



GOVT 2306.083 FE Texas State Government (Online) Course Syllabus: FALL 2020—2nd 8 Weeks

NORTHEAST TEXAS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

“Northeast Texas Community College exists to provide responsible, exemplary learning opportunities.”

Will Ramsay

Office Hours: You may attempt to contact me at any time prior to 10:00 pm.

Phone: (903) 434-8255 (Humanities Office)

Email: wramsay@ntcc.edu (**preferred method of communication**)

Office Hours	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Online
	Email me any time. My work schedule varies. I will make every effort to reply ASAP. Absolutely within 24-hours. If needing to call, please see the number above.					

The information contained in this syllabus is subject to change without notice. Students are expected to be aware of any additional course policies presented by the instructor during the course.

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.

Required Textbook(s):

The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy, 4th Edition By Sherri Mora, William Ruger, and Edward Mihalkanin

Publisher: McGraw/Hill Higher Education.

ISBN Number: 978-1-2640-1518-4 MORA / STATE OF TEXAS DIGITAL TEXT W/CONNECT

In the effort to save students money, your course materials are delivered through Inclusive Access. You have already paid for your course materials with your tuition and fees. Additional instructions for obtaining your access code and registering with McGraw-Hill Connect will be found in the Start Here folder in Blackboard.

Recommended Reading(s):

Dallas Morning News, Wall Street Journal, Houston Chronicle, Fox News Radio, CNN Radio, National Public Radio. Students are highly encouraged to read newspapers online and start listening to political commentary.

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.

Course Objectives:

1. Students will analyze and articulate the theoretical principles that guide political life.
2. Students will critically evaluate the content, causes, and effects of politically significant information gained through the news media.
3. Student will demonstrate an understanding of basic political processes and institutions.

Assignments, Discussions, Research Paper and Exams:

The semester is divided into 8 weeks of assignments. The assignments and associated due dates can be found below or on the Blackboard site under the title "Schedule and Due Dates." You must follow the week to week schedule in Blackboard. All work for the week is due Sunday of that week at 11:59 pm unless otherwise stated. **It is the policy of this course to NOT accept any late work.** The research paper must be turned in on or before due date in Blackboard via "turnitin.com" link. **It is the policy of this course to NOT accept any late research papers.** Email submissions will not be accepted. Papers should be submitted in Microsoft Word format.

CONNECT Assignments:

Each chapter includes a number of McGraw-Hill CONNECT assignments. These are included in your weekly folders.

The SmartBook Activities are based upon your ebook readings and will not be a part of your final grade but you are strongly encouraged to complete these activities which identify the key concepts of the chapter and your understanding of them. It is best practice to read through the ebook for understanding before attempting these activities.

Chapter Homework Assignments will make up 10% of your final grade. These are untimed assignments which can be printed if necessary and can be taken twice if you wish.

Chapter Quizzes can be taken twice and are timed at 45 minutes (25 questions total). The Chapter Quiz average will represent 15% of your grade. If you must take a quiz twice (because you are not satisfied with the first score), a 5% deduction will be applied to your final score.

All Connect Homework and Quizzes must be completed by Sunday (midnight) of the week assigned.

Discussion Board

Over the course of the semester, students are required to engage in discussion board posts. The boards offer an opportunity to engage with classmates and strengthen critical thinking skills. Each discussion board week, you are required to write three substantial posts. The final post must be made by the due date in order to receive points. Late posts will not receive points.

A substantive post consists of analytical questions, intelligent comments, illustrations of pertinent personal experiences, etc. *Simple written agreement concerning an issue or repetition of ideas does not count as a substantive post.* Discussion board posts must also abide by the following rules:

1. The first substantive post must be your original response to the forum topic, questions, and article. (See discussion page for specific instructions)
2. The second and third substantive posts must be responses to other students' posts.
3. In order to receive full credit, all posts must be respectful in tone (*This absolutely does not mean you cannot argue a point. I want you to engage each other! It must be done civilly.*), thorough, substantive, objective, and written according to the rules of proper English grammar and spelling. No texting language. Failure to abide by these rules will result in academic penalties. **Please make sure you follow the instructions for the individual Discussion Assignment. Each discussion assignment is different.**

Your original discussion posts should be completed by Thursday or Friday afternoon/evening at the latest. Then, your remaining two responses to other students' posts must be made by Sunday at midnight.

