



**Course** GOVT 2306.003  
**Course Title** State and Local Government  
**Professor** Mr. Evan M. Lowe  
**Term** Fall 2019  
**Meetings** MWF 3:00 – 3:50pm • HH 2.402

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### CONTACT INFORMATION

#### Professor

Name Evan M. Lowe  
Office Phone 972.883.4897  
Office Location GR 3.822  
Email Address [Evan.Lowe@utdallas.edu](mailto:Evan.Lowe@utdallas.edu)  
Office Hours MW 10:30a-12:00p & by appointment  
Other Information Best means to reach me is email. *No email response Friday night or Saturday.*

#### Teaching Assistant

Name Zahra Lodhi  
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Office GR 3.318  
Office Hours Tu, Th: 9:30–11:00a

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### GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, & other restrictions There are no prerequisites for this course other than an eagerness to learn and a commitment to active engagement in class.

Course Description This course will provide students with an introduction to Texas state government and politics. The course covers topics that relate to state governmental institutions, political behavior, and public policy.

Learning Outcomes By the end of the course, a student who has mastered the course material will be able to:

- Evaluate the role of interest groups, political parties, and public opinion in shaping Texas politics and policies
- Analyze and think critically about contemporary developments in Texas politics given historical background and theoretical concepts
- Identify, describe, and evaluate electoral and institutional processes
- Recognize and understand historical trends in the development of state institutions and the Texas constitution
- Meaningfully relate course topics to living in Texas

Texts & Materials

**Required:** (1) Miller, Banks and Jennifer Holmes. *Readings in State and Local Government*. Kendall Hunt Publishing Company. ISBN: 9781524936082 (eBook)

- Available at bookstore
- Direct access for purchase: <http://bit.ly/2ONyQdG>

**[Highly] Recommended:** (2) Champagne, Anthony, Edward J. Harpham, and Jason P. Casellas. *Governing Texas* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). New York: W. W. Norton Publishing. ISBN: 978393283679 (any format is fine)

- The 4th edition is now available and may be preferred. The 3rd is fine and perhaps less costly
- Amazon: <https://amzn.to/2MIRtsh>
- eBook may be least expensive [direct from publisher](#)

**Cengage Unlimited?** If you have already purchased a Cengage Publishing textbook for another class, you may want to look into Cengage Unlimited (\$119.99), which gives you access to most of Cengage's textbooks when you purchase one of the. If you go this route, I recommend *Texas Politics Today*. See me with any questions about books to select.

*Purchasing (or renting, if available) these editions is strongly encouraged. Course instruction and readings are based on these editions. Students who intend to use other editions do so at their own risk. In most cases, concepts are the same, but terminology may vary.*

Suggested Texts, Readings, & Materials

Additional readings may be posted on the course's eLearning page. Reading political news in either print or electronic media is encouraged.

**COURSE POLICIES**

Grading (credit) Criteria

**Assignment weighting:**

Exam 1:	25%	[20 September, 2019]
Exam 2:	25%	[25 October, 2019]
Exam 3:	25%	[4 December, 2019]
Final Exam:		[optional: 13 December, 2019]
<u>Reader:</u>	28%	[Varies. See course schedule.]
<b>Total:</b>	<b>103%</b>	

University standard grading scale:

A+ (97%+), A (94-97%), A- (90-94%), B+ (87-90%), B (84-87%), B- (80-83%), C+ (77-79), C (74-76%), C- (70-73%), D+ (67-69%), D (64-66%), D- (60-63%), F (<60%)

Grades will not be changed unless I make a computational error. Similarly, the extra 3% you may earn by successfully completing the reading quizzes means that course grades will *not* be rounded up. A 96.8%, for example, would be considered an A, not an A+.

If you have trouble meeting your expectations grade-wise, I encourage you to seek assistance from the Teaching Assistants or me as soon as possible. We will be happy to work with you to develop a plan for success in the course.

Grade disputes Any and all grade disputes must be addressed *in person* with the instructor within 7 days of receiving the grade. You should email me (a) a clear explanation of the basis for the dispute, (b) what grade is more representative and why, and (c) a reference that supports your objection. From there we will schedule a meeting to discuss. Grade disputes raised after 7 days will not be addressed.

