Texas Government
Brookhaven College, School of Social Sciences, Spring - 2015
GOVT 2306-23011 [3 Credit Hours] [Classroom – K244]
Class Times:  F  1:00 - 4:15 PM

Instructor Information
Name: Lehman Marks
Office Location: Brookhaven College Social Science Division Office
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Office Phone Number: (972) 860–4130

Required Textbooks/Reading materials:


And

*Dallas Morning News* and access to any other major newspaper (knowledge of current events will be essential to course activities).

Technology Requirements

- Internet access (free access available in campus computer labs)
- USB flash drive for back-up storage of electronic files
- Active E-mail account (checked daily, and always prior to class)
- Basic use of a personal computer (word processing and internet browsing).
- Access to the DCCCD e-campus system: [http://ecampus.dcccd.edu](http://ecampus.dcccd.edu)

Technical Support:

- If you should have any technical difficulties, the fastest way to get technical support with e-campus is to click the "Help" link at the very top of the e-campus screen and then "Submit a Ticket" or call 972-669-6402.
- The E-Campus Technical Support and Help Desk can be found at [http://dallastelecollege.dcccd.edu/](http://dallastelecollege.dcccd.edu/)
Course Grading System

Evaluation Procedure
Your grade is based on earning points in each area set out below. The sum of the points earned is your class grade. Please note that the "points" do not represent a percentage out of 100. They are simply points you have accumulated during the class.

Grading Scale
A = 100 points or above;   B = 93-99 points;   C = 85-92 points;   D = 78-84 points;   F = Less than 78 points

Regular Grade Point Allocation
1. Attendance – 1 point per class for a total of 10 points
2. Exams
   (a) Two take-home essay exams designed to help students work their way through course material.
   (b) Two brief in-class objective exams designed to help students master terminology and concepts
3. Short Essays – Four our-of-class essays. The subject of each essay will be announced by E-mail several days in advance. Each essay must comply with the following requirements:
   (a) One side of one piece of paper
   (b) Handwritten, single spaced
   (c) Two sources of reference for each paper. Citation criteria: MLA Format
   (d) Footnotes showing how you used sources within paper
   (d) Essays must be turned in on time.
4. Class Projects – subject to be announced
5. Course Evaluation Project
6. Extra Credit – special projects developed in class.
7. Final Exam – Administered during the Final Exam Week  Pass or Fail

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Scholastic dishonesty is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. As a college student, you are considered a responsible adult. Your enrollment indicates acceptance of the Dallas County Community College Code of Student Conduct published in the DCCCD Catalog at http://www1.dccd.edu/cat0506/ss/code.cfm

Plagiarism – claiming another’s writing as your own or the lending of your writing to another for that purpose – is a serious violation of the Richland College Student Code of Conduct. Any student caught plagiarizing can receiving a failing grade for the course.
Cheating – If you cheat on a test, you will get a zero on that test, and forfeit your right to do extra credit projects.

Addendum I - General Course Information

Course Content

GOVT 2306 is designed to introduce students to the organization, the principles and the various functions of the Texas State Government. Together we will analyze the history, structure, changes, and continued evolution of politics in the state of Texas. In addition, we will explore a variety of contemporary political issues as they relate to the course material. This course does cover some historical information, but is primarily a study of modern Texas politics (not history).

This is one of the rare collegiate courses where watching television (the news) will greatly benefit you. In addition, I highly encourage you to stay informed about current events issues that are related to the course via print, televised and electronic media. These additional resources will be of great assistance in your efforts to understand the content covered in this course.

The larger effort in this course is to understand how and why Texas has created a vast, dynamic and complex governmental system on the state and local levels. Upon completion of this course, you will have the knowledge and analytical skills necessary to better understand the philosophy, structure and logical processes which govern the world we live in. More importantly, this course will provide you with the resources necessary to participate in politics and make informed decisions in the future.

Course Information

GOVT 2306 – Texas Government. This is a Texas Common Course Number.

