



Texas State and Local Government

**GOVT 2306
10994—011
Summer 2010**

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COURSE OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of the course is to acquaint the student with Texas state and local government. The student will be introduced to: (a) a framework for analyzing Texas politics and government; (b) the constitutional basis for Texas government; (c) the processes of Texas politics and government; (d) the institutions of Texas politics and government; and (e) policies of Texas government. Specific behavioral objectives will accompany each unit of instruction.

GRADING PROCEDURES:

The student will be evaluated through four (4) unit examinations and two written assignments. The unit examinations will consist of objective and essay questions. Each unit examination will consist of thirty (30) multiple-choice questions and two (2) essay questions. The questions will cover the behavioral objectives for the assigned chapters in the Keith and Haag textbook and the lectures. Each multiple-choice question will be worth one (1) point, and each essay question will be worth ten (10) points. A student may earn a maximum of 200 points on the four unit examinations.

The written assignments will be an annotated bibliography and a position paper on a public policy issue in Texas state or local government. The papers are described on pages 3 and 4 of this syllabus and in handouts. A student may earn a maximum of 50 points for his or her annotated bibliography and 50 points for his or her position paper.

The total number of points accumulated during the semester will determine a student's grade for the course:

GRADE	TOTAL POINTS
A	270-300
B	240-269
C	210-239
D	180-209
F	179 or fewer

TESTING PROCEDURES:

The four unit examinations will be administered in class on the dates indicated on the course activity calendar. Students who are unable to take the examination because of an excused absence will take a make-up examination in the **Pinnacle Campus (PIN) Testing Center** (Room 706). Students who miss an examination because of an unexcused absence will not be allowed to take the examination in the testing center during the semester; however, those students may take an examination on that unit as a retest on the last class meeting of the semester. Students will not be allowed to take more than one unit examination on the last class meeting of the semester. The instructor will determine, on an individual basis, what constitutes an excused absence.

RETESTING PROCEDURES:

Students may retest one unit examination on the last class meeting of the semester. Students may also retest one unit examination in the PIN Testing Center during the semester. The examination format for retests will be the same as for the original examination and will cover the behavioral objectives for the unit; however, the questions will be different. If a student elects to take a retest, the retest score will replace the score on the original examination. A permission slip, issued and signed by the instructor, is required before a student can retest in the PIN Testing Center.

EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS:

Students will be provided an opportunity to earn extra credit points after each unit examination. The extra credit assignments will involve a variety of activities that allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the material covered in the unit. There will be several options for extra credit, but students may complete only one extra credit option for each unit of instruction. The extra credit assignment will be worth a maximum of five (5) points and will be due on the scheduled date for the next unit examination.

INCOMPLETE GRADES:

A student may receive a temporary grade of "I" under the following conditions: (a) the student has a valid, medical reason for requesting an incomplete and has accumulated at least 100 points; (b) the student requests a grade of "I" and completes the required form; and (c) the student agrees to complete the course by the deadline established on the Report of Incomplete Grade form.

ATTENDANCE AND PROGRESS REQUIREMENTS:

Regular attendance is considered essential to the successful completion of this course. Supplemental material covered in lectures will be covered on the unit examinations. To remain enrolled in the course, students must attend class regularly and must not accumulate an excessive number of unexcused absences during the semester. The instructor will determine, on an individual basis, what constitutes an excessive number of absences and whether an absence is excused or unexcused. The student is responsible for informing the instructor of the reason for any absence from class.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES:

Students who withdraw prior to the twelfth class day will not receive any grade on their records. After that date and until **June 30, 2010**, students who withdraw or are withdrawn by the instructor will receive a nonpunitive grade of "W" for the course. After June 30, 2010, students may not withdraw nor may the instructor withdraw them. Those students will receive a performance grade (A, B, C, D, or F).

The instructor is permitted to withdraw students whose attendance and /or progress is not satisfactory; however, the student is responsible for withdrawing from this course if she or he is no longer interested in completing the course.

