

Phone: 208-2399 (please nothing before 8 AM or after 6 PM)

E-Mail: kstephens@odessa.edu

Location: WMS 119W

Class Time: 8:00 AM – 9:20 AM

Days: Mon. and Wed.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.
6. Analyze the state and local election process.
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens
8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.

TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS:

Tx.Gov by Maxwell/Crain/Santos, ISBN: 978-1133964414

- Digital copies are also available.

News and government websites required to complete assignments and discuss current events

ATTENDANCE:

Because of the importance of class notes and discussion to learning attendance is vital to student success. Good attendance will help in borderline-grade cases. ***Attendance will be taken during every class.***

TARDINESS:

You are expected to be on time for class.

DROP POLICY:

You are responsible for dropping this class if you quit coming. The instructor will not do so. Failure to drop = F. ***As the instructor, I have the right to drop any student for nonattendance or failure to do coursework.***

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

You are encouraged to participate actively in class discussions. Often, informal discussions will center on assigned topics or current events. Class participation will help in borderline-grade cases.

PHONE POLICY:

All phones should be on silent. Texting or taking phone calls are highly discouraged, but I understand that emergencies come up. If you need to take a call or text, please step into the hall. If you are able, please join the class again as discreetly as you can.

BLACKBOARD:

Because this is a hybrid class, much of your coursework will be found online. This is where grades will be posted and assignments will be submitted. You will find helpful resources about testing and writing papers, also a “Coffee Shop” discussion board to post political cartoons and ask general questions.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments are an essential part of this course. There will be four (4) assignments, one for each unit. They will each be worth 5% of your overall grade.

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT:

One research assignment paper, worth 20% of grade, is required. This will be a 3-5 page paper written over one of several topics I will provide to you. The due date: on the "Semester Schedule" page. No late submissions will be accepted! Must be original work! Zero tolerance for Plagiarism! Will be submitted via BlackBoard.

EXAMINATIONS:

There are four (4) tests this semester. They are non-cumulative, meaning that each exam covers only the material for that section. **There is no comprehensive mid-term or final test.** Each test is in multiple-choice, fill in the blank, and true/false format.

MAKE-UP EXAMS AND QUIZZES:

If you are unable to take a quiz or test at the regular scheduled time with your class, you can take it BEFORE your class's test day. Otherwise, there are no makeups unless you give advance notification to the instructor. **A MAKE-UP EXAM GRADE WILL BE LOWERED BY ONE FULL LETTER GRADE FOR AN UNDOCUMENTED ABSENCE.**

- For a list of documented absences, please refer to the attached Make Up policy

CURRENT EVENTS:

Throughout the semester current events -- international, national, state, and local -- will be discussed and related to Government and politics. These stories will show the relationship between material in class and outside events.

GRADING POLICY

The final course grade will be determined on a percentage basis:

<u>% Of total possible points</u>	<u>Total possible points:900</u>
90-100% = A	Exam #1 100 points = 20% of course grade
80-89% = B	Exam #2 100 points = 20% of course grade
70-79% = C	Exam #3 100 points = 20% of course grade
60-69% = D	Exam #4 100 points = 20% of course grade
Below 60% = F	Assignments 1-4 = 5% each
	Research Assignment = 20%

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Any student submitting in a copied paper or letting their paper be copied by another student will get a zero on the assignment.

UNITS

Part I—Texas Historical & Constitutional Background

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. The Texas Constitution | Ch. 3 |
| 2. Texas Cultural, Historical & Political Development | Ch. 1 |
| 3. Texas in the Federal System | Ch. 2 |

TEST #1 (Ch. 1 - 3)

Part II--Influencing and Choosing Decision Makers

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|-------------------------|-------|
| 4. Voting and Elections | Ch. 4 |
| 5. Political Parties | Ch. 5 |
| 6. Interest Groups | Ch. 6 |

TEST #2 (Ch. 4-6)

Part III--The Institutions of Texas Government

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|--------------------------|--------|
| 7. The Texas Governor | Ch. 8 |
| 8. The Texas Legislature | Ch. 7 |
| 9. The Texas Judiciary | Ch. 9 |
| 10. Law and Due Process | Ch. 10 |

TEST #3 (Ch. 7-10)

Part IV—Taxing, Spending, & Local Government

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|------------------------|--------|
| 11. Taxing & Budgeting | Ch. 11 |
| 12. Local Government | Ch. 12 |

TEST #4 (Units 11-12)

