

WACO, TEXAS

AND INSTRUCTOR PLAN

TEXAS GOVERNMENT GOVT 2306.06

LARRY G. SALAZAR

NOTE: This is a 16-week course.

COVID-19 Notice:

McLennan Community College is committed to providing you with every resource you need to reach your academic goals. We are also concerned for your safety. We are working through COVID-19 guidelines to make sure we offer a safe environment for you and our faculty. This will include smaller class sizes to manage social distancing and proper cleaning techniques. You will have the advantage of a physical classroom experience but may also need to work part of the time online as we adjust to limited classroom capacity. This will also allow us the flexibility to move online, if so directed by federal, state and/or local COVID-19 guidelines. Faculty and staff are preparing now to ensure that you have the best experience in the midst of these uncertain times.

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<u>Course Description</u>: Texas Government (Texas constitution & topics)

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.

Prerequisites and/or Corequisites:

Prerequisite: Must have passed the reading portion of the TSI or credit for INRW 0402. Recommended: Sophomore standing or completion of HIST 1301 and 1302 recommended.

Corequisite: May be taken before or after GOVT 2305 (or simultaneously).

Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations:

This course will be taught as indicated in the MCC Course Catalog. Therefore, you do not have to have any prior knowledge of government, but the course will be taught as if the student has successfully completed HIST 1301 and 1302. This will not be required, however.

Instructor Information:

Instructor Name: Larry G. Salazar MCC E-mail: lsalazar@mclennan.edu Office Phone Number: (254) 299-8958

Office Location: MAC 311

Office/Teacher Conference Hours: MTWR 7:00-8:00, F 7:00-11:00 (virtual), & by appointment

Other Instruction Information: https://mclennan.zoom.us/j/2542998958

Required Text & Materials:

Title: The State of Texas: Government, Politics, & Policy

Author: Sherri Mora

Edition: 4th

Publisher: McGraw Hill ISBN: 978-1-260-16724-5

MCC Bookstore Website: http://www.mclennan.edu/bookstore/

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Student Support/Resources:

MCC provides a variety of services to support student success in the classroom and in your academic pursuits to include counseling, tutors, technology help desk, advising, financial aid, etc. A listing of these and the many other services available to our students is available at http://www.mclennan.edu/campus-resource-guide/

College personnel recognize that food, housing, and transportation are essential for student success. If you are having trouble securing these resources, we encourage you to contact a success coach by calling (254) 299-8226. Students can visit the Completion Center Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. to meet with a success coach and receive additional resources and support to help reach academic and personal goals. Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) is open 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Monday-Friday, without an appointment. The Completion Center and pantry are located on the Second Floor of the Student Services Center (SSC).

MCC Foundation Emergency Grant Fund

Unanticipated expenses, such as car repairs, medical bills, housing, or job loss can affect us all. Should an unexpected expense arise, the MCC Foundation has an emergency grant fund that may be able to assist you. Please go to https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/scholarships-and-resources/emergencygrant.html to find out more about the emergency grant. The application can be found https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/docs/Emergency Grant Application.pdf).

Minimum Technical Skills:

Students should have basic computer skills, knowledge of word processing software, and a basic understanding of how to use search engines and common web browsers.

Backup Plan for Technology:

In the event MCC's technology systems are down, you will be contacted/notified through your MCC student email address. Please note that all assignments and activities will be due on the date specified in the Instructor Plan, unless otherwise noted by the instructor.

* Click Here for the Minimum System Requirements to Utilize MCC's D2L|Brightspace

(https://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/Faculty%20and%20Staff%20Commons/requirements.html)

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Click on the link above for information on the minimum system requirements needed to reliably access your courses in MCC's D2L|Brightspace learning management system.

Email Policy:

McLennan Community College would like to remind you of the policy (http://www.mclennan.edu/employees/policy-manual/docs/E-XXXI-B.pdf) regarding college email. All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to use their McLennan email addresses when conducting college business.

A student's McLennan email address is the preferred email address that college employees should use for official college information or business. Students are expected to read and, if needed, respond in a timely manner to college emails.

Instructional Uses of Email:

Faculty members can determine classroom use of email or electronic communications. Faculty should expect and encourage students to check the college email on a regular basis. Faculty should inform students in the course syllabus if another communication method is to be used and of any special or unusual expectations for electronic communications.

If a faculty member prefers not to communicate by email with her/his students, it should be reflected in the course syllabus and information should be provided for the preferred form of communication.

Email on Mobile Devices:

The College recommends that you set up your mobile device to receive McLennan emails.

Forwarding Emails:

You may forward the emails that come to your McLennan address to alternate email addresses; however, the College will not be held responsible for emails forwarded to an alternate address that may become lost or placed in junk or spam filters.

