



Course GOVT 2306.004
Course Title State and Local Government
Professor Mr. Evan M. Lowe
Term Spring 2018
Meetings MWF 2:00 – 2:50am • HH 2.402

CONTACT INFORMATION

Professor

Name Evan M. Lowe
Office Phone 972.883.4897
Office Location GR 3.822
Email Address Evan.Lowe@utdallas.edu
Office Hours MW 10:00-11:30am & by appointment
Other Information Best means to reach me is email. *No email response Friday night or Saturday.*

Teaching Assistants

Name	Carlos Daniel Gutierrez Mannix	Jose Cando
Office Location	GR 3.314	GR 3.314
Email Address	cxg172030@utdallas.edu	jjc170730@utdallas.edu
Office Hours	W 8-11:30a	MW 12-1:30p

Supplemental Instructor (SI)

Name Ali Raza
Email Address Ali.Raza@utdallas.edu
Sessions: M 11-11:50a • MC 1.502 CD
T 3-3:50 • MC 1.608
W 10-10:50 • MC 1.502 AB

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is offered for this course. For more information about days, times, and locations of SI sessions, please refer to www.utdallas.edu/studentssuccess/leaders/si.html. Research has demonstrated that students who actively and repeatedly participate in SI sessions do, on average, nearly a full letter grade better in their courses. Please consider taking advantage of this resource.

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
- 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

Required Texts & Materials

- (1) Champagne, Anthony, Edward J. Harpham, and Jason P. Casellas. *Governing Texas* (3rd Edition). New York: W. W. Norton Publishing. ISBN: 978393283679
 - Available at on and off campus bookstores
 - Amazon: <http://amzn.to/2ITglYr> (\$20.20 rent, \$97.86 new) - *may change*
 - eBook may be least expensive [direct from publisher](#) (\$45.00 eBook)
- (2) Miller, Banks and Jennifer Holmes. *Readings in State and Local Government*. Kendall Hunt Publishing Company. ISBN: 9781524936082 (eBook)
 - Available at on and off campus bookstores
 - Direct access for purchase: <https://he.kendallhunt.com/product/readings-american-state-and-local-government> (\$40 eBook)

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.

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%
Exam 2:	25%
Exam 3:	25%
Reader:	28%
Total:	103%

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 online in eLearning, and cover only the material in that unit.
- Exams will be available from 8a-11p on exam day, and may be taken *once*.
- If you experience a technical error while taking the exam, please begin another attempt and inform the instructor via email.
- Exams are to be taken *individually*. Collaboration will be considered a violation of academic integrity and will be treated severely.
- You will have 90 minutes to complete the exam after beginning it.

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 <i>only</i> for University excused absences with documentation. Should a student miss an exam without a University excused absence, that student should plan to take the optional cumulative final exam.
Reader Assignments	<p>Assignments based on the assigned readings in <i>Readings in State and Local Government</i> will be made available in eLearning one week prior to the due date. Students will be given multiple attempts to complete these assignments prior to the due date for each. 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.</p> <p>Additionally, there is a syllabus quiz which will be included as a grade in Reader Assignment component of the course.</p>
Extra Credit	<u>No extra credit</u> will be offered in this course. Please do not make requests for extra credit, as they will not be granted. You may <i>earn</i> “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 may be necessary for success in this course, as some material presented in class may not be presented in the text.

Course Conduct

Classroom Citizenship	<p>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. Should this occur, you will be asked to put your device away or to leave the class.</p> <p>Drinks are acceptable in class, but please do not bring food.</p>
Email & Communication	<p>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.</p> <p>While in-person contact is preferred, if you must email the instructor, please observe the following email requirements. <u><i>Emails which do not meet these requirements will not be answered.</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Include your name, course number, course section, appropriate salutation, and a direct question.</u> I teach multiple courses and sections, 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. <u>If the question is directly addressed by the syllabus, I will not respond.</u> 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. Please 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 The course will abide by Title IX & UT Dallas' sexual harassment and sexual misconduct policy (UTDBP3102). Please find the policy details here: <https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdbp3102>

Incidents in or out of class may be reported here: <http://www.utdallas.edu/oiec/complaints/>

ADA Compliance The course follows policies and procedures articulated by UT Dallas with respect to ADA compliance. ([Policy UTDBP3100](#))

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.

Mental Health 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: <http://www.utdallas.edu/counseling/>

ASSIGNMENTS & ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Date(s)	Readings & Assignments	Due <small>[Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are due by 11:59pm on the date indicated]</small>
Week 1 8 – 12 January	Introduction to Texas & Politics	
15 January	NO CLASS • UNIVERSITY CLOSED (MLK Day)	
Week 2 15 – 19 January	Texas Political Culture - <i>Textbook</i> : Chapter 1	<i>1/16 – last day late registration</i>
Week 3 22-26 January	The Texas Constitution(s) - <i>Textbook</i> : Chapter 2	<i>1/24 – course drop deadline (without “W”)</i> 1/28 – Syllabus Quiz due
Week 4 29 Jan – 2 Feb.	Federalism - <i>Text</i> : Chapter 3, <i>Reader</i> : Chapter 2	2/4 – Reader Assignment #1 due
Week 5 5 – 9 February	Local Government - <i>Text</i> : Chapter 10, <i>Reader</i> : Chapter 10 Exam Review (2/7) EXAM 1 (2/9)	2/11 – Reader Assignment #2 due
Week 6 12 – 16 February	Legislature - <i>Text</i> : Chapter 7, <i>Reader</i> : Chapter 7	
Week 7 19 – 23 February	Legislature - <i>Text</i> Chapter 7, <i>Reader</i> Chapter 7	2/25 – Reader Assignment #3 due
Week 8 26 Feb – 2 March	Executive - <i>Text</i> Chapter 8, <i>Reader</i> Chapter 8	3/4 – Reader Assignment #4 due
Week 9 5 – 9 March	Judiciary - <i>Text</i> Chapter 9, <i>Reader</i> Chapter 9	
Week 10 12 – 16 March	NO CLASS • UNIVERSITY CLOSED (SPRING BREAK)	
Week 11 19-23 March	Judiciary - <i>Text</i> Chapter 9, <i>Reader</i> Chapter 9 Exam Review (3/21) EXAM 2 (3/23)	3/25 – Reader Assignment #5 due
Week 12 26 – 30 March	Elections - <i>Text</i> Chapter 5, <i>Reader</i> Chapter 3	4/1 – Reader Assignment #6 due
Week 13 2 – 6 April	Political Parties - <i>Text</i> Chapter 4, <i>Reader</i> Chapter 5	4/8 – Reader Assignment #7 due
Week 14 9-13 April	Interest Groups & Lobbying - <i>Text</i> Chapter 6, <i>Reader</i> Chapter 6	4/15 – Reader Assignment # 8 due
Week 15 16 – 20 April	Policy & Finance - <i>Text</i> Chapters 12, 11	
Week 16 23 – 27 April	Policy & Finance - <i>Text</i> chapters 12,11 Exam Review (4/25) EXAM 3 (4/27)	
30 April	- NO CLASS • University Reading Day	
7 May	FINAL EXAM 2:00 – 4:45pm • Online	

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