



# Texas Government

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## Instructor Contact Information

**Instructor:** Robert Lucas Williams      **Office Hours:** Must make an appointment with me.  
**E-mail:** rlwill21@central.uh.edu      **Alternative Contact:** 414-982-5853

## Welcome To

**Course Title:** GOVT 2306      **Term and Year:** Summer 2015  
**Course Subject:** Texas Government  
**Course Section:** 6006      **Class Days & Times:** MTWTh 12:00pm-1:55pm  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Class Room Location:** Bldg 12 503

## Course Overview

### **Catalog 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.

### **Student Learning Objectives:**

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.

**In our efforts to prepare students for a changing world, students may be expected to utilize computer technology while enrolled in classes, certificate, and/or degree programs within LSCS. The specific requirements are listed below:**

- PC/Mac
- Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel)
- Access to LSC-Online

## Getting Ready

Prior to each class period you are responsible for reading the material that is scheduled to be covered on that day. In many cases, this will mean that you need to read a chapter per day. This is a very condensed course. As a result, we will move very fast through the material, assignments are due with short turnaround, and exams occur with little preparation time. It is imperative that you stay on top of your work because there will be no time to play catch-up.

Prior to the second day of class you will need to do the following:

- Read the syllabus
- Obtain a copy of the required text listed below
- Read Chapter 1

**Required Material:** Governing Texas: An Introduction to Texas Politics, 1st Edition. Anthony Champagne, Edward J. Harpham. W.W. Norton Company. ISBN: 9780393920352

## Guidelines and Policies

**Attendance:** You are expected to come to class and participate in some capacity. Failure to meet this expectation will result in a low participation grade.

**Assignments:** No late assignments will be accepted without severe penalty. In a shortened semester, there is no time to play catch-up. All assignments received after the class period in which they are due will incur a 20% penalty per day. After the 5<sup>th</sup> day, a zero will be given for the assignment.

**Quizzes:** No late quizzes will be accepted.

**Make-up Exams:** If you miss an exam, you may make it up on the make-up day designated in the schedule below.

**Academic Integrity:** Cheating will not be taken lightly in this course. If plagiarism is suspected, an investigation will be pursued and full penalties will be sought. Please see this link for more information: [http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/libraries/academic\\_integrity\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/libraries/academic_integrity_brochure.pdf)

**Cell phones and Computers:** You may use whatever device you wish for taking notes. As a courtesy, please focus on class and refrain from using your devices for communication or information unrelated to class. I cannot guarantee open or accessible power outlets in the classroom. Absolutely no phone calls are permitted during class. If you choose to violate this policy, it will be reflected in your participation grade. If your cell phone or computer becomes a distraction to the instructor or other students, you may be asked to leave.

**Email and General Etiquette:** I am always available via email. I will try to respond within 12 hours of all emails. [rlwill21@central.uh.edu](mailto:rlwill21@central.uh.edu) is the best place to reach me. Almost all of the material in this course is contentious to some extent. One major expectation in this course is that each member of the class maintain an cordial demeanor and professional relationship with the instructor and other students. I encourage everyone to contribute to class in some capacity. It is okay to challenge others, but you must do so in a way that facilitates discussion and dialogue. Reasonable people disagree on almost every issue we face in politics. In fact, government and the political process help us manage these conflicts. If you are out of line, you will be asked to leave.

## Points Distribution

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Points</b>
Attendance/Participation	10
Papers (3)	30
Quizzes (4)	20
Midterm	20
Final	20
Total	100

## Letter Grade Scale

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Final Percentage</b>
A	89.5-100
B	79.5-89.4
C	69.5-79.4
D	59.5-69.4
F	0-59.4

## Requirements

### **Attendance and Participation**

You are expected to attend every class and contribute to discussion from time to time. This portion of your grade is worth 10% of the total. I will take class attendance everyday by passing a sign-in sheet around. The number of points you get will be negatively affected by the number of days you are absent and your contributions to class discussion will positively affect your grade. Asking questions, sharing observations, and otherwise contributing to discussion in class are considered participation.