## Grade Components

### Exams

#### Procedure:

- Exams will be given *in class* and will cover only the material in that unit.
- You will need to bring the following with you for each exam:
  - o Scantron form (882-e, which are the narrow green ones with 100 question blanks). These are for sale in the bookstore, vending machines, and may be available at no cost from other University offices.
  - o #2 pencil -- some scantron machines can read pen, but ours cannot. The #2 is less important than it being a pencil, as the hardness is a recommendation for how well the machine can detect the marks
- Exams will be taken individually and without notes. Please be sure to prepare for them. When taking your seat on exam day, please put everything away off of the desk.
- Exams will come in multiple "forms." When turning them in after completion, *be sure to return them to the correct pile in the front of the room*. Exams returned to the incorrect pile may be scored with a different key and will result in inaccurate scoring of your exam.

#### Final Exam (optional)

- The final exam will be cumulative and optional
- Final exam score will replace your lowest exam score (if you score better on the final)

### Make-up Exams

Make up exams will be given *only* for University excused absences with documentation. If a student misses an exam without a University excused absence, that student should plan to take the optional cumulative final exam.

**Reader  
Assignments**

Assignments based on the assigned readings in *Readings in State and Local Government* and will be available in eLearning at least one week prior to the due date. All assignments will be due by 11:59pm on the Sunday of the week that they are due.

Students will be given multiple attempts to complete these assignments prior to the due date. The highest score will be recorded. Assignments will no longer be available for credit once the due date has passed, and may not be made up regardless of the reason, technical difficulties included. It is your responsibility to complete the assignment within the time frame allotted. Do not rely on eLearning to prompt you to complete the assignment(s). You should note the due dates and set reminders if necessary.

Additionally, there is a **syllabus quiz** which will be included as a grade in Reader Assignment component of the course. The syllabus quiz will also be used to verify participation in the course prior to the census deadline (4 Sept.). Failure to complete the syllabus quiz may result in difficulties with financial aid and/or other enrollment issues.

Overall reader grade will be calculated as *points earned/total points*. Staying on top of these assignments is the best way to be successful.

Extra Credit

No extra credit will be offered in this course. Please do not make requests for extra credit, as they will not be granted. You may *earn* “extra” points on your course grade by completing your reader assignments on time and for full credit. Please take advantage of this opportunity.

Late Work

No late work will be accepted.

Class  
Attendance

**Expected.** No grade is assigned, but attendance may be taken periodically and will be considered as a part of the final grading calculation. Attendance will be necessary for success in this course, as some material presented in class may not be presented in the text. Furthermore, attending classes is a responsibility that goes along with enrollment. Each of us has plenty of other responsibilities, but it is our job to be sure to give the appropriate time to each of those. Attendance not only benefits each student individually, but also contributes to a classroom atmosphere that will benefit all.

**Course Conduct**

Classroom  
Citizenship

Laptops or other electronic devices may be used to take notes in class. Under no circumstances, however, will electronic devices be allowed to be a distraction to other students.

Active and civil participation in class is expected.

Email &  
Communication

Students are expected to either check their UTD email or to make arrangements so that their UTD mail is delivered to an inbox that is checked. All course communication will be either through eLearning or UTD email. It is the student's responsibility to be sure they receive course communications.

While in-person contact is preferred, if you must email the instructor, please observe the following email requirements. *Emails which do not meet these requirements will not be answered.*

- Include your name, course number, course section, appropriate salutation, and a direct question. I teach multiple courses and sections (roughly 1,000 students), and need to know who you are, what course you're in, and how to respond.
- Check the syllabus for an answer to your question. If the question is directly addressed by the syllabus, I will not respond. If you see your question is addressed but you need clarification, please indicate that and I will be happy to help.
- Do not use texting language. While I understand language norms change and evolve, if u r gonna email me about sumthin in tha class n u wtn me 2 kno wat u mean cuz like im not gonna guess @ wat u mean n send responses about sumin I think u meant but like isn't actually wat u meant. This is a matter of clarity and professionalism.
- If you do not receive a response in a reasonable amount of time (and you've checked to be sure your email doesn't fall into one of the above categories), please follow up. I intend to respond to all emails within 24-48 hours and it is possible that yours has been accidentally overlooked.

Comet Creed

*This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:*

*"As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."*

In short: Academic integrity will be taken especially seriously and violations will be reported according to University policy. Don't cheat.

