



Syllabus: Texas Government

Course Number: GOVT 2306.1H2

Semester & Year: Spring 2024

Instructor Information

Name: Stephen Gass

Office: SSB Office D

Class: SSB Room 14

Telephone: 903-823-3235

E-mail: stephen.gass@texarkanacollege.edu

Office Hours:

MW 7:30 - 12:30pm

TR 7:30 - 9:30am, 12:30pm – 2:00pm

Other hours by appointment

Textbook Information

Inside Texas Politics 3e, ISBN 978-0-19-754541-6

Student Learning Outcomes for the Course

GOVT 2306, Texas Government is a study of the 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.

Student Requirements for Completion of the Course and Due Dates

Instruction for this course will be accomplished through lecture, audio/video presentations, discussions, and student participation for the face-to-face portion of the course. Students will complete all assignments including exams through the web-based course homepage. Students should read the text for the course prior to arrival in class, be attentive and take notes during lecture. Student participation is essential to the learning process, and students are expected to answer questions and engage in professional debate both in the classroom and web-based posted forum questions. See the listed class schedule for assignment and test due dates. Students will complete all exams through web-based content. All exams will be timed. If you feel you have inadequate time to complete the exam please contact me and arrangements will be made to complete the exam at the campus testing center. In the event of losing internet connectivity while completing an exam, you must complete and submit a LMS Interrupted Test form located in the blue column on the left side of your course homepage. This will notify the Texarkana College Information Technology department of the issue. In addition, you must immediately notify me of the incident. Repeated requests to reopen exams due to losing connectivity will result in a requirement to take exams in the campus testing center. You will be allowed one makeup for a missed exam to be completed within two (2)

weeks of the original due date. Tests not made up within seven days will result in a ten-point reduction in grade for the exam.

Students are required to submit an essay that will be submitted as an assignment through the course homepage; including an introduction, body and closing paragraphs in response to the Films on Demand video “[It’s a Free Country: Constitution USA with Peter Sagal](#)”. The essay must be a minimum of one full page in length. The video can be accessed from the link on the course home page. However, if you are unable to open the link it can be accessed from Films on Demand at <http://digital.films.com> using the USER ID: texarkana and PASSWORD: texas, and searching for the video title. The essay should be approximately 500 words long and must be posted by the due date

Students are required to complete a **typed** Informative Essay about a substantial contemporary criminal justice issue that will be submitted as an assignment through the course homepage. The essay must be in MLA or APA format and be a minimum of four complete to six double spaced pages long (excluding title page and works cited page) and consist of at least five or six paragraphs including an introduction, body and closing paragraphs, with a works cited page attached. The essay must contain information from a minimum of three cited sources including but not limited to peer-reviewed articles, books and websites. At least one source must be a peer-reviewed article. Do not use Wikipedia as a source. The essay will be graded on content and a demonstration of investigative effort in developing and expressing the factual information on the issue. Do not merely write a paper about your opinion on a subject or individual. The topic, brief abstract and minimum of three (3) sources for the assignment must be approved by Friday, February 2, 2024, for a grade. The assignment must be submitted through the course homepage for grading no later than Friday, March 1, 2024. There will be no exceptions made for late submissions. You are encouraged to obtain assistance for this assignment from Texarkana College Library staff and me. Additional guidance for the assignment can be obtained from the **Research Essay with Rubric** instructions on the course homepage.

Students are required to submit five (5) brief responses to a Contemporary Criminal Justice issue during this semester through the course homepage. The response must be a minimum of a full paragraph in length and state both the issue being reported and the response of the student to the subject. The source must be less than four weeks old. Sources to consider using are newsprint, television and/or radio news programs and internet news sites. Information from an organization’s web site will not be accepted. A copy of the article must be submitted through attachment with the response, or the article or news program must be cited. As a **bonus** students may submit up to six (6) more responses, however under no circumstances will more than two (2) responses be accepted per week.

You have the following possibilities for earning points:

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| (1) 6 Chapter tests (100 points each) - | 600 total points |
| (2) Video “It’s a Free Country: Constitution USA” - | 100 total points |
| (3) Informative Essay (100), Approval (100) | 200 total points |
| (4) 5 Contemporary Issues response (20 points each) - | 100 total points |
| (5) Final Exam (100 points) - | <u>100 total points</u> |
| | 1,100 total points |

Bonus

- Up to **six** Contemporary Issues response (10 points each)
- Study notes folder (three points per exam)
- Movie with response questions (on availability)
- Prison tour (on availability)

Grading Scale

Grade	
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	59-below

Test 1: Chapter 1: The Struggle for Texas: Demographics, Culture, and Political Power, Chapter 2: The Texas Constitution, Chapter 3: Federalism,

Test 2: Chapter 4: Voting and elections, Chapter 5: Political Parties: Texas in Blue and Red, Chapter 6: Interest Groups,

Test 3: Chapter 7: The Legislature, Chapter 8: Governors of Texas, Chapter 9: The Plural Executive and The Bureaucracy,

