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Office Hours: Tu-Th 8.00 am-9.45 am, 1.00pm-4.30 pm

Monday 8.00 am-10.00 am (online), 4.00pm-5.30 pm (online)

Wednesday 8.00 am-10.00 am (online), 12.00pm-1.15 pm (online)

Brazosport College

GOVT 2306 Texas Government

Section

Spring 2024

3 Credit Hours

## **Course Description**

This course is an introductory survey of the Texas political system. Topics include 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.

## **Core Curriculum Objectives and Assessments**

As part of the Brazosport College Core Curriculum, this course provides students the opportunity to achieve the following core curriculum objectives:

1. Critical Thinking: Including innovation, creative thinking, inquiry and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
2. Communication Skills: Including effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
3. Social Responsibility: Including intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
4. Personal Responsibility: Including the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision making.

Objectives will be assessed according to the Brazosport College Core Assessment Plan through the sampling and evaluation of student work

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

The aim of this course is to make students understand structure, functioning and key concepts of Texas politics. At the end of the semester students are expected to have well rounded knowledge on:

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.

## Required Book

Mark P. Jones/William Earl Maxwell/Ernest Crain/Morhea Lynn Davis/Christopher Wlezein/Elizabeth N. Flores

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MindTap: Texas Politics Today, Enhanced

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ISBN: 9780357028865

It is easier to buy it online:

- 1- <https://www.cengage.com/c/texas-politics-today-enhanced-18e-jones-maxwell-crain-davis-wlezein-flores/9781337799843/>
- 2- Choose the one that is shown above. The one with the MindTap for 92 dollars
- 3- Click check out
- 4- Create an account! It is recommended to use your BC account.
- 5- Make the payment and buy the book.
- 6- There will be a code coming with the book. Login to D2L GOVT 2305
- 7- Click on MindTap on D2L.
- 8- Punch in the code! Voila! Everything is ready !

Required course materials are available at the Brazosport College bookstore, on campus or online at <http://www.brazosport.edu/bookstore>. A student of this institution is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from the college bookstore. The same textbook is/may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

**NO COURSE KEY IS REQUIRED IF YOU FOLLOW THESE STEPS. REGISTER THROUGH D2L NOT THOROUGH CENGAGE PAGE. NO COURSE KEY IS NEEDED AND THERE IS NO COURSE KEY.**

### **Course Management System**

Students can access course material by clicking on the Virtual Campus/D2L button at the bottom of the BC webpage or type <https://online.brazosport.edu> into your internet web browser. Students who have difficulty logging in for the first time or have other technical issues such as browser problems can contact the Brazosport College Information Technology Center by emailing [helpdesk@brazosport.edu](mailto:helpdesk@brazosport.edu) or by phoning the IT Helpdesk at 979-230-3266.

### **Course Procedures**

Students should follow national and state political news stories on a regular basis. The student is responsible for all materials presented in class and in the textbook, including illustrations. This will be an “information intensive” subject. A variety of communication means will be used, including instructor presentation, video, assigned readings, paper assignment and quizzes. Students will be expected to engage the ideas and material through appropriate class preparation and participation. The class will discuss a variety of simple and complex questions. The students will take written examinations.

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Exams:**

There will be three midterm exams (10 percent each) and one final exam (20 percent). If a student takes all 3 midterm exams, the two highest scores will be used in calculating course grade. Every student must take the final exam.

Final exam will be cumulative. The exams will be based on materials covered in class and your textbook. We will not cover every chapter line by line. It is the students' responsibility to read each chapter thoroughly and take extensive notes. The exams could be a combination of multiple choice, true-false, matching. The students must download Lockdown Browser to take the exams.

To take a makeup exam, the students MUST present a legal documentation for their absences and MUST inform the instructor at least 48 hours in advance, excluding emergency situations. Even emergency situations need to be documented. A hospital note, doctors note, a death announcement on a newspaper are some examples to legal documentations. A family trip, “feeling under the weather” without a doctor's note, grandparents' death without proof are some of the unaccepted examples. The students must present their documentation within 5 business days.

College policy requires that a final examination be given in each course at the end of each semester. Any final examination which is to be given prior to or after the college final examination period must be approved by the Dean of Instruction.

## **MindTap Assignments:**

What is MindTap:

MindTap enables you to make the most of your time by learning your way—wherever, whenever. MindTap keeps all your course resources in one, convenient place. Track your scores so you always know where you stand. Use the integrated digital textbook to highlight key text passages and take notes. You can create your own custom flashcards and study guides.

