

Office: Deadrick Hall 219
Phone: 208-2399 (please nothing before 8 AM or after 10 PM)
E-Mail: kstephens@odessa.edu
Location: DH 200

Office Hours: Directly before or after class,
by appointment, or via BlackBoard
Class Time: 10:00 AM – 10:50 AM
Days: Mon, Wed, Fri

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To present the basic concepts of politics that will better enable you, the student, to understand Texas government and politics.
2. To motivate you, the student, to take an interest in and understand issues facing the US, Texas, and Odessa.
3. To stimulate you, the student, to exercise your privileges and obligations as a U.S. citizen, through participation in local, state, and national political activities.

TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS:

Tx.Gov by Maxwell/Crain/Santos, ISBN:978-1-133-96327-1

- Digital copies are also available.

www.realclearpolitics.com

ATTENDANCE:

Because of the importance of class notes and discussion to learning attendance is vital to student success. Good attendance will help in borderline-grade cases. ***Attendance will be taken during every class. More than 3 unexcused absences may result in you being dropped from the class.***

TARDINESS:

You are expected to be on time for class.

DROP POLICY:

You are responsible for dropping this class if you quit coming. The instructor will not do so. Failure to drop=F. ***As the instructor, I have the right to drop any student for nonattendance or failure to do coursework.***

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

You are encouraged to participate actively in class discussions. Often, informal discussions will center on assigned topics or current events. Class participation will help in borderline-grade cases. You must read www.realclearpolitics.com every day and will be held responsible for the material posted there.

PHONE POLICY:

All phones should be on silent. Texting or taking phone calls are highly discouraged, but I understand that emergencies come up. If you need to take a call or text, please step into the hall. If you are able, please join the class again as discreetly as you can.

BLACKBOARD:

This is where grades will be posted and assignments will be submitted. You will find helpful resources about testing and writing papers, also a “Coffee Shop” discussion board to post political cartoons and ask general questions.

EXAMINATIONS:

There will be three one-hour exams, each worth 100 points. They will consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and an essay. A 200-point final exam will be given during the scheduled exam time. The final exam will be comprehensive including both the last units covered and those covered before.

You must bring a pen or #2 pencil to all exams.

MAKE-UP EXAMS AND QUIZZES:

If you are unable to take a quiz or test at the regular scheduled time with your class, you can take it BEFORE your class's test day. Otherwise, there are no makeups unless you give advance notification to the instructor. You must take the make-up before the exam is handed back in class. Makeups taken after exams are handed back in class will be two-hour ALL ESSAY. Only one make-up is allowed. A MAKE-UP EXAM GRADE WILL BE LOWERED BY ONE FULL LETTER GRADE FOR AN UNDOCUMENTED ABSENCE.

- For a list of documented absences, please refer to the attached Make Up policy

CURRENT EVENTS:

Throughout the semester current events -- international, national, state, and local -- will be discussed and related to Government and politics. These stories will show the relationship between material in class and outside events.

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT:

One research assignment paper, worth 300 points, **is required**. This will be a 3-5 page paper written over one of several topics I will provide to you. The due date: on the "Semester Schedule" page. No late submissions will be accepted! Must be original work! Zero tolerance for Plagiarism! Will be submitted via BlackBoard.

GRADING POLICY

The final course grade will be determined on a percentage basis:

<u>% Of total possible points</u>	<u>Total possible points:1000</u>
90-100% = 900 points = A	Exam #1 100 points = 17% of course grade
80-89% = 800 points = B	Exam #2 100 points = 17% of course grade
70-79% = 700 points = C	Exam #3 100 points = 17% of course grade
60-69% = 600 points = D	Research Assignment--300 points = 24% of course grade
Below 60% = 599 & below = F	Final Exam--200 points = 25% of course grade

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Exams and quizzes are closed book exams. No notes or additional materials are allowed. Cheating or plagiarism will result in the grade of 0. **Any student handing in a copied paper or letting their paper be copied by another student will get a zero on the assignment.**

UNITS

Part I—Texas Historical & Constitutional Background

1. Texas Cultural, Historical & Political Development
2. The Texas Constitution
3. Texas in the Federal System

TEST #1 (Units 1 & 3)

Part II--Influencing and Choosing Decision Makers

4. Voting and Elections
5. Political Parties
6. Interest Groups

TEST #2 (Units 4-6)

Part III--The Institutions of Texas Government

7. The Texas Governor
8. The Texas Legislature
9. The Texas Judiciary
10. Law and Due Process

TEST #3 (Units 7-10)

Part IV—Taxing, Spending, & Local Government

11. Taxing & Budgeting
12. Local Government

FINAL EXAM (Units 1-12)

READINGS—Maxwell / Crain / Santos

Ch. 1
Ch. 3
Ch. 2

Ch. 4
Ch. 5
Ch. 6

Ch. 8
Ch. 7
Ch. 9
Ch. 10

Ch. 11
Ch. 12

EXAM MAKE-UP POLICY

Due to excessive absences for exams on the scheduled exam day in all of my classes, I have spelled out my exam make-up policy. The policy is as follows:

1. To make-up an exam, you **MUST** contact me prior to or the day of the exam, in person, by phone or email.
2. If you take the exam **BEFORE THE ORIGINAL TEST DAY, THERE IS NO PENALTY.** If however, you take the exam **AFTER THE EXAM IS TAKEN** but before it is handed back and discussed in class, **THERE WILL BE A 10 POINTS DEDUCTION. IF TAKEN AFTER THE EXAM HAS BEEN HANDED BACK,** the make-up will be **ALL ESSAY.**
3. I must have **WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION OF A VALID REASON FOR YOUR ABSENCE AND INABILITY TO TAKE THE TEST AT THE SCHEDULED TIME WITH YOUR CLASS.** Documentation would include:
 - A note from your employer
 - A note from your coach or school organization sponsor
 - Documentation that you were ill and unable to attend (Dr. prescription)
 - Documentation of a funeral or other significant family event
4. **VALID REASONS TO MISS AN EXAM:**
 - An OC sponsored event
 - Job/work responsibilities
 - Serious illness or accident (auto or otherwise)
 - Family emergency/funeral/surgery/serious illness

I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO DECIDE IF YOUR REASON FOR MISSING AN EXAM IS INVALID AND IF I SUSPECT IT IS, YOU WILL NOT HAVE THE CHANCE TO TAKE A MAKE-UP.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of 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. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens
8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.

ODESSA COLLEGE CODE OF STUDENT CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

What follows is a general description of what many teachers here at Odessa College expect from their good students:

Good Students behave in ways that enhance the learning experience for everyone in the class.

- They attend regularly and come to class prepared even after an absence;
- They arrive on time and stay for the entire class;
- They are engaged during class, often actively participating in lecture and discussion;
- They leave cellular phones, beepers, and other electronic equipment turned off during class:**
- They are attentive during class, not whispering, giggling, or holding side conversations;
- They use appropriate language in class: no profanity or foul language;
- They wear clothing that allows them to participate fully in class activities, clothing which does not distract others in class;
- They stay on task, using class time to work on projects related to that class, rather than reading for or working on projects related to other classes;
- They avoid using tobacco during class or eating or drinking in classes where it is inappropriate;

Good students practice personal and academic integrity.

- They do not cheat in or out of class on tests and quizzes;
- They do not plagiarize on assignments: hand in the work of others as their own;
- They do not lie or make excuses;
- They complete assignments, projects, papers, and exams in a timely manner.

Good students respect the dignity of all people.

- They do not compromise or demean the dignity of others by taunting, teasing, insulting, sexually harassing or discriminating;
- They respect the opinions of others in the class;
- They do not engage in theft, vandalism, or malicious damage of property;
- They encourage the equal rights and treatment of all students, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, ethnic heritage, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and/or political ideology.

Good students are responsible for their own needs.

- They recognize it is their responsibility to communicate any problems or concerns to the appropriate Odessa college personnel, such as instructors, counselors, and coaches. This includes extended absences, health problems, job conflicts, emergencies, incarcerations, family problems, and documented learning disabilities;
- They follow appropriate procedures if they a grievance. After discussing the problem with the instructor, coach, or counselor first, they proceed in a hierarchical order as diagramed below, following the steps outlined in the Student Right to Due Process, available in full text from the office of the Vice-President for Student Life.

Grievance Procedure

**Student→ Instructor/Coach/Counselor→ Department Chairperson→ Division Dean→ Vice President→
President of Odessa College→ Board of Trustees**

GOVERNMENT 2306--SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Fall 2013

M-W-F Classes

(Dates are subject to change by professor)

Syllabus Day

8/26

Part I—Texas Historical & Constitutional Background

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|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Texas Culture and Diversity | 8/26, 8/28, 8/30, 9/4, 9/6, 9/9, |
| 2. The Texas Constitution | 9/11, 9/13, 9/16 |
| 3. Texas in the Federal System | 9/18, 9/20, 9/23 |

TEST #1 (Units 1 - 3)—Wednesday September 25

Part II--Influencing and Choosing Decision Makers

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|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 3. Voting and Elections | 9/27, 9/30, 10/2, |
| 4. Political Parties | 10/4, 10/7, 10/9, |
| 5. Interest Groups | 10/11, 10/14, 10/16, |

TEST #2 (Units 3-5)---Friday, October 18

Part III--The Institutions of Texas Government

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|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 6. The Texas Governor | 10/21, 10/23, 10/25, |
| 7. The Texas Legislature | 10/28, 10/30, 11/1, |

Research Assignment Paper Due— Friday, November 1

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|------------------------|----------------------|
| 8. The Texas Judiciary | 11/4, 11/6, 11/8, |
| 9. Law and Due Process | 11/11, 11/13, 11/15, |

TEST #3 (Units 6-9)—Monday, November 18

Part IV—Taxing, Spending, & Local Government

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|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 11. Spending & Services | 11/20, 11/22, 11/25 |
|-------------------------|---------------------|

Thanksgiving Break: Novemeber 27-30

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|----------------------|------------------|
| 12. Local Government | 12/2, 12/4, 12/6 |
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FINAL EXAM (over Units 1-12)

10:00 class: Monday, December 9 at 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.