

# McLennan C O M M U N I T Y C O L L E G E

WACO, TEXAS

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## **COURSE SYLLABUS AND INSTRUCTOR PLAN**

**TEXAS GOVERNMENT  
GOVT 2306\_89 and 2306\_90**

**DR. ERIK EMBLEM**

**NOTE: This is a 16-week on-line 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.

**TEXAS GOVT**  
GOVT 2306\_89 and 2306\_90

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**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 Hours: Monday and Wednesday 11:00a – 12p and Tuesday and Thursday 9:30a to 11a or contact me through email to set up a zoom meeting time.

**Required Text & Materials:**

Title: *Jones/Maxwell Texas Politics Today*, (you paid for access to the e-book and online material when you paid your tuition and fees)

Author: Jones, Maxwell, and Crain

Edition: **19th edition**

Publisher: Cengage Learning

ISBN: 9780357506769 (access code for electronic textbook and MindTap)

The cost of the e-textbook and MindTap is included in your tuition and fees.

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

**TEXAS GOVT**  
GOVT 2306\_89 and 2306\_90

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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.

**Email:**

I require that you use your MCC email. When you email me ([eemblem@mclennan.edu](mailto: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).

**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.”

**TEXAS GOVT**  
GOVT 2306\_89 and 2306\_90

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- **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.

### **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 Brightspace.

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)**

**TEXAS GOVT**  
GOVT 2306\_89 and 2306\_90

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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 Legislative Process

**Exam Two (LO 5-7)**

Week Eleven: The Executive Branch (Chapter Eight)

Week Twelve: “The Judiciary” (Chapter Nine)

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)**

**Course Grading Information:**

**16 Mind Tap Exercises (800 pts)** – Each unit has Mind Tap activities or quizzes 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).  
35%

**TEXAS GOVT**  
GOVT 2306\_89 and 2306\_90

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**Discussion Board (Db) (450 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. Students who do an excellent job of contributing will receive the full 90 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. Discussion boards may not be made-up after they close. 20%

**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. 22%

**3 Exams (550 pts)** – I will administer three exams. 120 pts exam one; 180 pts exam two; and 250 pts final exam. Each exam may cover material presented in the textbook, assigned readings, videos, and the discussion board. 23%

**Grade Distribution:**

**2300 – 2070 points = A**  
**2069 – 1840 points = B**  
**1839 – 1610 points = C**  
**1609 – 1380 points = D**  
**1379 -- 0 points = F**

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

**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.

**TEXAS GOVT**  
GOVT 2306\_89 and 2306\_90

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\* [Click Here for the MCC Attendance/Absences Policy](https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html)

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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 Unit activities. If you need to drop this class for any reason, please contact the instructor.

**You must contact me via email by Friday, August 27, 2021, 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.

\* *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.*



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## 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](mailto: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](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](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.mclennan.edu/disability).

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

[disabilities@mclennan.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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/](http://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.