Texas State and Local Government

GOVT 2306 Open Campus (PCM)

Synonym 03239, Section 026
Synonym 03241, Section 028
Summer 2007
July 9 – August 14

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       MTWTh 2:10 PM – 5:10 PM

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MANDATORY ORIENTATION:
Students are required to complete an orientation for Open Campus courses. During the Summer 2007 semester, students will complete an online orientation at: http://www.austincc.edu/shaag/online_orientation.htm

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 for each unit of instruction are available through links in the Examinations section of the syllabus below.

TEXTBOOK:
UNITS OF INSTRUCTION AND TEXTBOOK ASSIGNMENTS:

Unit I: The Context for Texas Government and Politics  Chapters 1-2

Unit II: Parties, Interest Groups, Campaigns, Elections, and the Legislature  Chapters 3-4

Unit III: The Executive and the Judiciary  Chapters 5-6

Unit IV: Local Governments and Public Policies  Chapters 7-8

GRADING PROCEDURES:
Students will be evaluated through four (4) examinations, one (1) written assignment, and participation in eight (8) discussion forums. The examinations will consist of objective questions, including multiple-choice and true/false questions. Each unit examination will consist of fifty (50) questions that will cover the behavioral objectives for the assigned chapters in the Keith and Haag textbook. Each question will be worth one (1) point. A student may earn a maximum of 200 points on the four examinations.

The written assignment is a research paper on a topic in Texas politics and government. The paper is described later in this syllabus. A student may earn a maximum of 70 points for his or her paper. Click here to learn more about the paper.

The discussion forums will allow students to demonstrate their understanding of textbook material and to share their opinions on contemporary issues in Texas state and local politics. There will be eight forums during the semester. Students are expected to participate in all of the forums. Students may earn a maximum of 80 points for participation in the forums. Click here to learn more about the discussion forums.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>TOTAL POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>315-350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>280-314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>245-279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>210-244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>209 or fewer</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
EXAMINATIONS:
Students will take four examinations during the semester. Examinations may be taken at the Testing Centers on the Northridge, Rio Grande, Pinnacle, Cypress Creek, Riverside, and Eastview Campuses or at the Round Rock Higher Education Center, Fredericksburg High School, or the San Marcos High School. Students will complete a form outside the Testing Center to request a test. Completed examinations will be graded by the Testing Center. Students will receive a copy of the test request form indicating the form of the examination (A or B) and the student’s score (# correct/50). Students should keep this form as verification that they completed the examinations with a particular score and to allow them to retest, if they elect to retest. Each examination will be based on the learning objectives covering the textbook assignments for that unit of instruction. Examination numbers, links to learning objectives, textbook assignments, and deadline dates are indicated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examination</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Textbook Assignment</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unit I</td>
<td>Chapters 1-2</td>
<td>7/19/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unit II</td>
<td>Chapters 3-4</td>
<td>7/26/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unit III</td>
<td>Chapters 5-6</td>
<td>8/2/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Unit IV</td>
<td>Chapters 7-8</td>
<td>8/9/07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examinations should be completed by the deadline dates. Examinations may be taken anytime before these dates. There will be a total of fifty (50) objective questions (multiple choice and True/False) on each examination. Each question is worth one (1) point. Contact the instructor if you are unable to take any of the examinations by the deadline date. Failure to take an examination on time may mean that the instructor will not accept the results of the examination.

RETESTING PROCEDURES:
Students may retest once on any two examinations without the instructor's permission up to the retesting deadline dates. 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. There are two forms of each examination (Forms A & B). Students will not be allowed to retest on the original form of the examination. Students are expected to inform the Testing Center that they are taking a retest, show the Testing Center personnel the test request form for the original examination, and request the alternate form of the examination. Students who accidentally retest on the original test form will not have the retest count and will have forfeited one of their two retests. If a student elects to take a retest, the retest score will replace the score on the original examination. The deadlines for retesting are: **August 13, 2007 for Testing Centers other than PIN; August 14, 2007 for PIN Testing Center.**
EXTRA CREDIT:
Students will be provided opportunities for extra credit after each unit examination. There will be several options for each unit; however, students will be allowed to complete only one option for a unit. The assignments will be due prior to the due date for the next unit examination. Students will submit extra credit assignments as Microsoft Word documents attached to an e-mail. Each extra credit assignment will be worth a maximum of four (4) points.

