

Dr. Robert Yowell
Academic I Room 201E – Kitty Hawk Campus
Office Hours:
MW 10:00 – 11:15 a.m.; 3:15 – 4:30 p.m.
R 2:00 – 4:30 p.m.
F 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
or by appointment (210) 486-5218

eInstruction Class Key: N77026F651

Course web page: <http://www.robertyowell.org>
StudySpace website: <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/nrl/gradebook/login.asp>

GOVT 2306.057
Northeast Lakeview College
Spring 2015
TR 9:25 – 10:40 a.m.
Academic I Room 131
1201 Kitty Hawk
Universal City, TX 78148

E-mail: ryowell@alamo.edu

Texas Government

Purpose

This three (3) credit course is a general survey course of the United States and Texas Constitutions, federalism, citizenship, voting and local governments with an emphasis on Texas government.

This course fulfills the Government/Political Science foundational component area of the core and addresses the following required objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Social Responsibility, and Personal Responsibility.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, a student is 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 issues, policies and political culture of Texas.

Required Texts and Accompanying Materials

We the People, Ninth Texas Edition by Ginsberg et al.
Internet access to use the StudySpace online materials
Four (4) Scantron exam forms, #95141

Required Classroom Technology

All students will need to purchase and pay to register (online) an eInstruction response remote pad and bring it ready for use *every* class period.

Grading

Grading will be composed of the following elements:	Portion of course grade
In-class quiz questions	20%
Attendance and Participation	10%
StudySpace Exercises	20%
Midterm Exams (the best two of three @ 15% each)	30%
Group Workshop	5%
Final Exam (Thursday, May 14, 9:25 a.m.)	15%

Grade cutoffs for all assignments are 90% for an "A," 80% "B," 70% "C," and 60% "D." Do not expect any curving or rounding of scores on any assessment. Students may obtain their scores at any time during the semester from the instructor to estimate a "running total" score. If you do not withdraw from the course and just stop attending, you will receive an "F" for the course. In order to receive a "W," you must withdraw from the course prior to the last withdrawal date as published in the schedule. To withdraw from a course, go in person to NLC Student Services, STCM Welcome Center during normal business hours. The Welcome Center staff will refer you to the Transaction Counter to process your withdrawal request.

Quiz questions will be interspersed throughout the lecture presentations and require the eInstruction response remote to answer. You must have your remote present and charged every class period; there will be absolutely no excuses accepted for not being able to participate with this technology. Information on the quiz questions will be taken from the readings, discussion from previous classes and current events we discuss in class. Your overall quiz score will be the percentage of quiz questions you answer correctly as a percentage of all those questions possible during the semester. Any time a student chooses not to attempt to answer a quiz question, the student is charged with an incorrect answer. Quiz questions missed by students with valid and documented excuses will be excluded from grading provided the student provides such documentation the day the student returns to class.

The base attendance and participation score is the percentage of non-exam classes fully and attentively attended, and I will modify this score based on the level of active and constructive class participation in which a student engages. I will use a randomization function to select students several times each class meeting to answer questions about directed readings you will find (in red italics) throughout each topic outline. An answer that demonstrates the proper level of class preparation will be rewarded with a positive adjustment to that student's attendance and participation score; answers displaying a lack of preparation will have the opposite effect. You are required to download (from the course website listed above), print and bring the appropriate topic outlines each class period. Each outline has assignments for you to complete (indicated by text in red italics) before that topic is discussed in class. These outlines will help you take well-structured and useful notes to prepare you for the exams. Failure to prepare for class time by attending without the appropriate topic outline or completing its assigned tasks may result in a penalty to your attendance and participation score.

You will need to complete about one exercise per week from the online textbook resource StudySpace. I have posted on the course website links to each exercise, its suggested completion date and how to submit your work. Absences from class meetings or technological difficulties are not acceptable excuses for the failure to complete StudySpace exercises.

Any electronic communication devices such as cellular phones are to be turned off and put away during the entire class, during every class meeting. Any student who either receives an incoming call or message or uses the device will be marked as absent for that class period. Unless cleared with the instructor beforehand, it is never appropriate to receive or send any text or voice message during class meetings in this or any course you will ever take. Any use of laptop computers or personal desktop assistants, etc. that is non-class related will result in that student be marked absent as well. Sleeping, putting one's head down on the desk or chatting with another student will achieve the same result. Please do not bring individuals to class who are not registered for the course without first receiving permission from the instructor.

Three midterm exams will be given (2/17, 3/19 & 4/23) the best two of the three being considered for grading. Students must bring a sharpened #2 pencil and a Scantron #95141 test scanner form (25 answer rows per side) for each exam. Avoid lines at the bookstore by buying four of these scanner forms early in the semester; you have been warned. Exams will be composed of approximately of 75% multiple choice, 15% fill-in-the-blank, and 10% short essays. Exams will not be returned in class, but students may learn their scores and review their performance during office hours or during a scheduled appointment. Make-up exams may be given during the last week of class meetings only (the week *before* final exams), to students with valid and documented excuses who contact the instructor before or on the day of the originally scheduled exam. It is your responsibility to schedule any valid make-up exam.

