

**DOUGLAS D. JONES**

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**Campus Office Hours: MW 9:15-9:45am, 11-11:30am, 12:45 -1:15pm**

**Online Office Hours: MTW 6:00 - 7:00pm**

**BRAZOSPORT COLLEGE**

**GOVT 2306 Texas Government**

**Section 02 - 3 credit hours**

**MW 11:30am-12:45pm**

**Spring 2024**

"I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts." -- Will Rogers, famous comedian and entertainer of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Origin and development of the Texas constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and intergovernmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES (Student Learning Outcomes)

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.

### TEXTBOOK

**There is no required textbook for this course.**

Information from the following book will be presented. Students are NOT required to buy to this book.

Murdock, Steve H., et al. 2014. *Changing Texas: Implications of Addressing or Ignoring the Texas Challenge*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press. ISBN: 978-1-62349-159-8

State textbook policy - "A student of this institution is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from a university-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer."

### OTHER READING MATERIAL

*The Texas Tribune* (<http://www.texastribune.org/>) is a good website for keeping up with Texas political news.

## COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Students can access course material by clicking on the Virtual Campus button at the bottom of the BC webpage or type <https://online.brazosport.edu> into your internet web browser. User name is first initial of first name, last name, and last 4 digits of your Student ID number (ex: jdoe1234). Initial password is lowercase letters bc followed by your six digit PIN number (ex: bc123456). (Your PIN number is the number issued by the registrar that you use to register online through myBC.) Once logged in, the course is listed as GOVT2306-DJONES-1FTF.

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.

## QUIZZES

Regular quizzes are open-note assignments in the Virtual Campus consisting of 10 (mostly multiple-choice with an occasional true-false) questions worth one point each. There is an enforced one hour time limit for completing each quiz so you should have plenty of time to be able to look up information as needed. Quizzes are set to allow a second attempt on missed questions. ***The first attempt will be used for grade purposes.*** Second attempt is solely to allow you to see questions that were missed. *Late work will receive reduced credit.*

## EXAMINATIONS

There will be four in-class exams and an optional comprehensive in-class final exam. If a student takes five exams, the four highest scores will be used in calculating course grade. The four regular exams are closed-note assignments consisting of 50 (mostly multiple-choice with a few true-false) questions worth two points each plus 10 bonus current event (multiple-choice) questions worth one point each. Each exam module will have a PowerPoint presentation containing current political and economic events located next to the study guide at the bottom of the module. The optional final is a closed-note exam consisting of 100 (mostly multiple-choice with a few true-false) questions worth one point each plus 10 bonus current event (multiple-choice) questions worth one point each.

## DISCUSSION

One of the features of the Virtual Campus is the ability to share perspectives through use of the discussions tool. There will be eight discussions to complete (two for each course module). Discussions are generally open-ended assignments to consider a topic most have probably not spent a lot of time thinking about. Your response does not need to be a lengthy writing exercise but it does need to demonstrate your **THOUGHTFUL** reflection on the topic. Some discussions are about an article or video posted in the Virtual Campus. For those discussions, you definitely need to address the information presented in the article/video before giving your personal thoughts on the topic. Demonstrate conclusively that you did in fact read the article/watch the video you are analyzing. **Use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) products for discussions will result in a zero for that discussion.** *Late work will receive reduced credit.*

*Course participants should respond to one another with respect at all times. Differing viewpoints are likely to be expressed and are welcome as long as each posting is stated in appropriate, respectful language. If you*

*disagree with an idea stated in a classmate's posting, your response should focus on the substance of the idea without attacking or insulting the person who expressed the thought you take issue with. In short, we should be able to disagree without being disagreeable.*

## GRAMMAR

This is an academic course at an institution of higher education. Ensure that all written course communications (including email) are grammatically correct. This includes but is not limited to capitalization, punctuation, sentence structure and spelling. Do not write discussions in a style like you are texting a friend. You should be communicating with your instructor and fellow classmates in a professional manner. **Discussions should be approached as if you are writing a document for management at work.**

## GRADING

All course assignments must be turned in on or before the due date in order to receive full credit. Course grades will be determined as follows:

Exam 1	15 %
Exam 2	15 %
Exam 3	15 %
Exam 4	15 %
Virtual Campus Quizzes	15 %
Virtual Campus Discussions	10 %
Active Class Participation	15 %

**Note: If a student stops attending/participating in the course, 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.**

Grade scale is as follows:

90.0 – 100	A	70.0 – 79.9	C
80.0 – 89.9	B	60.0 – 69.9	D
		< 60	F

## ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Honesty is the cornerstone of academic integrity of any educational institution. It is the foundation upon which the student builds personal integrity and establishes a standard of personal behavior. Brazosport College 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 is a violation of the Brazosport College Standards of Student Conduct and is punishable as prescribed by Board of Regents policies. Academic dishonesty shall include, but not be limited to, cheating on a test or assignment, plagiarism and collusion. **Students guilty of scholastic dishonesty shall receive a grade of zero for that course component and could possibly be subject to dismissal from the class with a failing grade by the Dean of Student Services.** The full policy regarding the Student Code of Conduct can be found in the BC Student Guide. This is available online at <http://www.brazosport.edu>.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Student responsibilities include:

- Reading and understanding the course syllabus
- Upholding the Brazosport College Student Code of Conduct
- Attending class
- Completing assignments
- Communicating with the instructor

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Brazosport College 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. For student to receive any accommodation, documentation must be completed in the Office of Disability Services. Please contact the Special Populations Counselor at 979-230-3236 for further information.