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Methods of Teaching and Learning:

Power Point presentations are given in class daily with a narrative from the instructor. Each week will end with some type of "assignment," whether it be a discussion board posting, a quiz, or an examination. The discussion boards provide an opportunity for students to provide personal input into the subject matter discussed that week. Quizzes will cover only the chapter covered for that particular week and are designed to assess learning. Examinations proctored by the instructor are required. All grades are based upon successful completion of the material within the time limit.

Course Objectives and/or Competencies:

This course is designed to examine the key elements and components of the Texas political system. To begin the course, we will highlight the state of Texas' unique historical, cultural, and economic importance. This will provide the framework for evaluating our unique state structure regarding the players of the political game who have access and influence over the political decision-making process in the state including: Texas legislature/executive/judicial branches and interest groups/lobbyists within the state of Texas. Lastly, we will examine the impact of elections, political parties, and important public policies.

Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas. Courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.

- Critical Thinking Skills (CT): "to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information."
- Communication Skills (COMM): "to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication."
- Social Responsibility (SR): "to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities."
- Personal Responsibility (PR): "to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making."

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Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- 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.

Technical Support:

For technical support, please do one of the following:

- contact the Information Systems and Services Help Desk at (254) 299-8077
- e-mail the Information Systems and Services Help Desk at helpdesk@mclennan.edu

Other Links of Possible Interest:

- MCC Library: http://www.mclennan.edu/library
- Student Support Services: http://www.mclennan.edu/students/sss

Course Outline or Schedule:

This course outline is subject to change. Instructor will notify students during class and will attempt to make an announcement on Brightspace upon any changes necessary during the course semester. Students are responsible for staying up-to-date with any changes made.

BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE:

Exam# 1 (Overview & Background: 40 Multiple-Choice Questions)

- Chapter 1: Introduction to Texas History and Politics
- Chapter 2: The American Federal System and the Texas State Constitution
- Chapter 7: Local Governments in Texas

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Exam# 2 (Texas Governmental Institutions at Work: 40 Multiple-Choice Questions)

- Chapter 12: Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas
- Chapter 3: The Texas Legislature
- Chapter 4: The Executive Department and the Office of the Governor of Texas
- Chapter 5: The Court System in Texas
- Chapter 6: The Criminal Justice System in Texas

Exam# 3 (Processes and Policies of Texas Politics: 40 Multiple-Choice Questions)

- Chapter 9: Voting and Political Participation in Texas
- Chapter 10: Campaigns and Elections in Texas
- Chapter 11: Political Parties in Texas
- Chapter 14: Financing State Government
- Chapter 13: Public Policy in Texas

Tentative Course Outline

Date of Class	Reading(s) for the Week	Discussion Boards, Quizzes, & Exams
August 24 – August 30	Syllabus / Course Overview Introduction to Politics	Log onto Brightspace / Google Classroom
August 31 – September 6	Introduction to Politics (cont.)	Introduce Yourself (Google Classroom)
September 7 – September 13 MCC CLOSED: SEPTEMBER 7	Mora Chapter 1	Discussion Post# 1
September 14 – September 20	Mora Chapter 2	Wednesday, September 16: Quiz# 1: Chapter 2
September 21 – September 27	Mora Chapter 7	Wednesday, September 23: Quiz# 2: Chapter 7
September 28 – October 4	Review for Exam# 1	First Exam: Wednesday, September 30 Chapters 1, 2, & 7 of Mora (Book Review# 1 Due!)
October 5 – October 11	Mora Chapter 12	Wednesday, October 7: Quiz# 3: Chapter 12

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Date of Class	Reading(s) for the Week	Discussion Boards, Quizzes, & Exams
October 12 – October 18	Mora Chapter 3	Discussion Post# 2
October 19 – October 25	Mora Chapter 4	Wednesday, October 21: Quiz# 4: Chapter 4
October 26 – November 1	Mora Chapter 5 & Mora Chapter 6	Discussion Post# 3
November 2 – November 8	Review for Exam# 2	Second Exam: Wednesday, November 4 Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, & 12 of Mora (Book Review# 2 Due!)
November 9 – November 15	Mora Chapter 9 & Mora Chapter 10	Wednesday, November 11: Quiz# 5: Chapters 9 & 10
November 16 – November 22	Mora Chapter 11	Discussion Post# 4
November 23 – November 29 MCC CLOSED: NOVEMBER 25-28	Mora Chapter 14	Monday, November 23: Quiz# 6: Chapter 14
November 30 – December 6	Mora Chapter 13	Discussion Post# 5 Online Course Evaluations & Make- Up Exams (If Necessary)
December 7 – December 10	Review for Exam# 3	Final Exam: Monday, Dec. 7 th (8:00-10:00) Chapters 9, 10, 11, 13, & 14 of Mora (Book Review# 3 Due!)

