



## **Course Syllabus**

### **Govt. 2306 State Government**

**Catalog Description:** A study of the place of the state in our federal system, including administration, courts, financial structure, and recent social legislation of the states, city, country, and other lesser units of government, with special emphasis on Texas government and the Texas Constitution.

**Prerequisites:** TSI Reading Complete

**Semester Credit Hours:** 3

**Lecture Hours per Week:** 3

**Contact Hours per Semester:** 48

**State Approval Code:** (4510025125)

**Course Subject/Catalog Number:** Govt. 2306

**Course Title:** Texas Government

**Course Curriculum:** State Criteria (those marked with an X reflect the state-mandated competencies taught in this course)

#### **Basic Intellectual Competencies in the Core Curriculum**

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking
- Listening
- Critical thinking
- Computer literacy

#### **Perspectives in the Core Curriculum**

- Establish broad and multiple perspectives on the individual in relationship to the larger society and world in which he/she lives, and to understand the responsibilities of living in a culturally and ethnically diversified world.
- Stimulate a capacity to discuss and reflect upon individual, political, economic, and social aspects of life in order to understand ways in which to be a responsible member of society.
- Recognize the importance of maintaining health and wellness.
- Develop a capacity to use knowledge of how technology and science affect their lives.
- Develop personal values for ethical behavior.
- Develop the ability to make aesthetic judgments.
- Use logical reasoning in problem solving.
- Integrate knowledge and understand the interrelationships of the scholarly disciplines.

## Core Components and Related Exemplary Educational Objectives

### Social and Behavioral Sciences

The objective of a social and behavioral science component of a core curriculum is to increase students' knowledge of how social and behavioral scientists discover, describe, and explain the behaviors and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, events, and ideas. Such knowledge will better equip students to understand themselves and the roles they play in addressing the issues facing humanity.

- To employ the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.
- To examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods, social structures, and cultures.
- To use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.
- To develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.
- To analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the area under study.
- To comprehend the origins and evolution of U.S. and Texas political systems, with a focus on the growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S. and Texas, federalism, civil liberties, and civil and human rights.
- To understand the evolution and current role of the U.S. in the world.
- To differentiate and analyze historical evidence (documentary and statistical) and differing points of view.
- To recognize and apply reasonable criteria for the acceptability of historical evidence and social research.
- To analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems.
- To recognize and assume one's responsibility as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy.
- To identify and understand differences and commonalities within diverse cultures.

**Instructional Goals and Purposes:** The purpose of this course is to fulfill academic requirements of the Panola College Core Curriculum and an Associate of Arts or Associate Science degree.

### General Course Objectives:

1. Describe the environment in which the Texas political system functions;
2. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the structure and history of the Texas Constitution;
3. Identify the various means of individual participation in the political process with particular emphasis on the electoral process as it applies to the principles of good citizenship;
4. Analyze the role and importance of interest groups on political parties and compare and contrast their functions;
5. Evaluate the role of local government in Texas and assess their impact on Texans daily lives;
6. Outline the legislative process and its organization;
7. Demonstrate knowledge of the executive branch and analyze its regulatory role;
8. Explain the role of the judicial and criminal justice system by identifying the various courts as well as the categories of each;
9. Evaluate the tax system in Texas and describe the areas of expenditures;
10. Develop personal values for ethical behavior and a capacity to discuss and reflect upon individual, political, economic, and social aspects of life in order to understand ways in which to be a responsible member of society.

**Specific Course Objectives:**

1. Explain the environment and culture in which the Texas political system works.
2. Identify structural elements and key historic parts of the Texas constitution.
3. Successfully discuss means of participation in the political process with emphasis on the electoral process as it applies to citizenship.
4. Successfully assess the significance of interest groups on political parties, while comparing the function of each of these.
5. Identify key elements in the role of local government, while specifically pointing out its significance in their daily lives.
6. Will discuss and analyze the legislative process and the organizational structure of the legislature.
7. Will pick out the powers and functions of the executive branch and its regulatory role.
8. Will successfully analyze the Texas criminal justice system and powers and responsibilities of the state courts.
9. Assess the tax system, while identifying how the state spends its money.
10. Demonstrate personal values and ethical behavior that reflect upon political, economic, and social aspects of life so that students will demonstrate ways in which to be a more responsible member of society.

**Course Content:**

1. Geography and characteristics of Texas land regions.
2. Demographic and cultural, economic trends
3. Previous constitutions and development of the current Texas constitution.
4. Problems of the current constitution and efforts made to change it.
5. Structure and responsibilities of local government, including municipal, county, regional, and special district governments.
6. History and development of political parties.
7. History and the changing nature of interest groups, political action committees, and lobbyists.
8. Problems such as drunk driving, traffic congestion, teen pregnancy and policy responses to deal with these issues.
9. Education in Texas ranging from K-12 education to vocational schools, community colleges, and universities.
10. The legislative process and structure, function, and responsibility of the legislative body.
11. State and local elections and key actors serving in offices.
12. The process from arrest to punishment.
13. The structure of the Texas court system and the responsibilities and powers of various levels of courts.

**Methods of Instruction/Course Format/Delivery:** Lecture/Brainstorming Discussion/Web based research/Note taking and proactive listening, selected guest speakers, examination of relevant current events, including primary and secondary documents.

**Assessment:** Assessment will include exams, quizzes, class participation, and written work assignments delivered by the instructor to the student. Multiple choice, listening, matching, journaling, research papers, and discussions may be employed to properly assess the students' learning.

**Course Grade: The Grading distribution is as follows**

Exams = 70%  
Written Assignment = 15%  
Class Participation = 15%

**Texts, Materials, and Supplies:**

Gary Keith and Stefan Haag, Texas Politics and Government: Roots and Reform, 3rd Edition.  
Pearson Education, 2010.  
ISBN-13: 978-0-205-73460-3

Other Reading Articles may be distributed at the instructor's discretion.

**Other:**

- For current texts and materials, use the following link to access bookstore listings: <http://www.panola.edu/collegestore.htm>
- For testing services, use the following link: <http://www.panola.edu/instruction/dl/testing.htm>