The sooner the original posts are made, the better the whole thing works. This is the best part of the course and how we all are able to interact with each other!

Research Paper

One research paper will be required for this course. For this paper you will identify a person in either State or local government who interests you. Secondly, you will write about an issue this person deals with or has championed that draws your interest.

You must see the assignment in Blackboard for more detailed instructions!

Couple of important dates:

- **April 11th** at 11:59 pm: You must have submitted your person/issue to me via email for my approval. *****Failure to submit your person/issue to me by this date/time will result in a 5 point deduction from your grade!*****
- **April 25th** at 11:59 pm: You must have submitted your research paper via Turnitin.

You are encouraged to gain my approval on the person/issue and turn the paper in ahead of schedule. **It is the policy of this course to NOT accept any late research papers.**

Exams

Unless noted, exams will consist of multiple choice and/or true/false questions. Students will be tested on assigned readings from the text. All tests must be completed by the due date.

There will be 2 exams throughout this course. Each exam will cover the chapters that have not yet been tested. The tests are not cumulative. For example, the midterm covers Chapters 1-7. The Final Exam will cover Chapters 8-14 (but not also 1-7).

The exams will be taken online and will consist of 50 questions. Students will have 60 minutes to take the test. While you are able to use your textbook, the time limit will not allow you to look up too many questions. Thus, you must be prepared by knowing the material or your test scores will suffer.

Students need to have reliable internet access as a test will not be restarted because of technical error. It is also recommended that students not wait until the very last moment to take a test as this can cause a great deal of traffic on the server and could slow things down or lead to technical malfunctions.

Evaluation/Grading Policy:

Weighted course grades:

- 15% CONNECT “Homework” assignments
- 20% CONNECT Quizzes
- 20% Discussion boards (four discussion boards)
- 30% Exams (two exams worth 15% each)
- 15% Writing assignment (Research Paper)

The final grade for the class will follow a standard grade scale based on the weighted percentages noted above.

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = Below 60

Student Responsibilities/Expectations:

Students are expected to complete all assignments by the due date and time stated. All assignments and exams are due by 11:59 pm on their scheduled date. It is the policy of this course that no late work will be accepted for credit and no make-up work will be permitted for this course.

Since this course is an online course, the attendance policy is the following: a student must log in within 6 days and complete the syllabus acknowledgment exam. Students are encouraged to log in 2 or 3 times a week (7-day period) for the duration of the course.

Students are expected to daily check the campus email account and the course Blackboard for any course changes, announcements, and assignments. Failure to check regularly may result in missed work and academic penalties.

Late Work Policy:

As previously stated, it is the policy of this course that NO late work will be accepted for credit.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined as using or imitating another's words, ideas, or work in general without proper citation of that source. Plagiarism is easy to commit and also easy to catch. Although students generally plagiarize due to academic laziness or naïveté, plagiarism is always inexcusable. Instances of plagiarism will be dealt with on an individual basis. The instructor may penalize the student for the specific assignment by assigning a grade of zero, or he may fail the student for the entire course. The discipline regarding plagiarism is up to the discretion of the instructor.

NTCC Academic Honesty Statement:

Students are expected to complete course work in an honest manner, using their intellects and resources designated as allowable by the course instructor. Students are responsible for addressing questions about allowable resources with the course instructor. NTCC upholds the highest standards of academic integrity. This course will follow the NTCC Academic Honesty policy stated in the Student Handbook.

Academic Ethics:

The college expects all students to engage in academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuit. Academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, and collusion is unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action. Refer to the student handbook for more information on this subject.

ADA Statement:

It is the policy of NTCC to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals who are students with disabilities. This College will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations. An appointment can be made with Shannin Garrett, Academic Advisor/Coordinator of Special Populations located in the College Connection. She can be reached at 903-434-8218. For more information and to obtain a copy of the Request for Accommodations, please refer to the NTCC website - Special Populations.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's educational records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have

transferred are considered “eligible students.” In essence, a parent has no legal right to obtain information concerning the child’s college records without the written consent of the student. In compliance with FERPA, information classified as “directory information” may be released to the general public without the written consent of the student unless the student makes a request in writing. Directory information is defined as: the student’s name, permanent address and/or local address, telephone listing, dates of attendance, most recent previous education institution attended, other information including major, field of study, degrees, awards received, and participation in officially recognized activities/sports.