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY:

As described in Austin Community College Student Handbook, scholastic dishonesty constitutes a violation of college rules and regulations and is punishable as outlined in the Handbook. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, **cheating on an examination** (either providing answers to or stealing answers from another student), **plagiarism**, and **collusion**. Plagiarism includes the use of another author's words or arguments without attribution. Collusion is defined as the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of any course requirement. If a student commits any of the offenses cited above in this class or in the Testing Center, the instructor will recommend and actively seek a grade of "F" for the student for the course.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM:

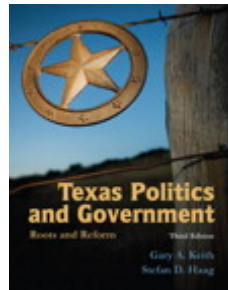
As described in Austin Community College Policy V-72, academic freedom protects professors and students in their search for truth and its free expression. However, professors and students also share a responsibility to respect the opinions of others and to ensure that course materials and discussions are relevant to the course objectives.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at the Pinnacle Campus, room 221 (phone number 223-8300) as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

TEXTBOOK:

Keith, Gary A. and Stefan D. Haag. *Texas Politics and Government: Roots and Reform*. 3rd Edition. New York: Longman Publishers, 2010.



UNITS OF INSTRUCTION AND TEXTBOOK ASSIGNMENTS:

Unit I: The Context for Texas Government and Politics	Chapters 1-2
Unit II: Parties, Interests, Participation, and Legislature	Chapters 3-4
Unit III: Executive, Bureaucracy, and Judiciary	Chapters 5-6
Unit IV: Local Governments and Public Policies	Chapters 7-8

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

Every student is required to submit an annotated bibliography and a position paper on a public policy issue relating to Texas state or local government.

Purpose: The purpose of the written assignments are threefold: to give the student an opportunity to explore a public policy in Texas state or local government, to give the student experience in preparing an annotated bibliography and writing a position paper, and to assist the student in developing his or her research and analytical skills.

Topic: The topic of the annotated bibliography and position paper must be a public policy issue selected from one of the options provided by the instructor.

Annotated Bibliography Format: In preparation for writing the position paper, the student will prepare an annotated bibliography that contains a variety of sources, including, for example, books, journals, magazines, and newspapers. Sources in the must conform to the Modern Language Association (MLA) style. The annotated bibliography will include a minimum of eight (8) sources that support the student's position on the issue of public policy and provide counter arguments to the student's position. For more information, see the handout entitled *Preparing an Annotated Bibliography*.

Position Paper Format: The position paper must be legibly handwritten or typed with a total length of between 5 and 6 pages, not counting the title page and the Works Cited page. The title page will include the public policy issue, the student's name, the course number, and the section number. The paper will include an introduction, a thesis statement, the counter arguments, the student's arguments, and a conclusion. For more information, see the handout entitled *Writing a Position Paper*.

Grading: The annotated bibliography will be worth a maximum of 50 points. The bibliography will be graded using the following criteria: quantity and quality of the sources (20 points); completeness of the annotations (20 points); and grammar, spelling, writing style, and proper documentation (10 points). The position paper will be worth a maximum of 50 points. The paper will be graded using the following criteria: introduction (5 points); presentation of the counter arguments (20 points); presentation of the student's argument (20 points); and grammar, spelling, writing style, and documentation of sources (5 points).

Deadline: The annotated bibliography is due on **June 28, 2010**. The position paper is due on **July 1, 2010**. **Five (5) points will be deducted for each class meeting date that the annotated bibliography or position paper is late.**

TEXAS STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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Class Meeting Dates	ACTIVITY
June 1	Course Requirements; Studying Texas Politics and Government
June 2	Socioeconomic and Ideological Context
June 3	Texas's Constitutions; Library Instruction; Topic for AB and PP Due
June 7	Constitutional Change; Review
June 8	TEST 1 (Chapters 1 & 2); Political Parties
June 9	Political Parties and Change
June 10	Interest Groups; Political Participation
June 14	Campaigns and Elections
June 15	Voting Behavior; Structure of the Texas Legislature
June 16	Legislative Process; Legislative Behavior; Review
June 17	TEST 2 (Chapters 3 & 4); Governor of Texas
June 21	Governor of Texas; Bureaucracy
June 22	Texas Judiciary
June 23	Judicial Selection; Review
June 24	TEST 3 (Chapters 5 & 6); Local Governments
June 28	County Government; Municipal Government: Annotated Bibliography Due
June 29	Municipal Government; Special Districts
June 30	Fiscal Policy; Taxing and Spending
July 1	Public Policy: Education; Position Paper Due
July 5	Public Policy: Public Assistance, Transportation; Review
July 6	TEST 4 (Chapters 7 & 8)
July 7	RETESTS