### **Papers**

You will write 3 papers that are at least 1 page in length, but they may be longer. In each of these papers you will write on topics of your choice. You may choose to write on a critical thinking question from your book's "You Decide" section of each chapter. You may also have an original topic approved by the instructor. Consult the list of broad topics below to help you narrow the focus of your paper. Please note that if you choose one of these broad topics, you should further narrow the focus of your paper (For example, if you choose to write on the legislative branch, then you might narrow your paper to focus on party organization in the Texas Senate). You should have a clearly stated central argument in your paper. You are expected to use credible sources to support your argument. These might include newspaper articles, academic research, your book, and/or government resources such as the Census Bureau. Other sources that you find are okay too, but they must be credible. Do not cite Wikipedia or similar sites in your paper. These are often good starting places because they sometimes provide direction on where to find credible sources, but they are not credible sources themselves. There are also sources cited throughout your book that you might follow

in this endeavor. I will be available if you have questions regarding any aspect of your papers. Late papers will be penalized 20% per day for 5 days and after 5 days you will receive a zero.

Legislature  
Executive  
Judicial  
County and Municipal Government  
Race and Ethnicity in Politics  
Religion in Politics  
Gender in Politics  
Economic Inequality  
Participation in Politics  
Public Opinion  
Urbanization  
Texas Constitution  
Parties  
Elections  
Interest Groups and Lobbying  
Criminal Justice  
Citizen Rights  
Political Economy  
Budgets  
Public Policy

### **Quizzes**

Four weekly quizzes will be given worth 5 points each. The format will be 10 multiple choice questions worth 0.5 points each. Question material will come from the book and class discussion. Quiz questions may also be used on midterm and final exams (NOTE: The first quiz will have a substantial number of questions regarding the syllabus.). Quizzes will be posted on Lone Star College Online on Friday of each non-exam week (i.e. Weeks 1, 2, 4, and 5) and are due the following Sunday night at 11:59pm.

### **Midterm**

The midterm will be 20 questions worth 1 point each. There will be an opportunity for bonus points on the midterm. At the end of the test a short essay question worth 5 points will be provided. You must demonstrate an understanding of the material in the book in order to receive any bonus points. To receive all 5 points, you must articulate a thoughtful response rooted in factual knowledge on the topic. Writing something down does not guarantee bonus points will be rewarded.

### **Final**

The final will be 20 questions worth 1 point each. There will be an opportunity for bonus points on the final. At the end of the test a short essay question worth 5 points will be provided. You must demonstrate an understanding of the material in the book in order to receive any bonus points. To receive all 5 points, you must articulate a thoughtful response rooted in factual

knowledge on the topic. Writing something down does not guarantee bonus points will be rewarded.

## **Total**

Your course grade will simply be the sum of your points from each category: Attendance and Participation, Papers, Quizzes, Midterm, and Final.

## Schedule

**Research Days:** On the designated days below, we will meet in a computer lab (location to be determined) and the course period will be used to conduct research and write drafts of your paper. I will be available so that you can ask me questions on the fly with regard to research and writing techniques. On the first research day, I will provide a brief introduction to research paper writing.

### **Week 1 – Chapters 1-3**

Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup> → Introduction and syllabus

Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> → Chapter 1: The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas

Wednesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> → Chapter 2: Texas and the Nation

Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup> → Chapter 3: The Texas Constitution

QUIZ 1 DUE SUNDAY NIGHT 11:59PM

### **Week 2 – Chapters 4-6**

Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup> → Chapter 4: Political Parties in Texas

Tuesday, June 9<sup>th</sup> → Chapter 5: Elections in Texas

Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> → Chapter 6: Interest Groups and Lobbying

Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup> → Research day

PAPER 1 DUE BY START OF CLASS ON MONDAY JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup>

QUIZ 2 DUE SUNDAY NIGHT 11:59PM

### **Week 3 – Chapters 7-9**

Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup> → MIDTERM

Tuesday, June 16<sup>th</sup> → Chapter 7: The Texas Legislature

Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> → Chapter 8: The Texas Executive Branch

Thursday, June 18<sup>th</sup> → Chapter 9: The Texas Judiciary

QUIZ 3 DUE SUNDAY NIGHT 11:59PM

### **Week 4 – Chapters 10-12**

Monday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> → Chapter 10: Crime and Corrections Policy

Tuesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> → Chapter 11: Public Finance in Texas

Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup> → Chapter 12: Public Policy in Texas

Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup> → Research day

PAPER 2 DUE BY START OF CLASS ON MONDAY JUNE 29<sup>TH</sup>

### **Week 5 – Chapters 13**

Monday, June 29<sup>th</sup> → Chapter 13: Local Government in Texas

Tuesday, June 30<sup>th</sup> → Current events in Texas politics

Wednesday, July 1<sup>st</sup> → Review day

Thursday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> → Research day

QUIZ 4 DUE SUNDAY AT 11:59PM

PAPER 3 DUE BY START OF CLASS ON MONDAY JULY 6<sup>TH</sup>

### **Week 6 – Make-up Days**

Monday, July 6<sup>th</sup> → NO CLASS – Study for your exam!

Tuesday, July 7<sup>th</sup> → FINAL EXAM

## LSC Information

### **Withdrawal Policy**

Withdrawal from the course after the official day of record and prior to “W” Day, (see current catalog for this date) will result in a final grade of “W” on your transcript. Instructor approval is necessary if you want to withdraw after official day. No credit will be awarded for a course earning a “W.” If you stop attending class, you must withdraw at the registration office prior to “W” day. If you stop attending class and do not officially withdraw, you will receive an “F” for the course.

### **Six Drop Rule**

Students who enrolled in Texas public institutions of higher education as first-time college students during the Fall 2007 term or later are subject to section 51.907 of the Texas Education Code, which states that an institution of higher education may not permit a student to drop (withdraw with a grade of “W”) from more than six courses, including courses that a transfer student has previously dropped at other Texas public institutions of higher education that have already been counted against their six drop limit. Each student should fully understand this drop limit before you drop any course. Please see a Counselor or Advisor in our Student Services area for additional information and assistance. **This policy does not affect developmental or ESOL students.**

## **Lone Star College-University Park Learning Center is committed to your success**

**Your success is our primary concern!** If you are experiencing challenges achieving your academic goals, please contact your instructor or an advisor. We can provide assistance with academic needs, ADA accommodations, classroom difficulties, financial concerns, and other issues.

**Tutoring:** For all disciplines, please link to <http://www.lonestar.edu/UPtutoring.htm> for information on hours and location. The tutoring lab, reading/writing lab, and math lab can be found within the learning center in building 12, 8<sup>th</sup> floor.

**Counseling Services :** Counseling services are available to students who are experiencing difficulty with academic issues, selection of college major, career planning, disability accommodations, or personal issues. Students may contact Counseling, Career, and Disability Services at 281.401.5370, or in building 13 Suite 200.

**The Assistive Technology Lab:** The Assistive Technology Lab is available for students who benefit from its various technologies to convert text to speech, magnify items, convert text to Braille, etc. For further information, please contact Fonda Johnson at 281-401-5384 or [Fonda.R.Johnson@lonestar.edu](mailto:Fonda.R.Johnson@lonestar.edu) .

**Library:** The Lone Star College-University Park Library is located in building 12, 8<sup>th</sup> floor and contains information resources for both college students and community members. Librarians are available to assist with research. To contact a reference librarian, [uplibrary-ref@lonestar.edu](mailto:uplibrary-ref@lonestar.edu).

For Library hours and contact information, please visit <http://www.lonestar.edu/library> .

## **Lone Star College-University Park Campus and System Policies**

### **Academic Integrity**

The Lone Star College System upholds the core values of learning: honesty, respect, fairness, and accountability. The system promotes the importance of personal and academic honesty. The system embraces the belief that all learners – students, faculty, staff and administrators – will act with integrity and honesty and must produce their own work and give appropriate credit to the work of others. Fabrication of sources, cheating, or unauthorized collaboration is not permitted on any work submitted within the system.

The consequences for academic dishonesty are determined by the professor, or the professor and academic dean, or the professor and chief student services officer and can include but are not limited to:

1. Having additional class requirements imposed,
2. Receiving a grade of zero or “F” for an exam or assignment,
3. Receiving a grade of “F” for the course,
4. Being withdrawn from the course or program,
5. Being expelled from the college system.

