

GRAYSON COUNTY COLLEGE
Course Syllabus

Please Note: Due to extenuating circumstances, including public health issues, course and testing delivery methods, instructional schedules, housing contracts, campus procedures and/or operating hours may be altered, interrupted and/or ceased for a limited or extended period of time. Such changes will be posted on the College website.

Course Information

Course: GOVT 2306 Texas Government (Online)

Professor Contact Information

NAME: Pawel Goral, Ph.D.

Email: goralp@grayson.edu

You can also email me through Canvas for all course-related correspondence.

Office Hours: Virtual

Office: Liberal Arts, Office 105E

Course Description

GOVT 2306. Texas Government. Origin and development of the Texas Constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and intergovernmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas Constitution.
 2. Describe 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. Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
 8. Analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas.
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Required Textbooks (ISBN # included)

1. The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy by Sherri Mora. Fourth edition. ISBN 978-1-259-91241-2

Required Assignments and Course Calendar

Outline of Topics Covered

Unit 1:

Chapter 1: Introduction to Texas History and Politics

Chapter 2: The American Federal System and the Texas State Constitution

Chapter 3: The Texas Legislature

Chapter 4: The Executive Department and the Office of the Governor of Texas

Unit 2:

Chapter 7: Local Governments in Texas

Chapter 9: Voting and Political Participation in Texas

Chapter 10: Campaigns and Elections in Texas

Chapter 11: Political Parties in Texas

Chapter 12: Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas

Unit 3:

Chapter 5: The Court System in Texas

Chapter 13: Public Policy in Texas

Chapter 6: The Criminal Justice System in Texas

Chapter 14: Financing State Government

Methods of Evaluation/Grading

Many of you have never taken a college government course before. It is quite different from a high school government class. The most obvious difference is that a college government course stresses critical thinking and writing over mere rote memorization of a list of names, dates, and events. We are simply more interested in the "WHY." In other words, we move beyond simple learning the basic details of an event or idea into the reasons behind why that event happened, why the course of Texas government has developed the way it has.

This course is laid out in 3 units and is not self-paced.

The course is composed of the following items:

1. The syllabus test is worth 2 percent of the final grade. It consists of 10 true-false questions based on the syllabus alone. You will have two attempts to complete this quiz - the higher score will count.
2. The pre-test consists of 25 multiple choice questions and is worth 2 percent of the final grade. Please note that you will receive full credit for the assignment regardless of the score. We simply would like to know how much you know about our Texas Government at the beginning of the course. So, complete the test and do not worry about the score – you will receive full credit for the assignment if you complete it. If you do not complete it, you will receive a 0.
3. The post-test. We will ask you to complete the same test again at the end of the semester. This time, your score will matter. Yes, the test is the same so it would be a good idea to record the pre-test as you complete it. I will not email you the pre-test later if you do not copy it yourself when you take it. The post-test is based on my lectures as well as the textbook and is comprehensive (it covers units 1-3). It is worth 8 percent of the final grade.
4. 6 chapter quizzes – 2 per unit. These quizzes are based on my written lectures (see the chapter slides) and are open book. They will consist of 15 multiple-choice, true-false, and fill-in-the blank questions each. These quizzes will be worth 15 percent of the final grade.

5. Exams: There will be three tests, one per unit. The exams will consist of 40 multiple-choice, short-answer, and fill-in-the-blank questions. Please be sure to review my lessons in the units' folders – they discuss many potential exam questions in detail and point out other issues that the exams might cover. The three tests are worth 34% of the student's final grade.
6. Class Activities, including three discussions, three video assignments, and three short writing assignments (one per unit), worth 25% of the student's grade, (3% each).
 - DISCUSSIONS: Students are required to respond to questions posted by the instructor on the discussion boards (see the Guide for Posting in Course Documents for specific details). Students must submit 1 responses per unit and submit 2 comments on other students' responses per unit. Thus, students must submit 3 posts per unit. Students, of course, are welcome to post more than is required. Discussion threads are available in "Discussions."
 - WRITING ASSIGNMENTS. There are 3 writing assignments, one per Unit. Writing assignment consists of 6 short answer questions (1-2 paragraphs each) based upon the readings. The purpose of this portion of the test is to gauge your basic knowledge of the "facts" of the course and your understanding of key events/ideas.
 - VIDEO ASSIGNMENTS: There are 3 video-based assignments; 1 per Unit. Students are required to watch and answer questions based on the required videos. The videos are selected to supplement the textbook since students do not attend lectures when enrolled in online classes. The videos will also help students enhance their core curriculum intellectual competencies discussed in the syllabus.
7. An essay worth 14 percent of the final grade.

Because almost all assignments are made available on Day 1, I will be reluctant to re-open any assignments that you might miss. Therefore, please be consistent and submit your work on time. Every assignment can be submitted for partial credit for up to three days beyond the deadline, no questions asked, but there will be a 25 percent point deduction for each day beyond the deadline (the final exam cannot be taken late for obvious reasons).

Students should remain informed of current events throughout this course, especially current political events. We will be discussing current events in class and it helps if students are aware of these events so that they may participate more fully in the discussions. Any major newspaper as well as any major television news service will help students meet this requirement.

There are NO formal extra credit opportunities in this course. In college there are no substitutes for content mastery (i.e., understanding the subject material).