The Group Workshop will be an exercise where students research contemporary topics in Texas politics outside of class and present arguments for and against changes to existing public policy, focusing on predicting in what political arena and what debate strategy such discourse would likely take place. This exercise will take place during the last class week of the semester.

College personnel with administrative authority, including faculty, may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty. "Scholastic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. See Student Code of Conduct for more details at:

<http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.2-Policy.pdf>

Religious Holy Day Policy

A "religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. The student must notify the faculty member in writing within the first 12 days of the semester of the intent to be absent due to a religious holy day. Under Texas Education Code 51.911, a student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time as established by the faculty member.

Online access to library resources is available at <http://www.alamo.edu/nlc/library>.

The Academic Support Center (ASC) is located on the second floor of the library and the phone number there is 486-5366. The hours are: Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Hours may vary between semesters and during the summer sessions. All services provided are free of charge to students.

NLC policy suggests strongly that students not bring children to a classroom or lab. Faculty members have the right to prohibit children from entering the classroom for safety reasons. Minors under the age of 12 must not be left unattended on campus, including the library.

Disability Access Statement

It is the student's responsibility to self-identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) office to receive an evaluation of accommodations and services in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Only those students with appropriate documentation will receive a letter of accommodation from the DSS office. The student will be responsible for presenting his/her letter of accommodation to the instructor in a timely manner. Instructors are required to follow only those accommodations authorized in the letter of accommodation. For further information, please contact the DSS office at (210) 486-5487 or email dmitchell-hebert@alamo.edu. The office is located in the Student Commons Building, Room 222H.

Mental Health Services: Free, confidential mental health counseling is available on campus in Student Commons Room 222D. Please call 210 486-5496 to arrange an appointment.

Any appeals concerning course grade must be submitted in writing; e-mail and phone inquiries will not be considered due to federal and state privacy laws. No extra credit work will be assigned or considered. I will not accept academic dishonesty of any kind. All work you submit must be your own.

"How do I prepare for class?"

First, download the topic outlines from the course website (*not* from ACES) and print them. These are not the complete notes for the topic, but you will develop these outlines to gain a thorough understanding of the material and acquire the skills you need to perform well on quizzes and exams. Skim through the chapter and attempt to fill in the outline using the information you find in the textbook; pay special attention to the topics that the research questions pose; *the road to your success in this course is paved in red italics*. Next, complete the outline during class with the material we discuss when we meet. Some time after class, I suggest the following day, edit and organize your notes to make them effective study guides for the quizzes and exams.

"How do I prepare for the exams?"

Being ready for class and using class time wisely are essential for doing well on the exams. I create the exams primarily from my lecture notes, so classes are preparation for the exams; your completed notes will be key to your success. I post review sheets on the course website for each exam to remind you what topics we have covered. These review sheets consist of both terms and sample questions that emphasize important course material. The most common mistake students make in preparing for the exams is to assume that if one recognizes the terms from the list, one is familiar with the material. You will need to be able to analyze far more deeply on exams than having a "flash card" understanding can yield. My advice is to develop the ability to answer the review sheets' essay questions using the terms provided. Students who can provide detailed answers to all of the sample essay questions will be well prepared for all elements of the exams.

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
Week 1 January 20 January 22	Introduction and Expectations The Context of Texas Politics	Course Syllabus pp. 17-23 and Chapter 19
Week 2 January 27 January 29	The Texas Constitution Interest Groups	Chapter 20 Chapter 22
Week 3 February 3 February 5	Interest Groups Political Parties	pp. 833-844
Week 4 February 10 February 12	Voting, Campaigns and Elections Voting, Campaigns and Elections	pp. 844-858
Week 5 February 17 February 19	Midterm Exam #1 The Legislature	Chapter 23
Week 6 February 24 February 26	The Legislature The Governor	Pp. 913-924
Week 7 March 3 March 5	The Governor The Texas Bureaucracy The Texas Bureaucracy	Pp. 924-938
Week 8 March 9-13	No Classes — Spring Break	
Week 9 March 17 March 19	The Texas Bureaucracy Midterm Exam #2	Pp. 924-938
Week 10 March 24 March 26	The Judiciary The Judiciary Criminal Justice	Chapter 25 Topic outline and pp. 1016-1021

Date	Topic	Reading
Week 11 March 31 April 2	Criminal Justice Criminal Justice	
Week 12 April 7 April 9	City Government City Government	pp. 986-992
Week 13 April 14 April 16	Counties, School and Special Districts State Policy	pp. 979-986; pp. 992-998 Chapter 27
Week 14 April 21 April 23	State Policy <i>Midterm Exam #3</i>	
Week 15 April 28 April 30	Federalism and State Policy Federalism and State Policy	Chapter 3
Week 16 May 5 May 7	The Future of Texas Politics The Future of Texas Politics	Group workshop
Week 17 <i>Final Exam</i>	<i>Thursday, May 14, 9:25 a.m.</i>	