

University of Houston-Downtown

Course Prefix, Number, and Title: POLS 2306: Texas Government

Credits/Lecture/Lab Hours: 3/3/0

Foundational Component Area: Government/Political Science

Prerequisites: Completion or enrollment in ENG 1301.

Co-requisites: None

Course Description: The course covers the origin and development of the Texas Constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and inter-governmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas. Course will focus on knowledge acquisition, social responsibility and effective communication. Students will acquire the skills needed to effectively participate in the political world.

TCCNS Number: GOVT 2306

Demonstration of Core Objectives within the Course:

Assigned Core Objective	Learning Outcome Students will be able to:	Instructional strategy or content used to achieve the outcome*	Method by which students' mastery of this outcome will be evaluated*
		*A combination of several instructional strategies or content will be used to achieve these outcomes. At least five written pages and an oral discussion/presentation component will be used for assessment in each class.	
Critical Thinking	Describe the origin, content, and development of the U.S. Constitution and compare to the Texas state constitution.	Class discussion and/or readings about the origin, content, and development of the Texas state constitution and the U.S. Constitution will be used to convey knowledge. Writing assignments and oral discussion/presentation can be used to assess knowledge and description ability.	Quizzes and/or tests will be used to test content knowledge. Optional essay can be used to assess proper analysis of the subject matter. A rubric will be used to assess outcome of written/oral work.
Social Responsibility	Describe: a) the roles and responsibilities of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government; b) the separation of powers between the three branches; and c) the privileges and	Class discussion and/or readings about the three branches of government will be used to convey knowledge. Active civic engagement and /or class discussion can be used to actively acknowledge responsibilities citizens have within civil society.	Quizzes and/or Tests will be used to test content knowledge. Optional of essay can be used to assess proper analysis of the subject matter. A rubric can be used to assess citizen

	responsibilities citizens have within civil society.		responsibility.
Critical Thinking Social Responsibility	Analyze the American political processes (including such things as the role of public opinion, interest groups, political parties, and the electoral process and/or the impact of political policy), both past and present, on subgroups of the US population, and compare to Texas state political processes.	Class discussion and/or readings about Texas political processes and Texas-US government comparison will be used to convey knowledge. Students will then be required to analyze Texas political processes and compare to the U.S.. For instance, an assignment can be made asking the student to analyze Texas voter registration laws then compare Texas law with registration laws in other states.	Quizzes and/or tests will be used to test content knowledge. Option of essay or oral discussion/presentation can be used to assess proper analysis of the subject matter. A rubric will be used to assess outcome of written/oral work.
Personal Responsibility	Evaluate the impact and outcomes of past and present federal policy on US citizens, subgroups of the US population, and/or citizens of other countries.	Class discussion and/or readings about Texas political processes and Texas-US government comparison will be used to convey knowledge. Students will then be required to evaluate impacts and outcomes. For instance, students may be asked to discuss the impact of Section V preclearance provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and evaluate how this provision affects Texas redistricting procedures.	Quizzes and/or tests will be used to evaluate content knowledge. A rubric can be used to assess evaluation ability.
Communication	Use argument and evidence to communicate an analysis of political phenomena and/or policy, orally and in writing.	Class discussion and/or readings will be used to gain content knowledge of policy. Oral presentation/discussion or written essays will be assigned to assess ability to convey argument. For instance a student may be asked to argue for or against a Texas legislature decision to allow students to carry firearms on college campuses.	Quizzes and/or tests will be used to assess content knowledge. A rubric will be used to assess students' ability to make logical and coherent argument.

Additional Course Outcomes:

When students complete the course, they shall be able to:

- Identify key events in the development of the Texas constitution and compare it to the U.S. Constitution.
- Identify key elements of state and local political systems, their roles and responsibilities and their relationship with the federal government.
- Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.
- Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas and national politics.
- Analyze the state and local election process and compare it to the national process.
- Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens
- Analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas and U.S. politics.

Course Outline:

- Introduction, Culture and Ideology in Texas
- Texas Foundings and Constitutions
- Interest Groups
- Parties
- Campaigns and Elections
- The Texas Legislature
- The Plural Executive
- Texas Ethics
- Texas Judiciary
- Texas Justice
- Local Governments
- Public Finances
- Public Policy
- Texas Media
- Comparing Texas
- Futures of Texas Politics

Grading/Course Content which Demonstrates Student Achievement of Core Objectives:

The grading scale is as follows: 100-90% = A; 89-80% = B; 79-70% = C; 69-60% = D; 59-0% = F.

Summary of Course Exams, Quizzes, and Final	
Three examinations	40% of the course grade
Eight quizzes	30% of the course grade
Communications Assignment: Position Paper with Oral Presentation	20% of the course grade
1 Letter to an Elected Official	10% of the course grade