GOVT 2306.005

Introduction to Texas Government

Professor: Charles Gregory

Email: gregoryc2@sfasu.edu

Office: Liberal Arts North 106

Phone: (936) 468-2176

Office Hours: Mon. & Tues. 7-9am

Text Books


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.

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 decisionmaking

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 Objectives

- To examine the major structural and functional concepts underlying Texas government.
- To be able to identify and discuss important trends in Texas public policies.
- To gain the ability to critically analyze issues facing Texas government.

Grades

Grades for this course will be based on lessons, discussion posts, and exams.

- **10 Lessons (each lesson is worth 10 points).** Each lesson contains a set of readings and one quiz (5 multiple choice questions). Each quiz is worth 10 points (2 points for each question), and you will have 8 minutes to complete. The first 5 lessons (see below) will be available from July 3 to July 19. This means all quizzes associated with these lessons must be completed before 11:30pm on July 19. The second 5 lessons (again, see below) will be available from July 20 to August 3. This means all quizzes associated with these lessons must be completed before 11:30pm on August 3. If you do not complete these short quizzes before they close, you will receive a 0 for each uncompleted quiz.

- **Discussion posts (each post is worth 20 points).** There will be 3 discussion questions posted on D2L. You are required to respond to the question posted on the discussion board and to respond to at least one of your classmate’s responses. The initial response will be worth 16 points, and the response to a classmate will be worth 4 points. You must answer all parts of the discussion question and you must post a separate reply to a classmate in order to earn full credit for the discussion response. Your initial response must be thorough and complete. This means you should expect to write 2-3 well-developed paragraphs that cover the following:
  
  o **Identify what they say (8 points).** Because writing is a response to a person or group, you must clearly state your own ideas as a response to others. This means you must clearly and concisely summarize the views you are responding to, and why you are responding (e.g., are they wrong?, do they overlook an important facet pertaining to the problem?, etc.).

  o **Respond to what they say by offering your own argument (8 points).** There are three primary ways to respond to others’ ideas: agree, disagree, or agree/disagree simultaneously. If you agree, it is important that you go beyond regurgitating the views you agree with. That is, you need to add something new to the conversation. If you disagree, you must offer a persuasive explanation for why you disagree. If you agree/disagree simultaneously, you must clearly identify what you agree with and what you disagree with. Moreover, your post must provide evidence supporting your position.

  o **Response to class mate (4 points).** Your response to your classmates may be shorter, however respond to the concepts and ideas that your classmate has proposed, not to their writing style or just saying that you agree/disagree with them. If you agree/disagree, you may say so, but you must explain why. Moreover, you must use appropriate language. The discussion board may cover sensitive topics so be respectful to your fellow student’s opinions. A disrespectful response will lead to a zero for the discussion board assignment. Thus, I encourage you to think about your response and try to formulate an answer in the most objective way possible. To be clear, the
Discussion board responses must be posted by the due date posted in the course schedule. If you fail to complete a discussion question before it closes, then you earn a zero for that discussion question. The schedule for the questions is as follows:

- Discussion 1 opens July 8 at 12am and closes July 14 at 11:30pm
- Discussion 2 opens July 15 at 12am and closes July 21 at 11:30pm
- Discussion 3 opens July 22 at 12am and closes July 28 at 11:30pm

**Exams (each exam is worth 50 points).** The midterm exam and final exam will cover material from the lectures and readings. The midterm exam will cover the following: Module Introduction to Texas, Module Texas Constitution, Module Texas Legislature, Module Texas Governor, Module Texas Plural Executive and Bureaucracy, and Module Texas Judiciary. *Midterm exam will be available from July 19, 2024 at 12am to July 22, 2024 at 11:30pm.* The final exam will cover the following: Module Political Parties; Module Organized Interests; Module Campaigns and Elections, Texas Style; Module Local Government in Texas; and Module Fiscal Policy. *Final Exam will be available from August 4, 2024 at 12am to August 7, 2024 at 11:30pm.*

**Grade Percent**

A  100 - 90
B  90 - 80
C  80 - 70
D  70 - 60
F  60 - 0

**Course Schedule**

*The course schedule is subject to change. More importantly, chapters should be read to prepare for the lesson for that week. There may be additional readings found within the lesson. Some assignments for the week will connect to the readings so be sure to get the books and complete the readings.*

- **1st Half of Semester: July 8 - July 22**
  - Module Introduction to Texas (there is no quiz accompanying this module)
  - Module Texas Constitution
  - Module Texas Legislature
  - Module Texas Governor
  - Module Texas Plural Executive and Bureaucracy
  - Module Texas Judiciary
  - *Midterm exam will be available from July 19, 2024 at 12am to July 22, 2024 at 11:30pm*

- **2nd Half of Semester: July 22 - August 7**
  - Module Political Parties
  - Module Organized Interests
  - Module Campaigns and Elections, Texas Style
  - Module Local Government in Texas
  - Module Fiscal Policy
  - *Final Exam will be available from August 4, 2024 at 12am to August 7, 2024 at 11:30pm*
Academic Integrity

The following is taken from SFA’s Policy Manual and can be found in section 4.1 – 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.

All cases of academic dishonesty, both cheating and plagiarism, will be handled according to University policies and procedures (A-4.1 & A-6.3). Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit. While these are not exhaustive lists, students who are curious should peruse SFA’s Policy Manual. Specifically, you should focus on section 4.1 – Student Academic Dishonesty.

To be clear, I do not take academic dishonesty lightly, and the consequences for academic dishonesty will be an “F” for the course. No exceptions.

Withheld Grades

The following is taken from SFASU’s Policy Manual (2014), “Semester Grades Policy” (A-54): 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 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. 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/.