MindTap is integrated in D2L. MindTap is an online learning solution designed with the intention to stimulate your engagement. You will access MindTap by logging into D2L, click on the course, GOVT 2306 then click on “Content” icon. Then click on “Table of Contents”. You will see the MindTap. Click on MindTap and follow the registration instructions. You may purchase a printed version of the stated textbook book from bookstore. The book comes with the access code to MindTap, which is required for the class. Alternately, you may skip the hard copy and purchase MindTap directly from the publisher. With MindTap, you will get a complete electronic version of the book. This is a cost-saving option in either case, click on the link to MindTap from within the course, and follow the prompts. You may access these materials free of charge on a temporary basis. You must buy MindTap, it is not optional. You cannot pass this course without completing MindTap assignments.

Here is a useful link

<https://www.cengage.com/training/mindtap?audience=Student#video>

Once you are in MindTap you will be able to do the readings online as well as from your textbook. Every week there is a topic and a chapter that will be covered. You must keep up with the readings.

Once you activate MindTap, you will gain free access to the MindTap Mobile App. With this app, you can read and practice anyplace, anytime giving you complete flexibility, and helping you increase your success in this course.

<https://www.cengage.com/mindtap/mobileapp>

If you need additional guidance, please visit

[www.cengage.com/start-strong](http://www.cengage.com/start-strong)

If you have TECHNICAL ISSUES, click on your name in the right-hand corner of MindTap. Click on SYSTEM CHECK and then if you still have issues, visit <http://techcheck.cengage.com> where you can check to see if they are experiencing any service interruptions. To contact Technical Support, please visit <http://cengage.com/support> to initiate a case or call 800-354-9706. Unfortunately, I cannot help you with technical issues, you must contact Cengage Technical support.

**Wrap it up quizzes (15 percent)**

Quizzes (one per chapter) for every chapter, students must take a short quiz of multiple-choice questions that test students' knowledge of the readings. Once the student clicks on a quiz, s/he will have **25 minutes to complete it**. So, make a good arrangement of your time. Each quiz will be available until the Sunday midnight of the week that we cover that chapter. You can find due dates for all assignments on the syllabus. If a student misses a quiz, there will not be a make-up quiz. Each quiz will **ONLY** be available in certain time. If a student fails to complete a quiz in the allocated time, there will be no makeup for that week's quiz.

There will be 12 quizzes available. The lowest 3 grades will be dropped. Students will be graded over 9 quizzes.

### **Watch and Consider (15 percent)**

Students are expected to watch a short video clip on the subject that is covered and expected to answer question on the video. There will be one video for each week's topic. There will be 12 videos available. The lowest 3 grades will be dropped. Students will be graded over 9 video assignments.

### **Focus Activities (10 Percent)**

There will be different assignments under focus activities. The students will be asked questions on terms that are covered in the chapters. The assignments must be completed in 20 minutes. Each activity will be available until the Sunday midnight of the week that we cover that chapter. You can find due dates for all assignments on the syllabus. If a student misses an assignment, there will not be a make-up. Each quiz will **ONLY** be available in certain time. If a student fails to complete an assignment in the allocated time, there will be no makeup for that week's assignment.

There will be 12 weekly assignments available. The lowest 3 grades will be dropped. Students will be graded over 9 Focus Activities.

### **Discussion Questions (10 percent)**

There will be 2 discussion questions throughout the semester, Students must answer both to the questions. The first discussion questions will be about the Voting and Elections ( Due 03/03/2024 11.59 pm.) The second question will be due 04/14/2024 11.59 pm. The second discussion question will be on the Texas Judiciary.

### **Short Paper (10 percent)**

Students will demonstrate civic responsibility by writing a letter to a member of Federal Congress about the issue of **combatting the misinformation and conspiracy theories plaguing TEXAS POLITICS**.

**Submission guidelines:** All written work must be types in Times New Roman, 12pt. font, double spaced . All assignments must be submitted on time. No extensions will be allowed (with the exception of extraordinary cases in which prior instructor's consent is required at least 48 hours **before the deadline for the assignment**). Students who do not submit their work on time will be penalized. 5 points for each day they fail to submit their work. Work that is submitted three days or more after the deadline will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. The due date of assignments is **clearly marked in this**

**syllabus** and it is **STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY** to know the due dates of the assignments.

It is imperative that all students adhere to **strict academic integrity guidelines** when conducting research and writing papers. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstances.** When incorporating someone else's ideas, whether through paraphrasing or direct quotation, it is mandatory to properly cite all sources using an appropriate referencing method.