## MENTAL HEALTH

To help you on your educational pathway, Brazosport College provides all students with access to TimelyCare. If you're stressed, challenged, or need help, download the TimelyCare app. It's your free virtual health and well-being service platform, available 24/7, 365 days of the year. Search "TimelyCare" in your app store. Then, register with your student email to access your health care services.

## 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 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)

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

I want every student to succeed in learning course material so please contact me if you are having difficulty with the work in this course.

## COURSE OUTLINE

### Module 1

Texas Introduction: Political Culture, General Overview, Regional Characteristics, and Future Challenges

Texas Government: State Political Culture

Eleven American Nations map

Is Texas Southern, Western, or Truly a Lone Star?

Texaplex 2 video (bit dated now but deals with some themes presented in Texas Introduction)

15 Most Populous Cities 2020 (Texas an urban state, home to several of the country's largest cities)

TxGovt - constitution

Texas Government: Constitution of Coahuila and Texas (1827)

Texas Government: Constitution of the Republic of Texas (1836)

Texas Government: Constitution of 1845

Texas Government: Constitution of 1861

Texas Government: Constitution of 1866

Texas Government: Constitution of 1869

Texas Government: Constitution of 1876

Amending the Texas Constitution

TxGovt - federalism and the states

Current events for exam 1

Exam 1 – key concepts study guide

Discussion: Introductions – due by January 22

Discussion: Texas: Southern or Western State? – due by January 26

open-note Quiz: Texas Introduction – available January 18-20

open-note Quiz: Texas Constitution – available January 25-27

open-note Quiz: Federalism and the States – available February 1-3

### **Exam 1 – Wednesday, February 7**

### Module 2

TxGovt - legislature

Texas Government: Legislative Sessions

TxGovt - legislative process

Wendy Davis's Filibuster in Photos

TxGovt - executive branch

TxGovt - governor

Greg Abbott and the \$200 million bully pulpit

TxGovt - judicial system

Is Justice for Sale in Texas

Court Structure of Texas  
Texas Government: Sources and Hierarchy of Law  
Texas Government: Types of Law and Jurisdiction  
Texas Government: Criminal Law Penalties  
Texas Government: Texas' Criminal Justice Process  
Criminal Justice Reform  
Criminal Justice Reform at the State Level  
Current events for exam 2  
Exam 2 – key concepts study guide

Discussion: Texas Legislature – due by February 16  
Discussion: Criminal Justice Reform – due by February 23

open-note Quiz: Texas Legislative Branch – available February 15-17  
open-note Quiz: Texas Executive Branch – available February 15-17  
open-note Quiz: Texas Judicial Branch – available February 22-24

## **Exam 2 – Wednesday, February 28**

*(\*\*\*Tuesday, March 5 – Texas Democratic and Republican primary election\*\*\*)*

### Module 3

TxGovt - Elections, Voting & Campaigns  
How the Sharpstown State Bank Brought Down Texas' Top Politicians  
Texas Government: Elections  
Why is Texas turnout so low? Demographics play a big role  
America's Suburbs: Ground Zero in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Politics  
TxGovt - political parties  
Party organization in Texas  
Texas Government: Political Parties  
Texas Government: Party Identification  
TxGovt - interest groups  
Texas Government: Interest Groups  
Interest Group Strength Across the States  
New Dilemma For Corporations And Social Issues  
Apple, Google among dozens of corporations condemning Texas' order to investigate families of trans kids  
"Discrimination is Bad for Business" open letter  
State Rep. Geanie Morrison Discusses Interest Groups  
Current events for exam 3  
Exam 3 – key concepts study guide

Discussion: Why is Texas turnout so low? – due by March 8  
Discussion: Role of Interest Groups – due by March 28

open-note Quiz: TX elections & voting – available March 7-9  
open-note Quiz: TX political parties – available March 21-23  
open-note Quiz: TX interest groups – available March 28-30

### **Exam 3 – Wednesday, April 3**

*(\*\*\*Monday, April 1 is the last day to withdraw from class for the semester\*\*\*)*

#### Module 4

Changing Texas - population growth & implications for Texas (from *Changing Texas* book)

As State Ages, Families Face Caring for Elderly at Home

Caring for an Aging Nation

TxGovt - public policy

States With No Income Tax

TxGovt - local government

Texas Government: Local Government

Map of Texas COGs (Council of Governments)

Current events for exam 4

Exam 4 – key concepts study guide

Discussion: Changing Texas book – due by April 12

Discussion: As State Ages, Families Face Caring for Elderly at Home – due by April 19

open-note Quiz: TX population change – available April 11-13

open-note Quiz: TX public policy – available April 18-20

open-note Quiz: TX local government – available April 25-27

### **Exam 4 – Wednesday, May 1**

***Optional Final Exam – Monday, May 6 (1:00-3:00pm)***