Test 4: Chapter 10: The Texas Judiciary, Chapter 11: Criminal Justice,

Test 5: Chapter 12: Local Government, Chapter 13: Budget, Finances, and Policy

Test 6: Chapter 14: Public Policy in Texas

Class Schedule

Holiday: Spring Break March 11-15, 2024

1	1/15 – 19/2024	Read the Syllabus and take introductory quiz Review Lecture Notes and Post Contemporary Responses, Begin Chapters 1-3
2	1/22 – 26/2024	Review Lecture Notes and Post Contemporary Responses, Complete Chapters 1-3, Take Chapters 1-3 <u>test</u> <u>It's a Free Country: Constitution USA Video</u>
3	1/29 – 2/02/2024	Review Lecture Notes and Post Contemporary Responses, Complete Chapters 4-6, Take Chapters 4-6 <u>test</u> Research Essay Topic Approval due by 02/02/2024 by 11:55pm
4	2/05 – 09/2024	Review Lecture Notes and Post Contemporary Responses, Complete Chapters 7-9, Take Chapters 7-9 <u>test</u>
5	2/12 – 16/2024	Review Lecture Notes and Post Contemporary Responses, Complete Chapters 10-11, Take Chapters 10-11 <u>test</u>
6	2/19 – 23/2024	Review Lecture Notes and Post Contemporary Responses, Complete Chapters 12-13, Take Chapters 12-13 <u>test</u>
7	2/26 – 3/01/2024	Review Lecture Notes and Post Contemporary Responses, Complete Chapter 14, Take Chapter 14 <u>test</u> Research Essay due 3/01/2024 by 11:55pm
8	3/04 – 08/2024	Review Lecture Notes and Post Contemporary Responses, Comprehensive Exam due March 06, 2024 @ 11:55pm
9	3/11 – 15/2024	Spring Break (rest and prepare for second eight weeks)

Attendance Policy

Success in this course depends on your regular participation in class and through the course homepage assignments. Attendance will be determined through weekly participation in class and completion of exams. A student will be dropped from the course due to excessive unexcused absences. A student may be dropped from this course after their second absence, to be determined by failure to attend class and completing at least one exam during the week that will be counted as part of the second class of the week. Exams will be closed on Sunday of each week at 11:55pm. If you are expecting to be unable to perform your assignments and exams for a week you should obtain prior approval by contacting me in my office by telephone at 903-823-3235 or email at stephen.gass@texarkanacollege.edu prior to the beginning of the week. Approval will only be given in the case of unavoidable emergencies, and you may be required to provide written proof.

A student absent due to school trips and/or school business will not have the absence counted against the student's allowable number of absences. A student absent for military duty or for recognized Holy Days will not have the absence counted against the student's allowable number of absences in accordance with the Texarkana College Student Handbook. In these circumstances students will be expected to satisfactorily complete the assignment and/or examination within a reasonable time after the absence. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Instructor of their intended absence. The Texarkana College Student Handbook can be accessed for guidance at www.texarkanacollege.edu.

Do not stop attending class without formally withdrawing from the course by the institution's published Last Day to Drop for this semester. Texarkana College policy states that if a student does not attend class and does not withdraw from the class, the student will receive a grade of **F** in the class and this could affect your current or future financial aid eligibility. The last date you attend will be reflected on the final grade sheet resulting in the reimbursement of grant and scholarship funds.

Class Conduct Policy

There will be a zero tolerance policy for any behavior that is disruptive to classroom learning. Professional debate is encouraged to enhance the learning environment however rude and vulgar behavior will not be tolerated. This includes ANY use of vulgar language or rude behavior toward instructor or any other student in the class. The field of Criminal Justice often involves topics that some might find controversial including but not limited to political and religious beliefs. Topics discussed in class are for an educational purpose and students must remain civil and respectful. Students asked to leave the class for improper behavior will be dropped from the course.

Academic Integrity Statement

Scholastic dishonesty, involving but not limited to cheating on a test, plagiarism, collusion, or falsification of records will make the student liable for disciplinary action after being investigated by the Dean of Students. Proven violations of this nature will result in the student being dropped from the class with an "F".

This policy applies campus wide, including TC Testing Center, as well as off-campus classroom or lab sites, including dual credit campuses. This information can be found in the Texarkana College Student Handbook at www.texarkanacollege.edu.

Disability Act Statement:

Texarkana College complies with all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and makes reasonable accommodations upon request. Please contact Larry Andrews at 903.823.3283, or go by the Recruitment, Advisement, and Retention Department located in the Administration building for personal assistance.

If you have an accommodation letter from their office indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodation, please present it to me so we can discuss the accommodations that you might need for this class. *It is best to request these changes at the beginning if not before the start of class* so there is ample time to make the accommodations.

Basic Needs Security Statement:

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing enough food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in this course or ability to remain in school, is urged to contact Tonja Blase, Director of Student Retention, at 903.823.3349 for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so.

Financial Aid:

Attention! Dropping this class may affect your funding in a negative way! You could owe money to the college and/or federal government. Please check with the Financial Aid office before making a decision.