohibited. Students who violate this policy are subject to losing points from their final course grade and further administrative action.

Food and Drink

Blinn College policy prohibits the use of food and drink in class rooms. Students who violate this policy are subject to administrative action.

Collaboration

Students are encouraged to work together to study for exams and prepare for presentations. The discussion of course topics and readings is encouraged. However, work on exams and papers must be the original work of the individual student.

Other Policies

The instructor reserves the right to amend or add course policies at any time with proper notification.

SCHEDULE

Week 1 (August 27th & 29th): Colonization to 1836

Week 2 (September 3rd & 5th): The Republic

Week 3 (September 8th - 12th): Statehood, the Civil War and Reconstruction

Week 4 (September 15th - 19th): Reconstruction, the new constitution

Week 5 (September 22nd- 26th): Texas in the early 20th century and civil rights
Course Packet Reading

Week 6 (September 29th - October 3rd): Texas in the modern world

Reading Assignment Ch. 1

Week 7 (October 6th-10th): Texas and the Federal Government
Reading Assignment Ch. 2

Week 8 (October 13th-17th): The Modern Constitution of the State of Texas
Reading Assignment Ch. 3

Week 9 (October 20th-24th): Public Policy and Local Govt.
Reading Assignment Ch.9
Midterm October 22nd
Course Packet Reading

Week 10 (October 27th-31st): Elections in Texas, Political Parties
Reading Assignment Ch. 4
Course Packet Reading

Week 11 (November 3rd-7th): The Legislature
Reading Assignment Ch. 7

Week 12 (November 10th-14th): The Plural Executive
Reading Assignment Ch. 8

Week 13 (November 17th - 21st): The Judicial Branch, Crime and Corrections in Texas
Reading Assignment Ch. 10
Course packet Reading

Week 14 (November 24th): Crime And Corrections in Texas Continued

Week 15 (December 1st - 5th): Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas
Presentations
Course Packet Reading

Week 16 (December 8th & 10th):
Final Paper due on December 10th

Final Exam: December 12th at 10:15AM

This course is a 48 hour course

Course schedule is subject to change or revision at the instructors discretion. Students will be notified of any change in class or via e-mail.

MCS BACKGROUND INFO

General

ACGM Approval Number: 45.1002.51 25
CIP Area: Social Sciences
Course Type: Academic
Core Course: Yes

Purpose

This course is offered to meet the state requirement for graduation from a public university in Texas. Government 2306 is designed, as part of the overall Blinn curriculum to equip the students with critical thinking and analytical skills to participate as an informed citizen in the democratic process. It also serves to provide the students with the knowledge and understanding necessary to recognize and appreciate the applications of the various aspects of Texas State Government to their everyday lives.

Assessment

Program level student learning outcomes are measured by common assessments college wide. Course level student learning outcomes are measured using varying assessments by campus.

Semester Schedule

Course objectives will be assessed by evaluating the student's knowledge and understanding of course material. This information will be obtained from student performance on a minimum of four major grades, including three major exams, a comprehensive final (worth 10-30% of the course grade), written or other assignments, and quizzes. As per Blinn College policy, participation in class will amount to at least 10% of the student's final grade. An average of at least 60% on all means of assessment is required for successful completion of the course.

Individual instructors will insure that the course materials and evaluations are delivered in such a manner as to fulfill the goals of the course. Since instructors have the freedom to structure their own classrooms, presentations to suit individual teaching materials, styles and creativity, calendars may vary between classes.

Expanded Description

Texas government is a survey of the dominant issues in Texas history and society that have impacted the political spectrum of the government. Students will be introduced to the constitutions of Texas and the role each played in the formulation of the state today. Emphasis will be placed on the unique characteristics of Texas political culture and environment and their influence, impact, and significance in our government and political parties. Major events, such as the Texas Revolution, onset of Jacksonian-Democracy, secession by the state, Congressional Reconstruction, the Constitution of 1876, the impeachment process, the Sharpstown Scandal, constitutional convention of 1974 and their relevant implications, plus current public policy to include fiscal policy will be addressed, discusses and illustrated. The historical domination by the Democratic Party and the emergence of the modern Republican Party, the evolution of the modern two

party state, the plural executive, the divided Supreme Court, will also be addressed.

Hours

Credit	Lecture	Lab	Clinical	Practicum	Experiential
3	3	0	0	0	0