GOVT 2306.018 – TEXAS GOVERNMENT

MWF 10:00 – 10:00 AM, F372
STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
SPRING 2024 (01.18.2024 – 05.10.2024)

Instructor: Mrs. Katie C. McClain
Email: kmcclain@sfasu.edu
Phone: 936.468.2061
Department: Government
Office: LAN 110

* Zoom office links are available in the “Getting Started” module on Brightspace.

Student Hours
F2F & ZOOM*
MON & WED: 12:00-2:30 PM
or by appointment

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, 2023-2024

This three-credit course requires approximately 2.5 hours (150 minutes) of face2face instruction as well as at least six hours of out-of-class reading and studying each week in preparation for completion of assignments.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

❖ Critically evaluate political science theories and approaches to institutional arrangements of the Texas political systems
❖ Communicate your understanding and interpretation of institutional arrangements of the Texas political systems, as well as the relationship between institutions and political behavior
❖ Understand social responsibility by examining state laws and state policy choices as they effect various regional, national, and global communities
❖ Understand, connect, and evaluate individual choices associated state public policy options and / or political science theories and concepts to institutional design of political systems
ABOUT THIS COURSE

COURSE READINGS

There is a required book for this course:


COMMUNICATION

I will communicate with you via News Announcements on Brightspace and emails to your student (@jacks.sfasu.edu) email address. The best way to reach me is through email (kmclain@sfasu.edu). I will do my best to respond within 24 hours, except for on weekends or during university holidays. If you don’t hear back from me within this timeframe, please feel free to nudge. You can also visit with me during student hours.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is not mandatory; however, I highly suggest you attend our class, as you will have an opportunity to ask questions and reinforce course content – and what we cover may not necessarily be discussed in the assigned readings. I will record attendance during each class for documentation purposes. If you do not attend class, it is your responsibility to get with a classmate to find out what was covered.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENT

In this class, you will use web-based software and applications to complete and submit assignments. It is your responsibility to acquire a dependable computer and internet connection with which to complete assignments for the course by the deadlines indicated on the calendar. It is not the responsibility of the instructor to provide additional time for assignments or an alternative means of completing the course due to technical issues.

GRADING & EVALUATION

Students have the opportunity to earn 1000 points in this course. Final grades for this course will be determined using the following scale: A = 90-100% (900-1000 points); B = 80-89.9% (800-899.9 points); C = 70-79.9% (700-799.9 points); D = 60-69.9% (600-699.9 points); F = 59% and below (0-599.9 points). Grades are determined from the following assignments:

❖ Exams: 3 @ 150 points (450 points total) / 45% of grade
❖ Quizzes: 10 @ 45 points (450 points total) / 45% of grade
❖ Homework Assignments: 2 @ 50 points (100 points total) / 10% of grade

It is your responsibility to keep up with your grades and calculate your current average in this course.
EXAMS (450 POINTS TOTAL / 45% OF GRADE)

There are three exams covering material from the corresponding unit (i.e., exams in this course are not cumulative). Exams are open-book, open-note, and administered through Brightspace. Exams will consist of various types of questions including, but not limited to, multiple-choice, matching, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and/or short answer questions. Material for the exams comes from classroom discussions and assigned readings. Class sessions do not cover all material from the assigned readings, but all assigned readings, regardless of whether the material is discussed in class, may be incorporated into the exams. Exams will be available on the dates indicated on the Course Calendar; you may log in and complete the exam at any point during the allotted timeframe. Exams are timed; once you have exceeded the allotted time, the exam will lock, and you will not be able to enter/modify responses. If a technology-related error occurs that prevents you from completing the quiz in the allotted time, email me immediately and provide documentation of the issue.

QUIZZES (450 POINTS TOTAL / 45% OF GRADE)

Quizzes are administered through Brightspace and will review content from assigned readings and material covered in class. Each quiz consists of fifteen questions, which may include multiple-choice, true/false, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and/or written responses questions. Quizzes are timed; once you have exceeded the allotted time, the quiz will lock, and you will not be able to enter/modify responses. If a technology-related error occurs that prevents you from completing the quiz in the allotted time, email me immediately and provide documentation of the issue. Your lowest three quiz grades will “drop” (i.e., not be counted) when calculating your final grade in the course.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS (100 POINTS TOTAL / 10% OF GRADE)

There are two homework assignments in which you will be asked to research, critically evaluate, expand upon, or apply the content we are learning in class. The format of these module activities will vary and may include image, video, or text-based deliverables. Additional information will be provided on Brightspace.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS & MAKE-UP EXAMS

We can only do the best we can do in the circumstances in which we find ourselves – and sometimes, those circumstances make learning on a predetermined timeline difficult. We all need a little leeway sometimes. Furthermore, I would MUCH RATHER you take the time to meaningfully engage with material in this course than rush through it or skip it altogether. As such, late quizzes and homework assignments will be accepted up to one week past the due date.