Course Grading Information:

Exams: There will be three required exams (including the final) in this class. All of the exams will be <u>non-cumulative</u> and comprised of <u>forty</u> multiple-choice questions. All three in-class exams will be taken "electronically," as discussed in class, via Google Forms. (Thus, you do <u>NOT</u> need a Scantron!) Test questions will potentially come from the textbook and from the class lectures. To do well on the exams, you need to be familiar with both. Each exam will be worth twenty percent, or effectively, they will combine for sixty percent of your course grade!

Quizzes: There will be six chapter quizzes comprised of ten multiple-choice questions throughout the semester to check your progress on the course material before you take the

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relative exams. {see brief course outline} These will be done at the *end* of the class, if given on that particular day. These will also be taken "electronically," as discussed in class, via Quizizz. In total, they will comprise fifteen percent of your final course grade. So, each one is worth three percentage points, because <u>your lowest quiz grade is dropped</u>. You will only have approximately ten to fifteen minutes to complete each quiz, so please come to class prepared on those days!

Book Review: Each student will be responsible for <u>one</u> scholarly book review. There will be one option provided for each respective unit, but, because of the "shortened" nature of the eight-week session, it will be not due until the day of the final exam. The book review is designed to give you access to additional outside material in order for you to broaden your understanding and interest in some aspect of the course. In the book review, you should be able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the work and how it relates to class. The instructions for the book review will be given on Google Classroom; please submit it there by the due date! The book review will encompass another fifteen percent of your course grade.

Attendance & Participation: Your attendance and participation grade is calculated as a combined score worth ten percent. A portion of this will be based off of occasional discussion postings that will be given on Brightspace that will allow each student an opportunity to discuss his or her opinion more thoroughly. These postings might be from something in the lecture material or something entirely abstract that relates to the material being discussed. Information provided with sources will be highly encouraged and given potential "bonus" points. Otherwise, opinions will suffice for the most part, but please consider your answer carefully for each discussion posting. While these are designed to encourage discussion among classmates on a topic, they should NOT turn into an argument.

According to MCC policy, students may not miss more than 25% of the required classes. If this occurs, students will be administratively dropped from the course for "non-attendance." Meanwhile, your attendance grade is calculated as the percentage of the classes that you have attended. That means if you only come to half of the classes, you receive a 50% for that portion of the grade. But, I will always reward hard work, so... students that miss no more than one class will receive an additional three (3) bonus points on their *entire course average*.

Reading Assignments: The chapters that you are to read in your textbook are listed on the tentative course outline. You will have the entire week to read the material, familiarize yourself with the relevant chapters in the textbook, and learn the material accordingly. The purpose of assigning reading in the textbook is to help you to better follow my lectures and to allow you ample time to ask questions on aspects that you are unsure about along the way.

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Grade Breakdown:

Exam 1:	20%	A = 90-100
Exam 2:	20%	B = 80-89
Exam 3:	20%	C = 70-79
Book Review:	15%	D = 60-69
Quizzes (5 @ 3%):	15%	F = 59 or less
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Attendance/Participation: 10% W or I = as appropriate

THE FIRST TIME YOU RECEIVE A GRADE THAT YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH... GET IN TO SEE ME IMMEDIATELY!

Too frequently students wait until the end of the semester to try to rectify poor grades received throughout the term. I am here to help, so utilize me. However, once all the grades are said and done there is not much that I can do. But if you get with me earlier in the semester, chances are that grades can be rectified. Remember, there is no stupid question!

Late Work, Attendance, and Make-Up Work Policies:

Late quizzes will not be allowed for any reason. Because, you will be allowed to drop your lowest quiz grade. You can only take exams early if you have an approved absence in advance. Early exams will be given at an agreed upon date, time, and location between the instructor and student. You cannot take an exam after the exam day unless it is approved by me in advance in writing (email). In the event that this occurs, you must have a copy of an email granting you permission to do so before you will be given the exam. If you cannot take the exam while it is given to the entire class, you will have to take a Make-Up Exam on your own time during the week before finals week on the date for Make-Up Exams. {see tentative course outline} You may NOT have more than one make-up exam. All make-up exams will be comprised of two essay questions from the section you missed. So, please don't miss a scheduled examination!

