Professor: Dr. Donald M. Gooch
Office: 135 Liberal Arts North, Department of Government
Phone: 468-2380

I am available by email and will check my email and respond in a timely fashion. I can be reached through the D2L email or the SFA email: goochdm@sfasu.edu

*Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn’t mean politics won’t take an interest in you.* - Pericles (430 B.C.)

**Course Description:** This course introduces students to the origin and development of the Texas constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and intergovernmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas. *General Bulletin, 2020-2021*

This three-credit hour face-to-face course requires approximate 150 minutes of classroom time/direct instruction as well as at least six hours of out-of-class reading and studying each week in preparation for exams and completion of writing assignments.

**Purpose:** This course is one of two required political science courses. This course focuses on Texas government. The course covers the Texas constitution and the state’s institutions (the executive, legislative, and judicial branch). It also explores a few of the policy outputs produced by the political system. Although many of you are not majoring in political science, all of you will be affected by the political process. Hopefully by the end of this course you will not only be more informed about the political process, but also more interested and involved in it.

**Textbook:**


**Grading:**
Course grades of 90 – 100 will be scored an A; 80-89 is a B; 70-79 is a C; 60-69 is a D; below 60 is an F.

If you think that an error has been made in calculating your grade, it is your responsibility to provide me with all of your work. To that end, it would be prudent to save anything that is handed back to you until you get your final grade report.
The schedule is designed so that you have two modules every week, due Sunday. Each module you will have an assignment and a quiz due. The modules generally cover one or two chapters and include written and audio lectures, along with a quiz. The quizzes are designed to help you work through the reading and the lecture and check your understanding of basic concepts. As such, you cannot take the quiz until you have completed the content module (and you should have completed the reading as well). I have posted review questions and reading assignment that you can start working through immediately to help you focus for the exams. Please let me know if you have any problems or concerns.

Course Requirements:
There will be four exams given during the semester, which comprise 70% of your course grade. The regular exams will consist of multiple choice, fill in the break, and short answer. Tests will cover material from the lecture and the reading. The exam time limits will be stated on each exam and strictly enforced. Another 15% of your grade will come from your quiz grade. The quizzes are designed to help test your basic understanding of the module's content. As such, you may take each quiz as many times as you want to help study the material. The highest grade will be recorded. Be sure to complete the reading and relevant portion of the study guide prior to taking the quiz for each module. The final 15% of your course grade will come from the weekly assignments. Whereas the quizzes are designed to test basic knowledge, the assignments are geared towards integrating the material in the lecture. There are 13 total daily assignments and you must complete 8 of them. The daily assignments are due at 11:00pm each Sunday. Once the dropbox closes, the assignment can no longer be submitted. (That means if you miss the due date, you will have to complete a different assignment.)
Success in this course:

To succeed in this course you need to keep up with the reading and the lecture. Keep in mind that you need to allow time for class and time to study. In a ‘live’ class you would spend two and ½ hours a week in class and one to three hours a day studying. An online course is no different. You should put aside time to read or listen to the lecture and hand write notes, time to read the textbook that corresponds to that module and fill out the relevant review sheet, and time to study the review sheet and lectures. If you do this with every unit as you go, then studying prior to the exam will be much more effective.

Study skills are developed with practice. It is unlikely that you can merely read an assigned chapter and fully absorb all the concepts contained in that chapter in one sitting. Rather, it is often the case that to truly understand new material, you have to read it more than once, spend time contemplating the material, and even discussing it with your peers. Success is significantly more likely if you keep up with the course requirements throughout the semester, rather than cramming the day before the exam.

Anyone having problems in this course is strongly encouraged to contact the instructor as early as possible. I will be happy to help you in any way possible. I may be able to help you study more effectively or recommend other assistance. Do not wait until the end of the semester to ask for help, when so much of your grade is already completed. Ask for help as soon as you know you need it. Remember, I want you to do well in this class!

Email inquiries should employ professional language including a subject line that indicates the nature of the email, your full name, which course and section you are enrolled in, and appropriate salutations. I will not respond to emails that are answered in the syllabus or requesting extra credit or any other adjustment in your grade. I will also not respond to emails merely repeating questions from the review questions that I give you to fill out. I am happy to answer questions and help you with material you are struggling with, but you should be sure you have been keeping up with the material and the modules.

Class information and updates:

Class information, including changes of dates, review sheets, or other information will be posted on the class D2L site.
This syllabus should be seen as a rough guide for the coming semester. I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus throughout the semester.

**Academic Integrity**
According to SFASU’s Policy Manual (2020), section on Student Academic Dishonesty:
“Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members must promote the components of academic integrity in their instruction, and course syllabi are required to provide information about penalties for cheating and plagiarism, as well as the appeal process.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: using or attempting to use unauthorized materials on any class assignment or exam; falsifying or inventing of any information, including citations, on an assignment; helping or attempting to help other student(s) in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to: submitting an assignment as one's own work when it is at least partly the work of another person; submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source; incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper or presentation without giving the author credit.

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty:
Penalties may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, resubmission of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university.


All cases of academic dishonesty will be handled according to University policies and procedures in the SFASU Policy Manual and other sources of policy. The consequences for academic dishonesty may range from a score of zero (0) on the assignment to an “F” for the course. For details, students should refer to the SFA Policy Manual (2019) or the University’s General Bulletin, 2019 – 2020 section entitled “Academic Integrity” and other sources of University policy.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy**

“At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic unit head, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F, except as allowed through policy [i.e., Active Military Service (6.14)]. If students register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.”

**Students with Disabilities**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/)
General Education Core Curriculum Objectives:
In any given semester, one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for the political science / government Foundational Component Area may be assessed.

- Critical Thinking Skills – creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
- Communication Skills – effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
- Social Responsibility – intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to effectively engage in regional, national, and global communities
- Personal Responsibility – the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making

Program Learning Outcomes:
This course is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for a political science major are addressed in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes:
By the end of the course, you should be able to
- Communicate your understanding and interpretation of institutional arrangements of the Texas political system, and well as key domestic and foreign policy issues
- Understand social responsibility by examining Texas government policy choices as they affect various regional, national, and global communities
- Understand, connect, and evaluate individual choices associated with Texas state public policy options and/or theories and approaches to institutional design of the Texas political system

General Education Core Curriculum
The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six core learning objectives: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives.

By enrolling in GOVT 2306: Texas Government you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Core Curriculum / General Education Objectives of Communication Skills (Visual and Written), Critical Thinking, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. During the semester, you will receive assignments that fulfill both the requirements of this course and the needs of Stephen F. Austin State University's Core Curriculum Assessment Plan with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. If you have any questions, please see your Instructor or the Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment at (936) 468-1130.

The chart below indicates the core objectives addressed by this course, the assignment(s) that will be used to assess the objectives associated with this course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Course Assignment Titles</th>
<th>2020 Date Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information</td>
<td>1) Exam #1 2) Exam #2 3) Exam #3 4) Exam #4</td>
<td>1) Sept 15 2) Oct 12 3) Nov 4 4) Dec 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to effectively engage in regional, national, and global communities</td>
<td>1) M2: Amendment 2) M4: Executive</td>
<td>1) Sept 6 2) Sept. 27</td>
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| Personal Responsibility | To include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making | 1) M7: Interview Party Chair  
2) M9: Infograph  
3) M11: Meme | 1) Oct 25, 2020  
2) Nov 8, 2020  
4) Dec 6, 2020 |