

**SYLLABUS  
Fall 2015**

**GOVT 2306 – Texas Government - (ONLINE)  
BRAZOSPORT COLLEGE**

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*Politics is about who gets what, when, and  
how.*

**Harold Lasswell**

GOVT 2306 Texas Government - CIP 4510025125 A functional study of the 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.

There is no required textbook for this course. This is an online course using the Desire2Learn (D2L) class management system. Course content will be presented in the Unit Modules found in D2L *Content*. Each module will contain Power Point presentations. Power Point presentations will contain narration by the instructor and will require a device with speakers or a headset. To hear the audio for each Power Point presentation click on "Slide Show" and then click on "From Beginning" and the presentation will automatically move from slide to slide with the narration. All class assignments will be submitted online.

**Ideas for Becoming a More Successful Student**

- **Read this syllabus carefully.**
- Make sure you thoroughly understand the requirements of the course and what will be expected of you. Ask questions about anything you do not understand.
- Become an active learner. Be an active reader, writer, and listener.
- Use the discussion board to become an active questioner. If you do not ask questions, you will probably not discover what you do not know.
- Spend time in the "online environment" in D2L. Don't sit back passively, waiting for knowledge to fall into your head like rain into a rain barrel. It won't.
- Relate content whenever possible to issues and problems and practical situations in your life.
- Figure out what study and learning skills you are not good at. Practice those skills whenever possible. Recognizing and correcting your weaknesses is a strength.

- Frequently ask yourself: "Can I explain this to someone not in this course?" If not, you haven't learned it well enough.
- Write summaries in your own words of important points from the power points and other sources in the modules. Make up test questions. Write out answers to your own questions.
- Frequently evaluate your reading and listening as you view the power points. Are you reading and listening actively? Are you asking questions as you read and listen? Can you distinguish what you understand from what you don't?

## Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

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 the issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.

## Exam Calendar

Calendar	Modules for each exam are as follows:	<b>For Full Credit Complete By</b>	<b>Late Credit Begins</b>
Exam One	The Social and Economic Milieu of Texas Politics The Texas Constitution Texas Government and Politics in the Federal System	<i>September 12 Midnight</i>	<i>September 13</i>
Exam Two	Interest Groups and Political Power in Texas The Party System in Texas The Mass Media In Texas Politics	<i>October 2 Midnight</i>	<i>October 3</i>
Exam Three	The Texas Legislature Elections, Campaigns, and Political Behavior in Texas	<i>October 22 Midnight</i>	<i>October 23</i>
Exam Four	The Texas Executive The Texas Bureaucracy and Policy Implementation	<i>November 11 Midnight</i>	<i>November 12</i>
Final Exam	The Judicial System in Texas Local Government in Texas Contemporary Public Policy	<i>December 4 Midnight</i>	<i>December 5</i>

	Issues		
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### Introductions and Profile

- The first assignment is to post a brief self-introduction and profile. In your introduction address the following questions. (1) What are your education and/or career goals? (2) Do you have a hobby or how do you like to spend your free time? (3) How will you make time for this course? (4) What is your "plan b" if you experience computer and/or Internet issues? (5) If you have taken an online course before what advice would you offer about being successful in online courses?

### Exams

- There will be four exams and a final exam. All exams will be completed online using D2L.
- Each exam will consist of a set of multiple-choice and true/false items drawn from the Power Points and other sources found in D2L *Content*.
- Late exams are penalized 10 points per day.
- Once you have completed and submitted an exam you will be able to view your grade in the D2L Grades tool.

### Essays

- Essays should be carefully written and demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the topic. Each essay will have an attached grading rubric which will give you detailed criteria on how the essay will be graded and scored. Check the Dropbox for essay topics and due dates. Essays are scored on content and style. The course glossary contains some commonly misused or misspelled words.

### Discussion Board

- The Discussion Board is an open forum. In this forum we may see a continuation of the topics discussed in the essays. Issues that develop in the news during the time of our course may also be topics of discussion. You are welcome to raise and present topics for discussion. The Discussion Board allows for replies to the postings of your classmates. In responding to a classmate's post it is fine to share your opinions. Remember to keep your comments civil and respectful.
- Posts to the discussion board should be in complete sentences with careful attention to spelling and grammar standards. Proof read discussion posts just as carefully as you would any formal written assignment.

### Grades

- Under "Assessments" you will see "Grades." This gradebook gives you an up to the minute record of your progress/grade for the class.

The course grade will be earned based on the following formula.

Self-Introduction	Discussion Board	25 Points
Essays	Four Essays @ 25 points each	100 Points
Exams	Four Exams @ 50 points each	200 Points

Final Exam	Final Exam @ 75 Points	75 Points
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**D2L Grade Book:** Your “final calculated grade” will give you an up-to-date view of where you stand in the course at any given point in the semester. The following scale will be used to determine your course grade:

Final Calculated Grade	Course Grade
100-90 %	A
89-80 %	B
79-70 %	C
69-60 %	D
59-0 %	F