



WACO, TEXAS

**COURSE SYLLABUS
AND
INSTRUCTOR PLAN**

**TEXAS GOVERNMENT
GOVT 2306.01**

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, including your safety. We will continue to monitor the evolving situation with COVID-19 and adjust our safety guidelines to make sure we offer a safe environment for you and our faculty. Please make sure to consult your faculty and the MCC website on any changes to these guidelines.

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Course Description: 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 {hereinafter Mora}

Edition: 5th

Publisher: McGraw Hill

ISBN: 978-1-265-84890-3

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

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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.”

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

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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 to Today: 50 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
- Chapter 11: Political Parties in Texas

Exam# 2 (Texas Governmental Institutions at Work: 50 Multiple-Choice Questions)

- 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

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- Chapter 12: Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas
- Chapter 9: Voting and Political Participation in Texas
- Chapter 10: Campaigns and Elections in Texas
- Chapter 14: Financing State Government
- Chapter 13: Public Policy in Texas

Tentative Course Outline

Week / Class Cancellations	Reading(s) for the Week	Discussion Boards, Quizzes, & Exams
August 23 – August 29	Syllabus / Course Overview Introduction to Politics	Log onto Brightspace / Google Classroom
August 30 – September 5	Introduction to Politics (cont.)	Introduce Yourself (Google Classroom)
September 6 – September 12 MCC CLOSED: SEPTEMBER 6	Mora Chapter 1	Discussion Post# 1
September 13 – September 19	Mora Chapter 2	Wednesday, September 15: Quiz# 1: Chapter 2
September 20 – September 26	Mora Chapter 7	Wednesday, September 22: Quiz# 2: Chapter 7
September 27 – October 3	Mora Chapter 11	Discussion Post# 2
October 4 – October 10	Review for Exam# 1	Midterm Exam: Wednesday, October 6 Chapters 1, 2, 7, & 11 of Mora
October 11 – October 17	Mora Chapter 3	Discussion Post# 3
October 18 – October 24	Mora Chapter 4	Wednesday, October 20: Quiz# 3: Chapter 4
October 25 – October 31	Mora Chapter 5 & Mora Chapter 6	Discussion Post# 4

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Week / Class Cancellations	Reading(s) for the Week	Discussion Boards, Quizzes, & Exams
November 1 – November 7	Mora Chapter 12	Wednesday, February 24: Quiz# 4: Chapter 12
November 8 – November 14	Mora Chapter 9 & Mora Chapter 10	
November 15 – November 21	Mora Chapter 10/14 (Slack)	Monday, November 15: Quiz# 5: Chapters 9 & 10
November 22 – November 28 MCC CLOSED: NOVEMBER 24-27	Mora Chapter 14	Monday, November 22: Quiz# 6: Chapter 14
November 29 – December 5	Mora Chapter 13 Online Course Evaluations & Make- Up Exams (If Necessary)	Discussion Post# 5 Wednesday, December 1: <u>Book Review Due!</u>
December 6 – December 9	Review for Exam# 2	Final Exam: Monday, Dec 6th (8:00-10:00) Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, & 14 of Mora (Book Review# 3 Due!)

Course Grading Information:

Exams: There will be two required exams (including the final) in this class. Both of the exams will be non-cumulative and comprised of fifty multiple-choice questions. Both in-class exams will be taken “electronically,” as discussed in class, via Google Forms. (Thus, you do **NOT** 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 250 points, or effectively, they will combine for 500 points of your total 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 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 250 points of your final course grade. So, each one is worth fifty (50) points, because your lowest quiz grade is dropped. 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 **one** scholarly book review. There will be one option provided for each respective unit, but it will be not due until the last day of class before

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the final exam. {see tentative course outline} 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 150 points of your total course grade.

Attendance & Participation: Your attendance and participation grade is calculated as a combined score worth the remaining 100 points. 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 thirty (30) 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.

Grade Breakdown:

Exam 1 (Midterm):	250	A = 900-1000
Exam 2 (Final):	250	B = 800-899
Quizzes (Top 5 @ 50):	250	C = 700-799
Book Review:	150	D = 600-699
<u>Attendance/Participation:</u>	100	F = 599 or less
Total Points:	1000	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 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.

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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 Attendance/Absences Policy](https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html)

(<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.

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

McLennan

C O M M U N I T Y

COLLEGE

ACADEMIC RESOURCES/POLICIES

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 or want to explore strategies for balancing life and school, we encourage you to contact a Success Coach by calling (254) 299-8226 or emailing SuccessCoach@mclennan.edu. Students may visit the Completion Center Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. to schedule a meeting with a Success Coach and receive additional resources and support to help reach academic and personal goals. Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) provides free food by appointment to students, faculty and staff based on household size. Text (254) 870-7573 to schedule a pantry 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 at 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 notified via 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.

Minimum System Requirements to Utilize MCC's D2L|Brightspace:

Go to <https://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/Faculty%20and%20Staff%20Commons/requirements.html> 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 their 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. If you need assistance with set-up, you may email Helpdesk@mclennan.edu for help.

Forwarding Emails:

You may forward 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 be lost or placed in junk or spam filters.

MCC Academic Integrity Statement:

Go to www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity for information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating.

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. For additional information, please visit www.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

Title IX:

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 (Chief of Staff for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/Title IX) at (254) 299-8645. Individuals also may contact the MCC Police Department at 299-8911 or the MCC Student Counseling Center at MCC at (254) 299-8210. The MCC Student Counseling Center is a confidential resource for students. Any student or employee may report sexual harassment anonymously by visiting <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/mclennan/>.

Go to McLennan's Title IX webpage at www.mclennan.edu/titleix/. It 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.

Disclaimer:

The resources and policies listed above are merely for informational purposes and are subject to change without notice or obligation. The College reserves the right to change policies and other requirements in compliance with State and Federal laws. The provisions of this document do not constitute a contract.