Make-up exams will be given only in the case of documented illness, emergencies, death in the family, university-related absences, or similar unavoidable circumstances. In the event of a missed exam, the student is responsible for informing the instructor as to the nature of the absence and providing the necessary documentation. Failure to do so will result in a score of zero (0) points on the exam.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

Extra credit opportunities will be available at the instructor’s discretion. Any extra credit opportunities will be announced on Brightspace.
### TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR

*Subject to change at instructor’s discretion. Changes will be announced in class and via Brightspace.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK(S)</th>
<th>TOPIC &amp; READINGS</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS (DUE SUNDAYS)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01.18 – 01.21</td>
<td><strong>Course Syllabus</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>UNIT 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>01.22 – 01.28</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to Texas Government</strong></td>
<td>Quiz #1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LSP Ch. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>01.29 – 02.04</td>
<td><strong>Texas Constitutions</strong></td>
<td>Quiz #2</td>
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<td>LSP Ch. 2</td>
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<td>02.05 – 02.11</td>
<td><strong>Texas Legislature</strong></td>
<td>Quiz #3</td>
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<td>LSP Ch. 3</td>
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<td>02.12 – 02.18</td>
<td><strong>Texas Governors</strong></td>
<td>Quiz #4</td>
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<td>LSP Ch. 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Exam #1: Opens February 19 @ 8 AM, closes February 25 @ 11:59 PM</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>UNIT 2</strong></td>
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<td>02.19 – 02.25</td>
<td><strong>Plural Executive &amp; Bureaucracy</strong></td>
<td>Quiz #5</td>
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<td>LSP Ch. 5</td>
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<td>02.26 – 03.03</td>
<td><strong>Texas Judicial System</strong></td>
<td>Quiz #6</td>
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<td>LSP Ch. 6</td>
<td>Homework Assignment #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>03.04 – 03.10</td>
<td><strong>Civil Rights in Texas</strong></td>
<td>Quiz #7</td>
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<td>LSP Ch. 7</td>
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<td>03.11 – 03.17</td>
<td><strong>SPRING BREAK</strong></td>
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<td>03.18 – 03.24</td>
<td><strong>Civil Liberties in Texas</strong></td>
<td>Quiz #8</td>
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<td>LSP Ch. 7</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Exam #2: Opens March 25 @ 8 AM, closes April 1 @ 11:59 PM</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>UNIT 3</strong></td>
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<td>03.25 – 04.07</td>
<td><strong>Political Parties &amp; Interest Groups</strong></td>
<td>Quiz #9</td>
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<td>LSP Ch. 9 &amp; 10</td>
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<td>04.08 – 04.14</td>
<td><strong>Campaigns, Elections, &amp; Voting, Texas-Style</strong></td>
<td>Quiz #10</td>
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<td>LSP Ch. 8</td>
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<td>04.15 – 04.21</td>
<td><strong>Local Government</strong></td>
<td>Quiz #11</td>
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<td>LSP Ch. 11</td>
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<td>04.22 – 04.28</td>
<td><strong>Fiscal Policy</strong></td>
<td>Quiz #12</td>
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<td>LSP Ch. 12</td>
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<td>04.29 – 05.05</td>
<td><strong>Social Policy</strong></td>
<td>Quiz #13</td>
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<td></td>
<td>LSP Ch. 14</td>
<td>Homework Assignment #2</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Exam #3: Opens May 6 @ 8 AM, closes May 10 @ 11:59 PM</strong></td>
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HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE

Review the assigned readings before coming to class. This will help you understand the material we will cover in class discussions. Furthermore, not everything in the assigned readings will be covered in class, so if you skip over the readings, you will miss out on material that may come up again on a quiz or exam. To fully understand the concepts covered in this course, you will likely need to review the assigned material more than once.

Take notes over the assigned readings and during class discussions. Taking organized notes as you review the topics discussed in this course will help you better understand and recall the material and will make studying for quizzes easier. You may find it helpful to outline your notes by referencing the PowerPoints uploaded on Brightspace before coming to class.

Break up studying into manageable chunks. Cramming—whether it’s compressing an entire week’s worth of content and assignments into one day or concentrating your studying for an exam into the period right before you take it—is not a great idea:

In terms of what’s going on in the brain, the neural connections being formed during the cramming process are temporary. All of the information being stored is in the short-term memory. So while cramming can help you rock that test tomorrow morning, when it comes to long-term remembering, it’s utterly useless. That’s because in school, learning is incremental. Students need to remember—and understand—the material they study, because lessons tend to build upon what was taught previously. (The Pros and Cons of Cramming, Oxford Learning, 2010)

Review feedback on graded assignments. Feedback offers you information regarding what you understood, what you need to review, and areas where you can continue to improve.