Furthermore, students are **explicitly prohibited from utilizing any AI sources**, including but not limited to ChatGPT, in the creation of their papers. The work submitted must be a genuine and original product of the student's own efforts.

To maintain academic rigor and credibility, all students are required to include a bibliography, which can be in the form of a "Works Cited" or "End Notes" page. The choice of citation style, whether it be APA, Chicago, Harvard, or any other approved style, is at the discretion of the student. However, it is crucial to use the chosen citation style consistently and accurately throughout the paper.

In addition to the bibliography, students must **incorporate in-text citations** whenever they reference or quote from external sources within the body of their paper. This ensures proper attribution and supports the transparency of the research process.

In summary, the utmost importance is placed on maintaining academic honesty, citing sources appropriately, and adhering to the chosen citation style consistently. Failure to do so may result in academic penalties, so it is imperative that all students understand what constitutes plagiarism and the consequences of not following these guidelines.

NOTE: If a student stops attending class, he/she will NOT be administratively withdrawn by the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to initiate the withdrawal process before the college deadline for such action.

*Students may enable push notifications for receiving reminders for assignments.*

*You must arrange your all schedule accordingly. "Leaving work late" or "being preoccupied with other stuff" are not valid excuses.*

It is very important to keep up with the schedule in an online course. The Mindtap assignments and PowerPoints will help you to prepare for the exams. Make sure you meet the deadlines shown in the syllabus. Putting the deadlines on your smart phone calendar may be a good option not to miss any assignment or test. Make sure you arrange your work and leisure time accordingly.

## **Communication**

**Students are responsible for regularly checking their college-mail and D2L emails for announcements. Please use your student email to communicate with me.**

Your email inquiries will be answered in a timely fashion, if they adhere to certain basic rules of courtesy and professionalism. Emails I receive with no salutation or the salutation, “hey”, will not get an answer. A minimal “Hi, Prof. Sisman” or a more formal, “Dear Prof. Sisman” is expected to start a good communication.

Allow me at least 24 hours to respond to your email. Emails sent on the weekend may not get a reply until Monday morning. **You should use your official BC email account when contacting with the instructor. Emails sent after 5.00 pm will be responded on next day.** Emails sent on the weekend may not get a reply until Monday morning.

## **Grade Scale**

A	89.5 - 100
B	79.5 – 89.4
C	69.5 – 79.4
D	59.5 – 69.4
F	below 59.4

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

BC is committed to providing equal education opportunities to every student. BC offers services for individuals with special needs and capabilities including counseling, tutoring, equipment, and software to assist students with special needs. Please contact Phil Robertson, Special Populations Counselor, 979-230-3236 for further information.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

BC assumes that students eligible to perform on the college level are familiar with the ordinary rules governing proper conduct including academic honesty. The principle of academic honesty is that all work presented by you is yours alone. Academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion shall be treated appropriately. Please refer to the BC Student Guide for more information, this is available online at <http://www.brazosport.edu>, click on the link found on the left side of the homepage.

Academic dishonesty violates both the policies of this course and the Student Code of Conduct. In this class, any occurrence of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Dean of Student Services for prompt adjudication, and may, at a minimum, result in \_\_\_\_F\_\_\_\_ in this course. Sanctions may be imposed beyond your grade in this course by the Dean of Student Services

**Title IX Statement:** Please include the following statement in your syllabus.

**Title IX Statement:**

Brazosport College faculty and staff are committed to supporting students and upholding the College District's non-discrimination policy. Under Title IX and Brazosport College's policy FFDA (Local), discrimination based on sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression is prohibited. If students experience an incident of discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct, they are encouraged to report it.

If a faculty or staff member "is informed of a student's pregnancy or related condition" by the student or "a person who has a legal right to act on behalf of the student," the employee must "promptly" tell the student or representative how to notify the Title IX Coordinator of the student's pregnancy or related conditions and must provide the Title IX Coordinator's contact information to the student or representative, unless the employee "reasonably believes" the Title IX Coordinator already knows.

While students may talk to a faculty or staff member at BC, please understand that they are "Responsible Employees" and must report what is told to them to college officials. Students can also contact the Title IX Coordinators directly by using the contact information below. Additional information is found on the Sexual Misconduct webpage at [www.brazosport.edu/sexualmisconduct](http://www.brazosport.edu/sexualmisconduct).