READINGS—Maxwell / Crain / Santos

EXAM MAKE-UP POLICY

1. To make-up an exam, you **MUST** contact me prior to or the day of the exam, in person, by phone or email.
2. If you take the exam **BEFORE THE ORIGINAL TEST DAY, THERE IS NO PENALTY**. If however, you take the exam **AFTER THE EXAM IS TAKEN THERE WILL BE A 10 POINTS DEDUCTION**.
3. I must have **WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION OF A VALID REASON FOR YOUR ABSENCE AND INABILITY TO TAKE THE TEST AT THE SCHEDULED TIME WITH YOUR CLASS**. Documentation would include:
 - A note from your employer
 - A note from your coach or school organization sponsor
 - Documentation that you were ill and unable to attend (Dr's note, prescription)
 - Documentation of a funeral or other significant family event
4. **VALID REASONS TO MISS AN EXAM:**
 - An OC sponsored event
 - Job/work responsibilities
 - Serious illness or accident (auto or otherwise)
 - Family emergency/funeral/surgery/serious illness

I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO DECIDE IF YOUR REASON FOR MISSING AN EXAM IS INVALID AND IF I SUSPECT IT IS, YOU WILL NOT HAVE THE CHANCE TO TAKE A MAKE-UP.

ODESSA COLLEGE CODE OF STUDENT CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

What follows is a general description of what many teachers here at Odessa College expect from their good students:

Good Students behave in ways that enhance the learning experience for everyone in the class.

They attend regularly and come to class prepared even after an absence;

They arrive on time and stay for the entire class;

They are engaged during class, often actively participating in lecture and discussion;

They leave cellular phones, beepers, and other electronic equipment turned off during class:

They are attentive during class, not whispering, giggling, or holding side conversations;

They use appropriate language in class: no profanity or foul language;

They wear clothing that allows them to participate fully in class activities, clothing which does not distract others in class;

They stay on task, using class time to work on projects related to that class, rather than reading for or working on projects related to other classes;

They avoid using tobacco during class or eating or drinking in classes where it is inappropriate;

Good students practice personal and academic integrity.

They do not cheat in or out of class on tests and quizzes;

They do not plagiarize on assignments: hand in the work of others as their own;

They do not lie or make excuses;

They complete assignments, projects, papers, and exams in a timely manner.

Good students respect the dignity of all people.

They do not compromise or demean the dignity of others by taunting, teasing, insulting, sexually harassing or discriminating;

They respect the opinions of others in the class;

They do not engage in theft, vandalism, or malicious damage of property;

They encourage the equal rights and treatment of all students, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, ethnic heritage, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and/or political ideology.

Good students are responsible for their own needs.

- They recognize it is their responsibility to communicate any problems or concerns to the appropriate Odessa college personnel, such as instructors, counselors, and coaches. This includes extended absences, health problems, job conflicts, emergencies, incarcerations, family problems, and documented learning disabilities;
- They follow appropriate procedures if they a grievance. After discussing the problem with the instructor, coach, or counselor first, they proceed in a hierarchical order as diagramed below, following the steps outlined in the Student Right to Due Process, available in full text from the office of the Vice-President for Student Life.

Grievance Procedure

**Student→ Instructor/Coach/Counselor→ Department Chairperson→ Division Dean→ Vice President→
President of Odessa College→ Board of Trustees**

GOVERNMENT 2306--SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Fall1 2014

M-W Classes

(Dates are subject to change by professor)

Syllabus Day 8/25

Part I—Texas Historical & Constitutional Background

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. The Texas Constitution | 8/25, 8/27 |
| Labor Day Holiday - No Class - 9/1 | |
| 2. Texas Cultural, Historical & Political Development | 9/3 |
| 3. Texas in the Federal System | 9/8 |

ASSIGNMENT#1 — DUE Sept. 7

TEST #1 (Ch. 1 - 3)— Sept 8-9

Part II--Influencing and Choosing Decision Makers

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|-------------------------|------------|
| 4. Voting and Elections | 9/10 |
| 5. Political Parties | 9/15 |
| 6. Interest Groups | 9/17, 9/22 |

ASSIGNMENT #2 — DUE Sept 21

TEST #2 (Ch. 4-6)--- Sept 22-23

Part III--The Institutions of Texas Government

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|---|------|
| 7. The Texas Governor | 9/24 |
| 8. The Texas Legislature | 9/29 |
| <u>Research Assignment -- Due Oct. 1</u> | |
| 9. The Texas Judiciary 10/1, 10/6 | |
| 10. Law and Due Process | 10/8 |

ASSIGNMENT #3 — DUE Oct 8

TEST #3 (Ch. 7-10)— Oct 9-10

Part IV—Taxing, Spending, & Local Government

- | | |
|------------------------|-------|
| 11. Taxing & Budgeting | 10/13 |
| 12. Local Government | 10/15 |

ASSIGNMENT #4 — DUE Oct 15

TEST #4 (Ch. 11-12)— Oct 16-17