Stay informed of current political events. Relating current events to the class material will help you understand the information and concepts covered in this course. Keep in mind that not all news outlets are equal when it comes to reputability.

CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS, SAFE SPACE, & INCLUSION

We will have many opportunities to explore some challenging issues and increase our understandings of different perspectives. Our conversations may not always be easy; sometimes we will need patience or courage or imagination or any number of qualities in combination to engage our texts, our classmates, and our ideas and experiences. Always, we will need respect for others. Thus, another aim of our course necessarily is to increase our facility with the sometimes difficult conversations that arise as we deepen our understandings of multiple perspectives—whatever our backgrounds, experiences, or positions.

My office and our classroom are safe spaces. It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. I intend to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your ideas and suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

ACCESSIBILITY

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 promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

WITHHELD GRADES

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the coursework 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. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf.
**UNIVERSITY RESOURCES**

**ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE RESOURCE CENTER (AARC) TUTORING SERVICES**

The Academic Assistance Resource Center (AARC) is an award-winning program that provides free peer tutoring for many entry-level courses, including online resources, walk-in tables, 1:1 appointments, and SI groups.

**CENTER FOR CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Center for Career and Professional Development exists to empower students and alumni to achieve life-long career success through individualized assistance, diverse career development programs, and collaboration with internal and external partners.

**FINANCIAL LITERACY**

Student financial advisors are available to help you with your finances through one-on-one appointments, presentations, and workshops. Topics covered include budgeting, credit card and debt management, identity theft, and fraud prevention.

**INVolVEMENT CENTER**

The Involvement Center is a one-stop shopping site for involvement on campus. The program is the center for student involvement on campus, distribution and receiving site for applications for numerous opportunities on campus, and a place for involved students to meet, hang out and collaborate with other students.

**RALPH W. STEEN LIBRARY**

The Ralph W. Steen Library provides various tools and services to support your research and learning, including databases and archives, inter-library loan services, study rooms, computer labs, and SUPER helpful librarians.

**TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

**BRIGHTSPACE (D2L) TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

For Brightspace technical support, contact student support in the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) at 936-468-1919 or d2l@sfasu.edu. If you call after regular business hours or on a weekend, please leave a voicemail.

**GENERAL TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

For general computer support (not related to Brightspace), contact the SFA Technical Support Center (TSC) at 936-468-HELP (4357) or at helpdesk@sfasu.edu.

**VETERAN’S RESOURCE CENTER**

The Veterans Resource Center provides a space for veterans, dependents of veterans, and ROTC members to gather, socialize, and form relationships with others that can provide networks of support and access to veterans' resources provided by the university and outside agencies.
WELLNESS & WELL-BEING

SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES

Dean of Students Office
www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents
Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby
936.468.7249
dos@sfasu.edu

Human Services Counseling Clinic
https://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/clinics-labs/counseling-clinic
Human Services, Room 202
936.468.1041

Health and Wellness Hub (“The Hub”)  
www.sfasu.edu/thehub
Corner of E. College and Raguet St.
936.468.4008
thehub@sfasu.edu

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include: Health Services • Counseling Services • Student Outreach and Support • Food Pantry • Wellness Coaching • Alcohol and Other Drug Education

CRISIS RESOURCES

Burke 24-hour Crisis Line 1.800.392.8343
National Suicide Crisis Prevention 988
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line Text HELLO to 741-741

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY DATES

October 13, 2023  Fall I ends
October 23, 2023  Fall II begins
November 15, 2023  Last day to apply for degrees to be completed in May 2024
November 18-26  Thanksgiving Holiday
December 11-15, 2023  Finals week
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 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 communication, critical thinking, personal responsibility, and social responsibility requirements.

The chart below indicates: (a) The core objectives that are required to be taught in this course per the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), (b) How the required core objectives will be addressed.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORE OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>CORE ASSIGNMENT TITLES</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION SKILLS</td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication</td>
<td>Exams #1-3, Homework Assignments #1-2</td>
<td>See calendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS</td>
<td>To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information</td>
<td>Quizzes #1-13, Exams #1-3, Homework Assignments #1-2</td>
<td>See calendar</td>
</tr>
<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>Quizzes #5, 7-13, Exams #2-3</td>
<td>See calendar</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY</td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making</td>
<td>Quizzes #1, 7-11, Exams #1-3</td>
<td>See calendar</td>
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