Prerequisite: The following must be met: (1) DREA 0093 or English as a Second Language (ESOL) 0044 or have met the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Reading Standard AND (2) DWRI in 0093, or English as a Second Language (ESOL) 0054 or have met the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Writing Standard.

Course Description: Origin and development of the Texas constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and inter-governmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas. Coordinating Board Academic Approval Number 4510025125.

Student Learning Outcomes for GOVT 2306

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 & balances 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.

**Addendum II - Course Policies and Performance Guidelines**

**General Guidelines for all Coursework**

All course assignments must comply with the following requirements to be considered a completed work (incomplete items will receive a zero). Please read these requirements carefully:

- **Students are expected to utilize high quality sources.** For current events related information, use a newspaper, news magazine or news website. The course textbook, Wikipedia, internet search engines, blogs and similar items are examples of unacceptable research sources on the collegiate level.

- **Failure to identify sources is plagiarism.** Provide the full MLA citation for all outside sources. All references are to be documented within the body of the assignment.

- **Only your own words will count toward the writing requirements.** The writing assignments are intended to assess your comprehension of the material.

- **All assignments are expected to meet college level writing requirements;** all answers are to be in essay format and the expectation is for each student to engage the topics using critical analysis. Please do not attempt to provide simplified or elementary answers if you wish to earn credit for your work. Take the time to fully explain your ideas and demonstrate the depth of your understanding to earn the grade you want.
There is no credit for partial work. The minimum writing expectation for each assignment or activity must be satisfied to earn a grade. Incomplete assignments will receive a zero.

Course Etiquette

- **E-mail** – Please allow 12 hours for a reply via e-mail. There may be periods where it may take longer to get a reply (such as weekends and holidays). Again, be patient and allow me time to get back to you.
- **E-mails** should always begin with a “Greeting” and be properly signed so that I can quickly identify the e-mail author.
- **Personal Requests** – I am happy to assist you with any questions you may have about the course, about the news, or even college life in general. However, personal requests for exemptions to course policies will not be granted unless there is a legitimate reason.

Late Work Policy

Ample time has been allotted to complete each Unit activity. All assignments are expected on or before the deadline indicated in the syllabus, or by e-mail instructions.

Attendance Policy

Attendance and participation are essential to your success in a Government Class. At the start of each class, an attendance sheet will be circulated. It is each student’s responsibility to ensure that they are present and accounted for when attending class. **Again, be sure that you sign the attendance sheet each and every class.** On several occasions during the semester an assignment, quiz or test may substitute for the roll sheet. Only in the case of a disability may one student sign the roll for a peer. Dishonesty will be considered an act of collusion and will be dealt with as a disciplinary issue (as stated in the student code of conduct).

Anytime you miss class, it is your responsibility to stay current with all assignments. I highly suggest that each student seek out a study partner and form a support group that you can rely on throughout the semester. If you plan to miss class, use your absences wisely. **There will not be an opportunity to make up in-class activities, or quizzes once the item has been delivered to the class.** If you are affected by a medical or legal situation and can provide proof (documentation) to substantiate your claim, your absence(s) may be excused.

**The following course attendance policy is in effect immediately:** Students will lose one grade point for each absence up to a total of ten points per semester.
Course E-mail / Announcements

There are frequent updates posted in the course announcements area and sent out via e-mail. This is the primary avenue of communication for this course. Each student is expected to read the information and keep current with the course. Many frequently asked questions are addressed via announcements and some may contain vital course information. These are official course communications, so bear in mind that you will be held accountable for the information provided via electronic communications.

Students are required to check their e-mail on a daily basis, and before attending class.

Course Honor Code

Scholastic dishonesty is a violation of the DCCCD Student Code of Student Conduct. This includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. Students are expected to complete all course work by their own efforts and in their own words.

When you cite or paraphrase another author, you are required to properly acknowledge all sources with a parenthetical citation in the body text and provide a bibliographic listing on a works cited page. If you have any questions about citations, contact me immediately. Any attempt to submit work that is not a product of your own efforts will result in an automatic “F” for the assignment and the course. In addition, you may face disciplinary action by the college administration leading up to expulsion from the college.

