

Course Syllabus for Government 2306 (11/S2)
"Texas, Texas" – Sam Houston's dying words, 1863

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Course objective: Since 1947, the Texas state legislature required that public college and university students complete six semester-hours in American national, state, and local government. The survey course in national government is designed not only to meet that requirement but also to provide you with the basic knowledge and understanding of government activity at the federal level. This course should also give you a better understanding of certain germane disciplines such as history, sociology, philosophy, literature, and economics while preparing you for careers in teaching, public service and the law. You may also benefit from taking a course such as this by not only learning how government affects your life but how you can affect public policy.

Course outcomes: Upon completion of this course, the student should have some basic understanding of

- 1) the Texas State Constitution
- 2) the political process in Texas
- 3) the policy-making institutions
- 4) public policy in Texas
- 5) local government in Texas

Textbook: Maxwell, William Ernest, et al., *Texas Politics Today*, 14th (2009-2010) ed.

Course outline:

Unit One: Politics (chs. 1, 3, 4, & 5)
Unit Two: Power (chs. 2, 6, 8, 9, & 10)
Unit Three: Policy and local government (chs. 7, 11 - 14)

All of the material in the assigned readings is subject to testing.

Assignments, quizzes, and examinations: During the course of this session there will be two assignments, fourteen chapter quizzes, and three unit examinations. The unit exams will open on the following dates: **19 July (Unit I), 30 July (Unit II), and 10 August (Unit III).**

Examination make-up policy: Remember that making up a missed examination is a privilege and **NOT** a right! If you have to miss an exam, contact me for further instructions. I reserve the right to have make-ups administered in a proctored situation, such as the OC Testing Center, Student Success Center, or the LRC. **There are NO make-ups for the chapter quizzes and/or assignments!!**

Grading policy: All quizzes and examinations are equally weighted. The major exams are worth 100 points each and the quizzes/assignments/posts are worth 20 points each. Final semester grades will be based on the following scale: **90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, and below 60 = F.** To arrive at your average, divide the total number of points you've scored by the total number of possible points (e.g. – 350 total points scored divided by 500 possible points = .70 or a 70 which would translate into a C for the semester grade). The maximum number of available points is 720.

Also, keep in mind that once a grade is assigned, it is **final!!!** The need to retain eligibility, please your parents, get into law school, med school, grad school, etc., may be important reasons to change a grade, but they are not valid. A final semester grade is just that – final.

Academic dishonesty: Cheating and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Suspected cheating or plagiarism may result in a reexamination in a controlled environment, a failing grade, or dismissal from the course. As per OC Board Policy the option is with the instructor: *In cases of **academic dishonesty**, the instructor has the authority to impose appropriate scholastic penalties.*

Academic assistance: Help with preparing for exams, writing essays, setting up e-mail, Blackboard, etc., is available at the Student Success Center: 335-6878 or <http://www.odessa.edu/dept/ssc/>

Drop/withdrawal policy: Dropping and/or withdrawing from the course is your responsibility. Drops/withdrawals after this date are granted only in the most warranted instances and are at my discretion. Check with the Registrar (432-335-6404) for the last day to withdraw for this session.

Special needs: Odessa College complies with Section 504 of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act and with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. Issues with special needs will be referred to the Office of Disability Services.

Miscellaneous reminders:

- 1) **All e-mail communication is to be through OC student e-mail.** While I won't ignore an e-mail from a personal (or other) account, all communication originating from me regarding the course will go to your student e-mail account. This is college policy!
- 2) If you run into a problem (taking a quiz, exam, etc.), please notify me right away so that I can correct it asap. Don't hit the back button on your browser while taking the exam as you will (most likely) get kicked off. I will reset the exam for you, but you should know that the test generator will generate a different exam (the same material, but with different questions) each time.
- 3) If resetting exams/quizzes for you becomes chronic (more than twice), I do reserve the right to have you take a paper exam in a proctored situation. Please be careful while taking the exam(s) and make sure that your system requirements meet those required by Blackboard. If you continue to have problems submitting assignments/exams, you might consider downloading the Mozilla/Firefox browser. For some reason, Blackboard seems to "play nicer" with Mozilla than with Internet Explorer ... as does Google Chrome. Just FYI.
- 4) If you see a **clipboard/writing pad/notepad** where your score should be once you've completed your exam; that indicates that your exam (for whatever reason) wasn't submitted properly. Contact me asap and I will reset it for you. If you see an **exclamation point** where your grade should be, that means that you've gone over the assigned time limit (30 minutes for the quizzes and 30 minutes per assigned chapter for the unit exams). **Anything beyond ten percent of the assigned time limits (that would be more than three minutes over for the quizzes and twelve to fifteen minutes for the unit exams) will result in a two point per minute deduction.**
- 5) Since you don't have to attend lecture and all of the quizzes/exams are "open-book" with more than ample time to complete them (if you are prepared), there is **no** compelling reason to offer "extra-credit" in this course.
- 6) Since there is no lecture component to this course, success is going to largely depend on your reading and comprehension skills. Read and prepare thoroughly. Consider outlining each chapter as you read it. Examine the headings, bold-faced words, and chapter summaries carefully. Contact the Student Success Center if you feel that you need assistance in this area.

- 7) Also, remember that the Student Success Center (inside the LRC) provides computers, tutors, and a good environment to test in. If you run into a (technical) problem, there's someone to help right away. Call 432-335-6878 for additional information
- 8) Again, if you need to contact me, use gfindley@odessa.edu (preferred), 335-6591 (office) or, if it is truly urgent and you need to get in touch right away (afternoons, evenings, weekends, etc.), call me at home (432-362-7713). If I don't answer, leave a message and I'll get back to you as soon as I can.