

McLennan
C O M M U N I T Y
COLLEGE

WACO, TEXAS

COURSE SYLLABUS
AND
INSTRUCTOR PLAN

TEXAS GOVERNMENT
GOVT 2306_89 and 2306_90

DR. ERIK EMBLEM

TEXAS GOVT
GOVT 2306_89 and 2306_90

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.

Prerequisites and/or Corequisites:

Prerequisite: Must have passed the reading portion of the TSI Assessment or have credit for INRW 0402. Semester Hours 3 (3 lecture).

This is a reading intensive course. A reasonable level of self-discipline is needed for successful completion of the course. Please be prepared to spend at least three hours a day to complete your assignments and prepare for quizzes and exams. Your participation in daily assignments and in class discussions are expected throughout the semester.

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: Monday & Wednesday: 12:30p to 1:30p and Tuesday and Thursday: 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. or contact me through email to set up face to face meetings.

Required Text & Materials:

Title: *Jones/Maxwell Texas Politics Today, Enhanced, 1 term Printed Access Card* (this is a code that gives you access to the electronic version of the textbook – a hard copy of the textbook is not required for this class)

Author: Jones, Maxwell, and Crain

Edition: **18th edition**

Publisher: Cengage Learning

ISBN: 9780357028872 (access code for electronic textbook and MindTap)

or

ISBN: 9780357262528 (Loose leaf text and electronic access code)

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

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).

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](http://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/teaching-commons/requirements)
(www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/teaching-commons/requirements)

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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Methods of Teaching and Learning:

Reading, participation on the discussion board, and writing are the primary teaching methods in this class. Students will also learn through projects, video, and multimedia. Evaluations of learning may include exams, quizzes, and essays.

The course includes a textbook and other material that will be delivered via the Internet. Students are expected to read the daily reading assignments, view any lecture and or videos, complete the online assignments, respond to the Discussion Board (Db) assignments, write papers, and take the course exams. Students will earn points on each completed assignment. The total points earned during the semester will determine the student's final grade. More information about the grading system is provided later in the syllabus.

Since the course is constructed around online participation, the student must know how to use a computer, a Web browser, and email. The student must be able to create and save documents; send and receive electronic documents; have a general understanding of online technologies; and practice appropriate online behavior.

The basic MCC Computer requirements are:

Hardware:

Internet connection (at least 56k, but a high-speed connection is recommended)

A monitor that supports a resolution of 1024x768 or higher is recommended.

Software:

Web browser to access BrightSpace (e.g. an up-to-date version of Mozilla Firefox, Chrome, Edge, etc...). BrightSpace support is available see the link above and at 254-299-8077 (workday) and 254-717-6349 (after hours).

Word processing software that allows you to save documents in rich text format. (MS Office or Open Office is recommended.) If MS Office is not available, students may download Word viewer and other viewers from the Microsoft Website.

Some portions of the course may require one or more of these plug-in application programs:

- ✓ Adobe Acrobat Reader (<http://www.adobe.com/downloads.html>)
- ✓ Adobe Flash Player (<http://www.adobe.com/downloads.html>)
- ✓ Apple Quicktime (<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>)

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Respondus LockDown Browser - Using LockDown Browser for on-line Exams.

The use of LockDown Browser is required for online exams. Watch this [short video](#) to get a basic understanding of LockDown Browser and the webcam feature.

Download and install LockDown Browser from this link:

<http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/information.pl?ID=187933269>

Note: Don't download a copy of LockDown Browser from elsewhere on the Internet; those versions won't work at our institution.

To take an online test - Start LockDown Browser, log into BrightSpace and navigate to the exam. (You won't be able to access the exam with a standard web browser.) For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this [Student Quick Start Guide \(PDF\)](#).

Finally, when taking an online exam, follow these guidelines:

- Ensure you're in a location where you won't be interrupted
- Turn off all mobile devices, phones, etc.
- Clear your desk of all external materials — books, papers, other computers, or devices
- Remain at your desk or workstation for the duration of the test
- LockDown Browser will prevent you from accessing other websites or applications; you will be unable to exit the test until all questions are completed and submitted

Email:

I require that you use your MCC email. When you email me (eemblem@mclennan.edu), please put your course and section number on the subject line. It is up to you to make sure that I am receiving your EMAILS and assignments. I will respond to your EMAIL within 24 hours during the week. I will respond to emails received after 5 p.m. (Central Time) on Fridays or during the weekend by the end of the following Monday. If I do not respond inside that time frame, assume that I did not receive your message and email me again or call me (254.299.8917).