The college uses a premier plagiarism detection program known as “SafeAssign.” Since all papers will be electronically submitted for review, I implore you to avoid procrastinating and begin your work as soon as possible. Time seems to be the largest factor in a student’s decision to plagiarize.

Statement of Academic Freedom

The collegiate environment is one that promotes tolerance, understanding, communication and equality. Use the guidelines below in your interactions with the instructor and your peers:

Students are provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their comprehension of political issues and express their understanding of key points in this course. The discussion format in particular is an opportunity for students to enjoy their constitutional right to free speech and expression. This is not intended to serve as a platform for one to express their political ideology or personal feelings about a given issue. It is a forum for an intellectual dialogue and an exchange of ideas. Again, the expectation is that you
will conduct yourself to the standards befitting a college student engaged in an intellectual dialogue (both inside and outside the classroom).

Academic freedom will be protected and respected by all students and the instructor. However, there are some limitations on free speech. Hateful, sexist, racist, hurtful, or otherwise obscene comments that are intended as a personal attack will not be tolerated. Additionally, any dialogue that does not specifically pertain to the topic at hand will not receive an audience. At the instructor's discretion, a student that violates these guidelines may be removed from the course and possibly from the college.

Addendum III - Course Activities, Assignments, and Exams

Course Readings, Lectures and Presentations

Each student is expected to read the assigned material as detailed in the course. It is vital that you manage your time and maintain a high degree of self-discipline to ensure your success in any college course.

*Formal Assessment Guidelines – Texas Policy Paper

Introduction

This activity is an opportunity for you to closely examine a contemporary policy issue facing the state of Texas. Over its history, the Texas government has had many conflicts with the national government as part of the dynamics under a federal system of governance. These disputes have heated up in recent years, and include immigration policy, education policy, environmental policy, social welfare policy and many others issues. Select one of personal interest and objectively outline the nature of the dispute. This will allow you to work towards finding a solution.

Take into consideration constitutional disputes as well as political, economic and cultural differences. Look at the history underlying the dispute, how it is playing out within the governing institutions, and how you think the issue may be resolved, assuming that is possible.

Completing this activity is a mandatory component of this course. It serves as the standard course assessment for all GOVT 2306 students. Failure to submit this project in its entirety will result in a failing grade for the course. There are three steps to completing this project.

Step 1: Identify the issue and how both the US government and Texas government have been currently addressing it (historical perspective).
Step 2: Gather a minimum of three scholarly research articles and additional news/current events relevant to the topic.

Step 3: Prepare a formal policy report that is a minimum of 1000 words (excluding cited text), which includes a discussion of the following:

- A statement of the current policy
- Reasons for initiating changes
- Policy options to be considered
- Pros and cons of each option
- Recommended course of action
- Reasoning for selecting that course of action

The grading standards used to assess the quality of your work for this policy paper will be detailed in a grading rubric, which will be provided during the semester.

It is strongly suggested that you use the library database at the start of the semester to begin researching a topic. This assignment requires carefully planning throughout the semester. Refer to the course calendar for the specific due date. The final draft is to be submitted via the submission guidelines identified by the instructor.

NOTE: Procrastination on this project has resulted in many students, who were otherwise passing, having to fail and repeat the course.

Extra Credit Opportunities

At various points in the course, extra credit may be available in several forms. It may be part of an assignment, a separate assignment or simply a reply to an e-mail. If it is part of an assignment, be sure to include the extra credit on a separate page that appears after the works cited page.

Addendum IV - DCCCD Institutional Policies

Instructor’s Rights:

The instructor reserves the right to modify any course requirements and calendar due dates as necessary to manage and conduct this course. Students are responsible for contacting the instructor and seeking clarification of any requirement that is not understood.