Alex Crouse, Director of Student Life and Deputy Title IX Coordinator 979-230-3355;  
[alex.crouse@brazosport.edu](mailto:alex.crouse@brazosport.edu)

Brad McGonagle, Vice President, HR and Title IX Coordinator 979-230-3459;  
[brad.mcgonagle@brazosport.edu](mailto:brad.mcgonagle@brazosport.edu)

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students are expected to fully participate in the course. The following criteria are intended to assist you in being successful in this course.

- a. Time Management
- b. Understanding the Syllabus Requirements
- c. Utilizing Online Components (such as D2L)
- d. Communicating with the Instructor
- e. Completing Course Work

**OTHER STUDENT SERVICES INFORMATION**

This list is provided to assist students in locating available services. Information about the BC Library is available at <http://www.brazosport.edu/~lib/Information.htm> or by calling 230-3310. Tutoring for Math, Reading, Writing, Biology, Chemistry, and other subjects is available in the LAC, 230-3253. To contact the Communications & Fine Arts Division call 230-3224. The Student Services area provides the



following services: Counseling and Advising, 230-3040; Financial Aid, 230-3294; and Student Activities, 230-3355.

### **Campus Closure Statement:**

Brazosport College is committed to the health and safety of all students, staff, and faculty and adheres to all federal and state guidelines. The College intends to stay open for the duration of the semester and provide access to classes and support services on campus in the safest way possible. The College will also comply with lawful orders given by applicable authorities, including the Governor of Texas, up to and including campus closure. It is possible that on campus activities may be moved online and/or postpone if such orders are given.

### **Course Outline**

**Week 1- (January 16-18)-** Introduction to Syllabus and key terms

**Week 2 (January 23-25)-** The Environment of Texas Politics

Read: Chapter 1

Assignment (Due 01/28/2024 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 1
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 1
- 3- Focus Activities chapter 1

**Week 3 (January 30-February 1)-** Texas in the Federal System

Read: Chapter 2

Assignment (Due 02/04/2024 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 2
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 2
- 3- Focus Activities chapters 2

**Week 4- (February 6-15)** Texas Constitution

Read Chapter: 3

Assignment (Due 02/18/2024 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 3
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 3
- 3- Focus Activity chapter 3

**Week 5-(February 13 15)- Texas Constitution con't**

**Midterm 1- Available on from 02/16/2024 7.00 am until 02/17/2024 11.59 pm**

**Week 6- (February 20-22)- Voting and Elections**

Read Chapter: 4

Assignment (Due 02/25/2024 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 4
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 4
- 3- Focus Activities chapter 4

**Week 7-(February 27-29)- Political Parties**

Read Chapter: 5

Assignment (Due 03/03/2024 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 5
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 5
- 3- Focus Activities chapter 5
- 4- **Discussion Question 1**

**Week 8- (March 5-7) The Politics of Interest Groups**

Read Chapter: 6

Assignment (Due 03/10/2024 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 6
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 6
- 3- Focus Activities chapter 6

**Midterm 2 –Available online between 03/08/2024 9.00 am- 03/09/2024 11.59pm.**

**Week 9-(October 23-27)- SPRING BREAK**

**Week 10- (March 19-21) The Legislative Branch**

Read Chapter: 7

Assignment (Due 03/24/2024 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 7
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 7
- 3- Focus Activities chapter 7

**PAPER SUBMISSION DEADLINE 03/24/2024 11.59 PM.**

**Week 11 (March 26-28) The Executive Branch**

Read Chapter: 8

Assignment (Due 03/31/2024 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 8
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 8
- 3- Focus Activities chapter 8

**Week 12- (April 2-4 ) –The Judicial Branch**

Read Chapter: 9

Assignment (Due 04/07/2024 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 9
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 9
- 3- Focus activities chapter 9

**Midterm 3- Available online between 04/05/2024 9.00 am until 04/06/2024 11.59pm**

**Week 13 (April 9-11 )- Law and Due Process**

Read Chapter: 10

Assignment (Due 04/14/2024 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 10
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 10
- 3- Focus Activities chapter 10
- 4- **Discussion Question 2**

**Week 14 (April 16-18) Local Government**

Read Chapter: 11

Assignment (Due 04/21/2024 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter 11
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter 11
- 3- Focus Activities chapter 11

**Week 15 (April 23-25)- Public Policy in Texas**

Read: Chapter 12

Assignment (Due 04/28/2024 11.59 pm)

- 1- Wrap it up quiz chapter
- 2- Watch and Consider chapter
- 3- Focus Activities chapter 12

**April 29-** Wrap up section

**Final exam will be available between 05/02/2024 9.00 am- 05/03/2024 11.59 pm.**