State and Local Government
Course Syllabus

GOVT 2306. State and Local Government. (3-3-0)
A study of the nature, organization and general principles of state and local governments within the United States and Texas. Prerequisite: Must be TSI complete in reading.

Instructor: Dr. Charles L. Taylor...ctaylor@kilgore.edu..903 753-2642, extension 3710,office 205,D in Longview Hall,North. Instructor is available by appointment.

Course Rationale: One of the measures of good citizenship is a basic knowledge of and involvement in our political system. This basic introduction to the Texas political system will provide the student with an understanding of and an appreciation for citizen participation. This course partially satisfies the Government requirement for A.A., A.A.T. and A.S. degrees at Kilgore College.


http://www.longmanamericangovernment.com

Supplement Materials: relevant websites will be assigned by the instructor relevant to material ion class lectures and the accompanying text

Evaluation: Major exams may follow each unit of study with a minimum of 3-4 units. Unit exams will make up eighty percent of the overall grade. These exams will be given on the following approximate dates; unit one—last week of September , unit two—early November - third and final unit exam-first and second week of December. Instructor will make use of multiple choice questions as well as a limited number of short-answer and essay questions. Daily grades may include reading tests from each chapter, written reports, class participation in political activities, group projects presented in class. These quizzes will make up twelve percent of the overall grade. The instructor will determine the relative value of each grade component. Attendance and punctuality will comprise eight percent of the overall grade.

Classroom Policies: Students cannot: 1.sleep  2. Lay their head on the desk 3. Talk while the teacher is speaking  4. Speak on cell phone 5. Text or read text messages

The Instructor reserves the right to make modifications in content and schedule as necessary to promote the best education possible within prevailing conditions affecting this course. Each year, students will be given an opportunity to evaluate the instructor and the course.

Activities: Text readings, supplemental readings, class lecture and discussion, and listening experiences
Assessment: Daily quizzes, written reports, oral reports,critical thinking exercises.,web -based research and analysis

Exemplary Educational Objectives:
EEO 1 describe and analyze the environment and background of the political systems of Texas and the United States.
EEO 2 demonstrate a knowledge of the history and structures of the constitutions of Texas and the United States.
EEO 3 distinguish the powers and responsibilities of the various branches of government within Texas and the United States.
EEO 4 outline and discuss the political process with emphasis on principles of good citizenship and the impact on daily lives
Student Learning Outcomes: Students must be able to:

Describe the environment in which the Texas political system functions.
Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the structure and history of the Texas constitution
Identify various means of political participation with emphasis on the electoral process as it applies to the principles of good citizenship.
Analyze the role and importance of interest groups on political parties and compare and contrast their functions.
Identify various means of political participation with emphasis on the electoral process as it applies to the principles of good citizenship.
Evaluate the role of local government in Texas and assess their impact on Texans daily lives.
Outline the legislative process and its organization.
Demonstrate a knowledge of the executive branch and analyze its regulatory role.
Explain the role of the judicial and criminal justice system by identifying the various courts as well as the categories of each.
Evaluate the tax system in Texas and describe the areas of expenditures.
Develop personal values for ethical behavior and a capacity to discuss and reflect on the individual, political, economic and social aspects of life in order to understand ways in which to be a responsible member of society.

2306 Course Outline:

I. The Texas Society and Political Culture, Federalism and the Texas Constitution - Specific Objectives: The student must be able to:

1. trace the evolution of the Texas Constitutional system and political system.
2. describe the physical make-up of the Texas Constitution.
3. evaluate the impact of various geographic and population patterns on Texas political culture.
4. analyze the influence of social and economic characteristics on the Texas electorate.
5. describe attempts at constitutional revision in Texas and analyze the outcomes.
6. discuss the forces which have influenced our political culture.
7. explain the importance of a written constitution.
8. compare and contrast the basic features of the United States and Texas Constitutions.

II. Political Participation: Voting, Elections, Political Parties, and Interest Groups - Specific Objectives: The student must be able to:

1. demonstrate an understanding of Texas political parties by tracing the historical development of the Texas party system, discussing party factionalism and ideology in Texas, and describing the legal organization of Texas parties.
2. define the term “interest group” and discuss their functions as well as their impact on Texas politics.
3. compare and contrast political parties and interest groups.
4. demonstrate comprehension of the election system by discussing voter participation, voting qualification, and election administration.
5. evaluate voter turnout and participation.

III. Government Organization, the Legislative Process, the Governor, the Plural Executive and the Bureaucracy - Specific Objectives: The student must be able to:

1. demonstrate knowledge of the basis of representation in the Texas Legislature.
2. analyze the impact of apportionment on the system of representation.
3. evaluate the organization of the Texas Legislature through a discussion of the presiding officers, their powers, and the committee system.
4. demonstrate understanding of legislative influences by: describing the legislative powers of the governor, other officials and the role of the lobby.
5. evaluate the position of the governor in Texas government through a discussion of the qualifications, elections, and powers of the Texas governor.
6. list elected executive officials other than the governor and discuss their role in state government.
7. describe the role of the administrative structure in state regulation and service and to evaluate its effectiveness.

IV. **The Texas Court System and the Judicial System - Specific Objectives:** The student must be able to:

1. outline the organization of the Texas court system as well as trial and appellate court procedure.
2. explain the selection, qualifications, tenure, and powers of Texas judges.
3. describe the types of juries used in Texas.
4. outline the rights one is entitled to in a criminal proceeding.
5. appraise civil court procedure.
6. evaluate the criticisms of the judicial process and proposed reforms.

V. **Local Government & Finance - Specific Objectives:** The student must be able to:

1. illustrate knowledge of state revenue and spending, as well as administrative aspects of Public Finance in Texas.
2. analyze the impact of the Texas system of public finance on the lives of Texas residents.
3. demonstrate knowledge of Texas city government through a discussion of each type of city government in Texas.
4. evaluate the organization of Texas county government.
5. explain the purpose of creating special districts, and to describe the legal position of the various types of special districts.
6. discuss the fiscal policies of local governments in Texas.
7. describe electoral politics at the local level and evaluate the impact of the different election procedures.

Additional information will include contemporary political issues that challenge not only state government but national and local entities. These challenges include drunk driving, teen pregnancy, traffic congestion, overcrowding and population planning, an absence of effective role models, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, elder abuse and neglect, improving k-12 education, school violence such as cases in Columbine High School, getting and retaining teachers, the incarceration and management of prison inmates, and the establishment and revisions to the broad, overall criminal justice system. Students will be involved in multiple critical thinking exercises regarding these issues and how they can be practically resolved.