LEARNING OBJECTIVES: UNIT I

After reading Chapters 1 and 2 in the Keith and Haag textbook and attending the lectures, the student should be able to:

Lectures: Unit I

- Explain how a framework facilitates an understanding of politics and government.
- Distinguish between politics and government.
- List and define the five ideas of the American Creed.
- Describe the importance of the American Creed.
- Describe how individualism, equality, and liberty relate to an analysis of politics.
- Describe how democracy and constitutionalism relate to an analysis of government.
- Describe the four conditions of democracy: political equality, deliberation, participation, and nontyranny.
- Describe the two forms of democracy: majoritarian and pluralist.
- Describe the nondemocratic possibility: elitism.
- Describe the institutional arrangements and processes that promote each form of democracy.
- Describe Huntington's paradigm of American politics.
- Describe the IvI gap.
- Describe the responses to the IvI gap.
- Describe the factors that produce the responses to the IvI gap.
- Describe the logical progression of responses to the IvI gap.
- Describe the factors that produce periods of creedal passion or moralism in American politics.

Chapter 1: Ideas, People and Economics in Texas Politics

- Describe how the face of Texas is changing and the effects of those changes.
- Describe the roots of Texas politics and government.
- Describe the ethnic groups of Texas:
 - Native Americans
 - Hispanics
 - African Americans
 - Asian Americans
 - Anglos
- Describe the contemporary population of Texas.
- Describe the population projections for Texas from 2010 to 2040 (*Analyzing Visuals*).
- Describe the urbanization of Texas.
- Describe how Texas's historical experiences have shaped the five ideas of the Texan Creed:
 - Individualism
 - Liberty
 - Constitutionalism
 - Democracy
 - Equality

- Describe health insurance coverage in Texas (*Politics Now*).
- Describe how the Texas ERA has affected politics in Texas (*The Living Constitution*).
- Describe the four political ideologies in Texas: libertarian, populist, liberal, and conservative.
- Describe the student protests that occurred over immigration policy (*Ideas into Action*).
- Describe the evolution of the Texas economy from cotton to cattle and from cattle to petroleum.
- Describe the contemporary economy of Texas.
- Describe the debate over bilingual education in Texas (*Join the Debate*).
- Describe wealth and poverty in Texas.
- Describe how the political culture of Texas affected welfare reform.
- Define the key terms at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 2: Constitutionalism

- Describe the attempts to revise the 1876 Texas Constitution.
- Describe the roots of the current Texas Constitution:
 - 1836 Constitution
 - 1845 Constitution
 - 1861 Constitution
 - 1866 Constitution
 - 1869 Constitution
- Describe the delegates who attended the Constitutional Convention of 1875.
- Describe the reasons for the 1876 Constitution.
- Describe the provisions of the 1876 Constitution.
- Describe how the courts have interpreted Article 7, Section 1 of the Texas Constitution (*The Living Constitution*).
- Describe the controversy between Wimberley ISD and Education Commissioner Robert Scott (*Politics Now*).
- Describe the patterns of voter turnout in constitutional amendment elections (*Analyzing Visuals*).
- Describe the process for amending the 1876 Texas Constitution and its effects.
- Describe the criticisms of the 1876 Texas Constitution.
- Describe the piecemeal efforts to revise the 1876 Texas Constitution.
- Describe the efforts of an Austin Community College government class to influence the adoption of a constitutional amendment (*Ideas into Action*).
- Describe the early comprehensive efforts to revise the 1876 Texas Constitution.
- Describe the 1974 Constitutional Convention and its failure to produce a constitution.
- Describe the failed amendment attempt in 1975.
- Describe the 1999 constitutional revision efforts.
- Describe the marriage amendment approved by the voters in 2005.
- Describe the debate concerning the adoption of the initiative process in Texas (*Join the Debate*).
- Define the key terms at the end of the chapter.

Topics for Annotated Bibliography and Position Paper

Choose **one** of the following topics for your annotated bibliography and position paper.

1. Texas Top 10 Percent Law
2. Texas Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
3. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
4. Transportation
5. Judicial Selection
6. Taxation
7. Funding Public Education
8. Voter Identification
9. Posting 10 Commandments in Public Buildings
10. Restrictions on Abortion