ADA Information:

If you are a student with a disability and/or special needs who requires accommodations, please contact the College’s Special Services Office in Room S-124,
(972) 860-4129. Go to http://www.brookhavencollege.edu/onlinesvcs/students/ to learn about all the student services that are available.

**Religious Holidays:**

Students who will miss classes to observe a religious holiday must notify the instructor in advance. Students are required to complete any missed assignments or examinations within a reasonable time.

**Academic Honesty:**

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**Withdrawal Policy – Last day for a ‘W’ is April 20, 2015.**

If you are unable to complete this course, it is your responsibility to withdraw formally. Do not simply stop attending the course. The withdrawal request must be received in the Registrar’s Office by (semester’s drop date). Failure to do so will result in your receiving a performance grade, usually an “F.” If you drop a class or withdraw from the college before the official drop/withdrawal deadline, you will receive a “W” (Withdraw) in each class dropped. Again, the last opportunity to withdraw from the course with a grade of “W” is **April 20, 2015**.

**Financial Aid Students:**

If you are receiving Financial Aid grants or loans, you must begin attendance in all classes prior to the certification date of **September 24, 2013**. Do not drop or stop attending any class without first consulting the Financial Aid Office. Changes in your enrollment level and failing grades may require that you repay financial aid funds.
Six-Drop Rule:

For students who enrolled in college level courses for the first time in the Fall 2007 semester, Texas Education Code 51.907 limits the number of courses a student may drop. You may drop no more than 6 courses during your entire undergraduate career unless the drop qualifies as an exception. Your campus counseling/advising center will give you more information on the allowable exceptions.

Remember that once you have accumulated 6 non-exempt drops, you cannot drop any other courses with a “W”. Therefore, please exercise caution when dropping courses in any Texas public institution of higher learning, including all seven of the Dallas County Community Colleges.

Repeating the Course:

Effective for Fall Semester 2005, the Dallas County Community Colleges will charge additional tuition to students registering the third or subsequent time for a course that falls in the majority of credit and Continuing Education/Workforce Training courses. Developmental Studies and some other courses will not be charged a higher tuition rate. Third attempts include courses taken at any of the Dallas County Community Colleges since the Fall 2002 Semester.

Final Grades and E-connect:

Paper grade reports are no longer available from the Dallas Community Colleges. Students may retrieve their grades on-line through eConnect or by visiting the Advising Center. Specific instructions for obtaining your grades can be found at http://www.brookhavencollege.edu/grades.html
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 23</td>
<td>Class Begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 23</td>
<td>First In-Class Project</td>
<td>First Essay Assigned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 30</td>
<td>Finish first class project</td>
<td>First Essay Due</td>
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<td>Jan 30</td>
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<td>First Objective Test Assigned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 6</td>
<td>Second In-Class Project</td>
<td>First Objective Test</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 6</td>
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<td>Second Essay Assigned</td>
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<td>Feb 13</td>
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<td>Second Essay Due</td>
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<td>Feb 13</td>
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<td>First Take-Home Test Assigned</td>
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<td>Feb 20</td>
<td><strong>District Conference Day – No class</strong></td>
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<td>Feb 27</td>
<td>Texas Policy Paper</td>
<td>Texas Policy Paper Assigned</td>
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<td>Feb 27</td>
<td>Policy Paper Proposal</td>
<td>First Take-Home Test Due</td>
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<td>Mar 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Submit Texas Policy Paper Proposal</td>
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<td>Mar 13</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break – No class</strong></td>
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<td>Mar 20</td>
<td>Discuss Film Bonus Project</td>
<td>Third Essay Assigned</td>
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<td>Mar 27</td>
<td><strong>TEXAS POLICY PAPER DUE</strong></td>
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<td>Apr 3</td>
<td>Main Course Project</td>
<td>Third Essay Due</td>
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<td>Apr 10</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Second Objective Test Assigned</td>
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<td>Apr 17</td>
<td>Project</td>
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<td>Apr 24</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Fourth Essay Assigned</td>
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<td>May 1</td>
<td>Project Debate</td>
<td>Fourth Essay Due</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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