UT Dallas  
Syllabus  
Policies and  
Procedures

*The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.*

*Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.*

## Miscellaneous

Religious Observances	I will make accommodations for religious holidays and observances that conflict with course assignments and due dates. It will be the student's responsibility to bring any conflict to my attention so we can discuss the accommodation. Must be notified prior to conflict.
Sexual Discrimination Policy	<p>The course will abide by 'Title IX &amp; UT Dallas' sexual harassment and sexual misconduct policy (UTDBP3102). Please find the policy details here: <a href="https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdbp3102">https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdbp3102</a></p> <p>Incidents in or out of class may be reported here: <a href="http://www.utdallas.edu/oiec/complaints/">http://www.utdallas.edu/oiec/complaints/</a></p>
ADA Compliance	<p>The course follows policies and procedures articulated by UT Dallas with respect to ADA compliance. (<a href="#">Policy UTDBP3100</a>)</p> <p>Qualifying students seeking reasonable accommodation for a disability should see the Office of Student Accessibility, which will determine eligibility and implementation plans for reasonable accommodation. Student seeking accommodation should see the OSA and bring the action plan to the course instructor as early as possible in the course. Should you choose not to use the accommodation, you may. Nevertheless, to use the accommodation approved by OSA, the instructor must have the documentation ahead of time.</p>
Mental Health	<p>Students who feel anxious, overburdened, or otherwise in need of support, should be aware of the resources UT Dallas offers with respect to mental health. The Student Counseling Center provides services and programs to assist students in achieving emotional well-being and to help manage personal demands that may get in the one of your academic success. They provide counselling, learning disability assessments, and a variety of other services. Please see their website for more information: <a href="http://www.utdallas.edu/counseling/">http://www.utdallas.edu/counseling/</a></p>

## ASSIGNMENTS & ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Date(s)	Readings & Assignments	Due [Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are due by 11:59pm on the date indicated]
<b>Week 1</b> Aug 19-25.	Introduction to Texas & Politics	
<b>Week 2</b> Aug 26-Sept. 1	Texas Political Culture - Textbook Chapter 1, Reader: Chapter 2	<b>9/1 – Syllabus Quiz due</b>
Sept. 1	<b>Labor Day (No Class)</b>	
<b>Week 3</b> Sept. 2-8	The Texas Constitution(s) - Textbook: Chapter 2	
<b>Week 4</b> Sept. 9-15	Federalism - Text: Chapter 3, Reader: Chapters 1 & 2	<b>9/15 – Reader Ch. 1 &amp; 2 due</b>
<b>Week 5</b> Sept. 16-22	Local Government - Text: Chapter 10, Reader: Chapter 10 <u>Exam Review (9/18)</u> <b>EXAM 1 (9/20)</b>	<b>9/22 – Reader Ch. 10 due</b>
<b>Week 6</b> Sept. 23-29	Legislature - Text: Chapter 7, Reader: Chapter 7	
<b>Week 7</b> Sept. 30-Oct. 6	Legislature - Text Chapter 7, Reader Chapter 7	<b>10/6 – Reader Ch. 7 due</b>
<b>Week 8</b> Oct. 7-13	Executive - Text Chapter 8, Reader Chapter 8	<b>10/13 – Reader Ch. 8 due</b>
<b>Week 9</b> Oct. 14-20	Judiciary - Text Chapter 9, Reader Chapter 9	
<b>Week 10</b> Oct. 21-27	Judiciary - Text Chapter 9, Reader Chapter 9 <u>Exam Review (10/23)</u> <b>EXAM 2 (10/25)</b>	<b>10/27 – Reader Ch. 9 due</b>
<b>Week 11</b> Oct. 28-Nov. 3	Elections - Text Chapter 5, Reader Chapter 3	<b>11/3 – Reader Ch. 3 due</b>
<b>Week 12</b> Nov. 4-10	Elections /Political Parties - - Text Chapter 5, 4; Reader Chapter 3, 5	<b>11/10 – Reader Ch. 5 due</b>
<b>Week 13</b> Nov. 11-17	Interest Groups & Lobbying - Text Chapter 6, Reader Chapter 6	
<b>Week 14</b> Nov. 18-24	Policy & Finance - Text Chapters 12, 11, Reader Chapter 11	
Nov. 25-Dec. 1	<b>Fall/Thanksgiving Break (No Class)</b>	<b>12/1 – Reader Ch. 11 due</b>
<b>Week 15</b> Dec. 2-5	<u>Exam Review (12/2)</u> <b>EXAM 3 (12/4)</b>	
<b>Finals Week</b> Dec. 7-13	<b>FINAL EXAM</b> 13 December, 2019 @ 2:00-4:45p in HH 2.402	

*The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.*