

McLennan
C O M M U N I T Y
COLLEGE

WACO, TEXAS

COURSE SYLLABUS
AND
INSTRUCTOR PLAN

TEXAS GOVERNMENT
GOVT 2306_07

DR. ERIK EMBLEM

NOTE: This is a 16-week Blended/Hybrid 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.

TEXAS GOVERNMENT: TEXAS CONSTITUTION & TOPICS

Course Description:

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. Must have passed the reading portion of the TSI or credit for READ 0302.

Prerequisites and/or Corequisites:

There are no prerequisites for GOVT 2306

Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations:

This is a reading intensive course. Please be prepared to spend at least six hours a week outside of class to complete your assignments and prepare for quizzes and exams. Your attendance and attention are expected in class.

Instructor Information:

Instructor Name: Dr. Erik S. Emblem, Ph.D.

MCC E-mail: eemblem@mclennan.edu

Office Phone Number: 299-8917

Office Location: MAC 312

Office/Conference Hours: Tuesday and Thursday: 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. and by appointment

Required Text & Materials:

Title: *Texas Politics Today*

Author: Mark P. Jones

Edition: **18th edition** - *Texas Politics Today*, Enhanced, Loose-leaf Version, 18th + MindTap, 1 term Printed Access Card

Publisher: Cengage Learning

ISBN: 9780357262528

ELECTRONIC ISBN: 9780357028872

The text may be purchased through the MCC Bookstore ([MCC Bookstore Website](#)).

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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 [here](https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/docs/Emergency_Grant_Application.pdf) (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) (https://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/Faculty%20and%20Staff%20Commons/requirements.html)**

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.

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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.

Methods of Teaching and Learning:

While lecture and dialogue are the primary teaching methods in this class, students will also learn through projects, readings, video, multimedia, and presentations. Evaluations of learning may include exams, quizzes, project presentations, and essays.

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Course Objectives and/or Competencies:

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.”

In addition to the above listed competencies, 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.

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Course Outline or Schedule:

Below you will find a tentative calendar of subject matter covered in class. I will let students know when changes are made to the schedule in class and on Brightspace.

Week One – Introduction to Political Thought

Week Two – Influence of Texas History on Texas Politics

Week Three – “Texas Political Culture and Diversity” (Chapter One)

Week Four – Texas in the Federal System (Chapter Two)

Week Five – The Texas Constitution in Perspective (Chapter Three)

Exam One (LO 1-3)

Week Six: “Voting and Elections” (Chapter Four)

Week Seven: “Political Parties” (Chapter Five)

Week Eight: Interest Groups (Chapter Six)

Exam Two (LO 5-7)

Week Nine: The Texas Legislature (Chapter Seven)

Week Ten: The Legislative Process

Week Eleven: The Executive Branch (Chapter Eight)

Week Twelve: “The Judiciary” (Chapter Nine)

Exam Three (LO 3-4)

Week Thirteen: “Law and Due Process” (Chapter Ten)

Week Fourteen: Local Governments (Chapter Eleven)

Week Fifteen: Public Policy in Texas (Chapter Twelve)

Weeks Sixteen: **Final Exam (LO 7-8)**

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Course Grading Information:

Grades:

4 Class Assignment/Quizzes (200 pts) – I will give five assignment/quizzes during the semester. Each assignment is worth 50 points. The material used for each quiz comes from class assignments. I will administer these quizzes at my discretion. I will drop your lowest assignment score.

12 Chapters of MindTap Assignments (600 pts) – I expect you to complete an online assignment for each of the twelve chapters in our text. Each chapter's online assignment is worth 50 points.

3 Writing Assignments (500 pts) – Throughout the semester I will assign three writing assignments in which the student will reflect upon or research the topic I assign. Two reflection writing assignments (150 points and 100 points) and one research paper (250 points). Critical thinking, analysis, and independent thought are a must for each assignment. A prompt and rubric for each assignment will be provided on Brightspace.

4 Exams (650 pts) – I will administer four exams. The first three exams are worth 150 points each and the final is worth 200 points. Each exam covers material presented in lectures, the text book, and in reading assignments.

Grade Distribution (on the MCC grade scale):

1950 – 1755 points = A

1754 – 1560 points = B

1559 – 1365 points = C

1364 – 1170 points = D

1169 -- 0 points = F

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Late Work, Attendance, and Make Up Work Policies:

I will penalize late work. Unless I have previously granted permission to turn the assignment in late or receive a document from a doctor validating an illness that caused the absence or prevented you from turning the assignment in to me on time, I will penalize the assignments in the following manner:

- Papers turned in the same day, but after class the stated time will receive a 10% penalty
- Papers turned in within a week will receive a 25% penalty
- Papers turned in a week after the due date will receive a 35% penalty.
- Papers turned in more than a week after the assignment's due date will receive at least a 40% penalty
- It is acceptable to submit a paper to the instructor before the day it is due. This will prevent points from being deducted if you are unable to turn it in on time

Class participation is a must and may be the deciding factor in borderline grades. I may allot extra credit points for exemplary participation and effort. **Students are required to take all exams on the scheduled dates.** However, if an exam must be missed, the student must contact me in advance with a legitimate reason and appropriate documentation. In exceptional situations, I will provide an altered make-up exam. **I will not give make-up quizzes** (I will drop the lowest quiz grade) **or make-up exams.**

TurnItIn:

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com page service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Student Behavioral Expectations or Conduct Policy:

Students are expected to maintain classroom decorum that includes respect for other students and the instructor, prompt and regular attendance, and an attitude that seeks to take full advantage of the education opportunity. All students are responsible for their own conduct in class and must

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adhere to the General Conduct Policy located in the college handbook or at <http://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide-2016-17/> - If a student violates the standards expressed in the student handbook, I may dismiss the student from the class.

With the exception of assistive learning devices, electronic devices (e.g. telephones, mp3 players, etc...) and headphones may not be used while class is in session.

Telephones must be silent and put away. Computers may be only used for note taking—should computers be used for any other purposes during class, the privilege of using a computer in class will be revoked.

I have zero tolerance for plagiarism and/or cheating. I will apply an automatic 0 points to any quiz, test, or exam upon which there is cheating and all plagiarized material will receive 0 points.

* [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.

* [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.

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.

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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

*** [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 at MCC by calling 299-8210. 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.*