Time: All times listed are **Central Time**.

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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.”

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.

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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 on blackboard.

Week One – Introduction to the Class and Texas History

Week Two – Influence of Texas History on Texas Political Culture

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

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

Exam One (LO 1-3)

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

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

Week Seven: “Political Parties” (Chapter Five)

Week Eight: Interest Groups (Chapter Six)

Week Nine: The Texas Legislature (Chapter Seven)

Week Ten: The Executive Branch (Chapter Eight)

Week Eleven: “The Judiciary” (Chapter Nine)

Exam Two (LO 5-7)

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

Week Thirteen: Local Governments (Chapter Eleven)

Week Fourteen: Public Policy in Texas (Chapter Twelve)

Week Fifteen: Texas in Court

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

Course Grading Information:

15 Mind Tap Exercises (750 pts) – Each unit has Mind Tap activities for students to complete (see MindTap link in Brightspace). Each chapter’s activities are worth a total of fifty-points (50) (your scores on chapter activities may add up to less than fifty points). You must complete Mind Tap activities by the assigned time. A missed Mind Tap activity will result in a grade of zero (0).

Discussion Board (Db) (300 pts) - I will post five Db prompts throughout the semester. You are asked to post your well thought out response to each prompt as well as responses to at least five of your fellow students’ posts (at least 6 posts per prompt). Your posts must show familiarity with the subject addressed in the prompt and appropriate analysis and criticism. Simple statements such as, “I agree” or “You’re right” are not sufficient. In addition, please do not use “text-speak” such as LOL, SMH, etc. Students who do an excellent job of contributing will receive the full 60 possible points. Students whose contributions are less than excellent will receive fewer points. Students who do not provide all 6 postings will lose significant points regardless of their content.

Courtesy and Respect - I expect students to demonstrate courtesy and respect to all instructors, guests, and fellow students. While honest discussion and debate of topics is expected and encouraged, such interactions should not involve aggressive, derogatory, or hostile behaviors (verbal or otherwise). The instructor reserves the right to act to protect the decorum of the learning environment and the image of MCC.

3 Writing Assignments (500 pts) – Throughout the semester I will assign three writing assignments in which the student will reflect or research the topic I assign: one paper about you, one reflection essay and one research paper. Critical thinking and personal perspective are a must for each assignment. I will give a detailed explanation for each paper on Brightspace. The papers are due no later than 11:00 p.m. on the due date. Papers must be submitted through Brightspace to the TurnItIn tool.

3 Exams (500 pts) – I will administer three exams. The first two exams are worth 150 points each and the final exam is worth 200 points. Each exam covers material presented in the textbook, assigned readings, videos, and the discussion board.

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Grade Distribution:

2050 – 1845 points = A
1844 – 1640 points = B
1639 – 1435 points = C
1434 – 1230 points = D
1229 -- 0 points = F

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.

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 within 24 hours of the due date/time, will receive a 15% penalty
- Papers turned in after 24 hours of the assigned time will receive a 35% penalty
- It is acceptable to submit a paper before the day it is due.

Participation is a must. 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 rarely allow for make-up of Mind Tap activities** (please contact me early if you are having technical difficulties).

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 adhere to the General Conduct Policy located in the college handbook. If a student violates the standards expressed in the student handbook, I may dismiss the student from the class.

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.

* [Click Here for the MCC Academic Integrity Statement \(www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity\)](http://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 \(www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies\)](http://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies)

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

Online Attendance

You may be dropped from this class after not participating in two consecutive Discussion Prompts (Db) and/or missing three consecutive Mind Tap activities. If you need to drop this class for any reason, please contact the instructor.

You must contact me via email by Friday, January 17, 2020, to let me know that you are intending to engage with the class this semester.

Students will be permitted to make up exams missed due to (1) authorized participation in official College functions, (2) significant personal illness, (3) an illness or a death in the immediate family, or (4) the observance of a religious holy day. The instructor has the prerogative to determine whether a student may make up work missed due to other reasons. The student is responsible to inform the instructor of the reason for an absence and to do so in a timely fashion.

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

* [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.

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.*