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 70 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.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES:
Students who withdraw prior to the fourth class day will not receive any grade on their records. After that date and until July 31, 2007 student who withdraw or are withdrawn by the instructor will receive a nonpunitive grade of "W" for the course. After July 31, 2007, 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.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT:
Students are expected to submit one (1) written assignment during the semester. The paper will be between 1000 and 1500 words and will be submitted to the instructor as a Microsoft Word attachment to an e-mail. The paper must address the questions posed in the assignment, use Internet sources which will be
documented using the MLA style, and be coherently written. The paper will be worth a maximum of seventy (70) points. The paper is due on the following date:

Paper (link to paper description)  
August 6, 2007  
Return to Grading Procedures

DISCUSSION FORUMS:
Students are required to participate in eight (8) discussion forums during the semester. The topics for the discussion forums involve contemporary issues in Texas state and local politics and government and relate to material presented in the textbook. Students will have access to each discussion forum for several days. During that period, students are required to post their opinions on the topic (the posting) and to comment (the comments) on at least two other students' opinions. The forums are accessible through Blackboard (see below).

To participate in the forums, you will need a username (see Blackboard login Web site below) and a password (initially, your DOB, expressed as MMDDYY).

The purpose of the forums is to allow you to demonstrate your understanding of textbook material. Consequently, your posting should answer all of the questions raised in the discussion forum description, using your textbook as the basis for your posting. You are encouraged to add information that is not from the textbook but is relevant to the topic of the discussion forum. The more complete the answer to the questions raised in the forum description, the better the grade on the posting. Comments should add substantively to the posting or comment on which you are commenting.

Students may earn a maximum of ten (10) points for each of the discussion forums. The posting will be worth a maximum of six (6) points, and each comment will be worth a maximum of two (2) points; however, no more than a total of four (4) points will be awarded for comments. The topics for the forums and dates are listed below:

Discussion Forum 1: Political Ideologies 7/10 - 7/17
Discussion Forum 2: A New Constitution for Texas 7/10 - 7/17
Discussion Forum 3: Voter Turnout in Texas 7/20 - 7/26
Discussion Forum 4: Political Campaigns 7/20 - 7/26
Discussion Forum 5: The Governor's Executive Powers 7/28 - 8/4
BLACKBOARD: Blackboard is Austin Community College's comprehensive e-learning platform.

Logging In. When you first access Blackboard by clicking on the Bb logo above, you will find information on logging into Blackboard and how to change your password.

Blackboard Components. The blackboard components vary by instructor. In my course, you will see the following components in the left frame of my course: Announcements, Syllabus, Textbooks, Assignments, Communication, External Links, and Tools.

- The Announcements section to provide information to the class members. Check the announcements frequently (at least every day) during the semester.
- The Syllabus section provides a link to the syllabus for the course. Right Clicking on the link allows you to open the syllabus in a new frame.
- The Textbooks section lists the required textbook for the course and provides a link to the textbook publisher's companion Web site for the textbook.
- The Assignments section provides a list of dates on which the assignments (unit examinations, retests, discussion forums, and the
research paper) are due. In addition, there are links to four practice quizzes here. The extra credit assignments are also listed here.

- The **Communication** section allows you to send e-mails to other students in the class, to set up white boards for chats with other students, and other communication options. This also contains the **Discussion Board** section, which is the location for the discussion forums for the course. To participate in the forums, you will need to click on the title of the discussion forum (e.g., Political Ideologies). A new window will open. Click on "Add New Thread" (upper left corner) to post your opinion on the topic of the discussion forum. In your posting, be sure to answer all of the questions raised in the discussion forum description. When you have completed your posting, click on "Submit." When you are ready to comment on another student's posting, click on the student's posting or comment. After you have read the student's posting or comment, click on "Reply" in the bottom right corner of the posting or comment. In the new window, type in your comment. When you complete your comment, click on "Submit" to post it to the forum. After you have posted or commented, "refresh" or "reload" your browser and check to make sure that your posting or comment was posted.

- The **Tools** section provides links to **Personal Information** (this is where you change your password and your e-mail address), **Manuals** (you should definitely read the student's manual), and other tools. You are encouraged to read the Student's Manual and become familiar with Blackboard's components.

[Back to Top] [Instructor's Home Page]