Student Behavioral Expectations or Conduct Policy:

Attendance: We will cover a great deal of information in each class lecture, and I use the lectures to emphasize key areas that you should study. Attendance will be taken 10 - 15 minutes after class starts each day. Those students who have not arrived in class and signed the attendance sheet by the time the sheets go out are counted absent for the day. Beginning the second week of class, I will start to send around attendance sheets. It is YOUR responsibility to sign the attendance sheet next to your assigned seat. Everyone must sign up for a seat because it helps me "find you" during class, it is used for attendance, and it is used for returning your graded assignments. Please "scope out" where you would like to sit within the first two days of class. This will comprise ten percent of your total average. Furthermore, given that much of the

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material for tests is drawn from the lectures, your attendance is essential to do well in this class. Additionally, I will not excuse **ANY** absence unless it is a university excused absence.

Finally, it is in your best interest to attend class. Why? It's simple:

There is a strong correlation with low semester grades and high absenteeism.

Classroom Behavior: There are several classroom policies regarding classroom behavior in order to provide the most learning conducive environment possible. If you are late to class, please take your seat as quietly as possible, regardless of where you sit. If you must leave early please clear it through me at the beginning of class to get that approved. If you simply get up and leave during class without prior approval, you will be counted absent for that day. The use of cell-phones, pagers, and other "noise-making" devices will NOT be tolerated. Please turn them off, switch them to "silent" or "vibrate" mode, as applicable, before entering class, or simply leave them at home. Contrarily, students MAY use laptop computers or audiotapes during lectures. However, I reserve the right to revoke the privilege of using the previous devices if it interferes with the classroom environment or if it is disruptive. Finally, if you must sleep during class, please do so quietly. Students who have complaints about others' disruptive behavior should first talk to me about the problem, then, if necessary, the classmate who is causing trouble. The potential sanctions for persons who disrupt class or their neighbors include moving you to a different seat, asking you to leave the class for the day, dropping you from the course entirely, to giving you an "F" for the course. So, please don't interrupt class.

Technology Requirement: Everyone must use e-mail, the Internet, Google Classroom, and Brightspace in this course for a variety of reasons. I have found that this encourages students to communicate with me regarding class materials. You will need your MCC login and password in order to access the course on Brightspace. All students registered for the class have been added. You are responsible for any announcements, assignments, or other information that I distribute on Brightspace. Additionally, I will post your grades on Brightspace so that you can keep track of them easier. Check these regularly (i.e. at least once a week) to help ensure that all of your grades are accurate. It is much easier to fix a problem early on than at the end of the semester.

* Click Here for the MCC Academic Integrity Statement

(www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity)

The link above will provide you with information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating.

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* Click Here for the MCC Attendance/Absences Policy

(https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html)

Click on the link above for the college policies on attendance and absences. Your instructor may have guidelines specific to this course.

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days

McLennan Community College shall excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities including examinations for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Students are required to file a written request with each instructor for an excused absence. A student whose absence is excused for this observance may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. Religious holy day means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Texas Tax Code.

McLennan Community College may not excuse absences for religious holy days which may interfere with patient care.

Accommodations/ADA Statement

Any student who is a qualified individual with a disability may request reasonable accommodations to assist with providing equal access to educational opportunities. Students should contact the Accommodations Coordinator as soon as possible to provide documentation and make necessary arrangements. Once that process is completed, appropriate verification will be provided to the student and instructor. Please note that instructors are not required to provide classroom accommodations to students until appropriate verification has been provided by the Accommodations Coordinator. Instructors should not provide accommodations unless approved by the Accommodations Coordinator. For additional information, please visit mclennan.edu/disability.

Students with questions or who require assistance with disabilities involving physical, classroom, or testing accommodations should contact:

disabilities@mclennan.edu 254-299-8122 Room 319, Student Services Center

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* Click Here for more information about Title IX

(www.mclennan.edu/titleix)

We care about your safety, and value an environment where students and instructors can successfully teach and learn together. If you or someone you know experiences unwelcomed behavior, we are here to help. Individuals who would like to report an incident of sexual misconduct are encouraged to immediately contact the Title IX Coordinator at titleix@mclennan.edu or by calling Dr. Drew Canham (Vice President for Student Success) at 299-8645. Individuals also may contact the MCC Police Department at 299-8911 or the MCC Student Counseling Center is a confidential resource for students. Any student or employee may report sexual harassment anonymously by visiting the following website: http://www.lighthouse-services.com/mclennan/.

McLennan's Title IX webpage (http://www.mclennan.edu/titleix/) contains more information about definitions, reporting, confidentiality, resources, and what to do if you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct, gender-based violence or the crimes of rape, acquaintance rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, dating violence or domestic violence.

* You will need to access each link separately through your Web browser (for example: Internet Explorer, Mozilla, Chrome, or Safari) to print each link's information.