### **Student Behavior Expectations**

Students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately while on College property or in an online environment. Students may receive disciplinary action up to and including suspension, if they violate System or College rules, disrupt classes, or interfere with the opportunity of others to obtain an education. Students who pose a threat to the safety of others will be subject to immediate withdrawal from the classroom, campus environment, and/or online environment, as well as face subsequent criminal charges, as appropriate. Please refer to the Student Code of Conduct located online at <http://www.lonestar.edu/student-responsibilities.htm> for additional information.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act Statement**

Lone Star College-University Park is dedicated to providing the least restrictive environment for all students. We promote equity in academic access through the implementation of reasonable accommodations as required by the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title V, Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) which will enable students with disabilities to participate in and benefit from all post-secondary educational activities.

Disability Services is located on the LSC University Park campus in building 13, Suite 200. You may contact Disability Services at the following number: 281.401.5370. Additional information may be accessed online at the following URL: <http://www.lonestar.edu/disability-services.htm>

### **Campus Safety and Security**

Lone Star College System is committed to maintaining the safety of the students, faculty, staff, and guests while visiting one of our campuses. See <http://www.lonestar.edu/safety-nh.htm> for details.

Register at <http://www.lonestar.edu/12803.htm> to receive emergency notifications. In the event of an emergency, contact the police at 5911.

### **Computer Virus Protection**

Computer viruses are, unfortunately, a fact of life. Using flash drives on more than one computer creates the possibility of infecting additional computers and flash drives with computer viruses. This exposes college computers, personal computers, and any other computers to potentially damaging viruses. The college has aggressive anti-virus procedures in place to protect its computers, but cannot guarantee that a virus might not temporarily infect one of its machines. It is your responsibility to protect all computers under your control and use and ensure that each flash drive you use, wherever you use it, has been scanned with anti-virus software.

### **Equal Opportunity Statement**

It is the policy of the Lone Star College System to provide equal employment, admission and educational opportunities without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, veteran's status, sexual orientation, or disability.

Lone Star Colleges strive to provide an excellent learning environment free from harassment or intimidation directed at any person's race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, veteran's status, sexual orientation, or disability. Any form of harassment will not be tolerated.

## **FERPA**

The academic, financial, and non-directory information on your student account is confidential and protected by the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA). LSCS cannot release certain information to another person without your written authorization. The Authorization to Release Student Information Form can be found at [http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/admissions/ARC-011\\_FERPA\\_Privacy\\_Request.pdf](http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/admissions/ARC-011_FERPA_Privacy_Request.pdf).

## **Internet and E-mail**

LSCS provides computing and network resources. You are encouraged to use the computers, software packages, and electronic mail (e-mail) for educational or System-related activities and to facilitate the efficient exchange of useful information. The equipment, software, and network capacities provided through the district computer services are the property of the System. Use of the equipment and networks is to comport with the policies and procedures of the System and access may be denied to any student who fails to comply with the System's policies and procedures regarding its use.

Access to the System's e-mail and similar electronic communications systems are a privilege and certain responsibilities accompany that privilege. All users are expected to demonstrate the same level of ethical and professional manner, as is required in face-to-face or written communications. Threatening, anonymous, or forged messages will be treated as a violation of this policy.

## **Software Piracy**

Law strictly prohibits unauthorized copying of software purchased by Lone Star College-University Park for use in laboratories. Lone Star College-University Park administration will take appropriate disciplinary action against anyone violating copyright laws.

## **Evaluation of Instruction**

Lone Star College-University Park is committed to student success. As part of its' institutional effectiveness efforts, our instructors are assessed in several ways. For the continuous improvement of our instruction, all students are required to provide input for each course they take each semester using the Course Evaluations Questionnaire, which can be accessed online for each course. This occurs approximately half way through your course and your instructor will provide you more information on this process. Once you evaluate your course, print and turn in the receipt of completion to your instructor. The college deans review these evaluations each semester. The deans and/or department chairs may visit each instructor's class at some time during the semester to observe the instructional environment being provided and complete an assessment of the instructor.