Students should take care that they have put their names on their papers prior to submitting them (for work submitted online and work submitted in hard copy). Any assignment, quiz, or test submitted without a name will NOT be graded.

The grading for the course is as follows:

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = 0-59%

Course & Instructor Policies

Student Responsibility

You have already made the decision to go to college; now the follow-up decisions on whether to commit to doing the work could very well determine whether you end up working at a good paying job in a field you enjoy or working at minimum wage for the rest of your life. Education involves a partnership that requires both students and instructors to do their parts. By entering into this partnership, you have a responsibility to show up for class, do the assignments and reading, be engaged and pay attention in class, follow directions, and put your best effort into it. You will get out of your experience here exactly what you put into it – nothing more and nothing less.

No electronic devices, including smart watches, may be used during quizzes and exams. In fact, all electronic devices, including smart watches, must be put away during quizzes and exams. Failure to comply with this rule could result in the loss of all credit on the assessment.

There are NO formal extra credit opportunities in this course. In college there are no substitutes for content mastery (i.e., understanding the subject material).

Class Attendance

Attendance will be recorded daily, and it is the responsibility of the student to adjust the roll if they enter class after roll has been taken. Adjustments must be made daily (adjustments to the roll from previous days are not permitted). Students who missed class due to their participation in an official school function must provide the professor with appropriate documentation in order to have the absence excused.

Late Arrivals

Take care of making a habit of being tardy or leaving class early. Although sometimes “life happens,” those who abuse this will be dealt with individually and may face a course grade reduction.

As a note of caution – students who arrive late on exam day will not be granted additional time to complete the exam. The exam will be due at the end of the class period. The only exceptions to this are for students who are late due to an extenuating circumstance, which requires proper documentation (as explained below). Students who arrive to take the exam after the first exam has been turned in will not be permitted to take the test. A make-up will only be granted if the student qualifies (as explained below).

Make-up exams are possible, but only with the instructor’s approval. It is always best to make arrangements for missed exams in advance if possible. In the event of an unexpected emergency, the student has one (1) week from the date of the scheduled exam to receive approval, after which no approval will be granted except under extenuating circumstances. Any approval given for a make-up exam will only be granted with a documented excuse (doctor’s note, towing receipt, etc.). Do not miss an exam because you did not feel like coming to class or wanted extra time to prepare.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic Dishonesty, any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

If a student violates the college's code of ethics, the student is subject to receiving no credit for that assignment and/or subject to failing the course.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle student initiated withdrawal requirements from any class. You must complete the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled (see GCC College Catalog for details).

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room SC 115 in the Student Success Center.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:
Jeffri Hodge
(903) 463-8751 (voice or TTY)
hodgej@grayson.edu

If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services. The Coordinator is available to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Services to notify them of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. Disability Services can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Title IX

GC policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation and protected veterans status.

Furthermore, Title IX prohibits sex discrimination to include sexual misconduct: sexual violence (sexual assault, rape), sexual harassment and retaliation.

For more information on Title IX, please contact:

- Dr. Regina Organ, Title IX Coordinator (903-463-8714)
- Dr. Dava Washburn, Title IX Coordinator (903-463-8634)
- Dr. Kim Williams, Title IX Deputy Coordinator- South Campus (903) 415-2506
- Mr. Mike McBrayer, Title IX Deputy Coordinator (903) 463-8753
- Ms. Marilyn Power, Title IX Deputy Coordinator (903) 463-8625
- Website: <http://www.grayson.edu/campus-life/campus-police/title-ix-policies.html>

- GC Police Department: (903) 463-8777- Main Campus) (903) 415-2501 - South Campus)
- GC Counseling Center: (903) 463-8730
- For Any On-campus Emergencies: 911

*****Grayson College is not responsible for illness/injury that occurs during the normal course of classroom/lab/clinical experiences.***

*****These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.***

***** Grayson College campus-wide student policies may be found at the following URL on the College website: <https://www.grayson.edu/currentstudents/Academic%20Resources/index.html>***

COVID-19 Syllabus Information Grayson College continues to monitor the evolving COVID-19 situation and align our college planning with guidance from the local and state health officials. Our primary goal is to protect the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and the Grayson community, while delivering quality education. We will continue to communicate as more information becomes available.

Safety requirements for students, faculty, staff, and the general public will be posted and kept current, so please stay tuned to your Viking email and the COVID 19 page on the Grayson College website for additional information or other changes that may be announced.

Grayson College COVID-19 Safety Protocol The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Always wash hands with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty. For information about handwashing, see CDC's Handwashing website.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.

Grayson College COVID-19 Instructional Guidelines

In accordance with the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, Grayson College will follow these guidelines:

Groups of 9 or less may be scheduled for small group labs, where hands-on skills are necessary to be practiced or demonstrated

Social distancing will be practiced to reduce the risk of transferring germs

Faculty and students will be screened prior to entering a lab or classroom, which will include:

o Taking each person's temperature

o Asking CDC-standard questions

All persons will wash hands with soap and water upon admittance

Students and faculty will participate in sanitation and cleaning of equipment and workspace at the conclusion of each session

Students are encouraged to:

- Log in to Canvas and communicate with your faculty as needed.
- Study and complete assignments in a timely manner
- Ask questions along the way