

South Plains College

GOVT 2107

SPRING 2020

## **Federal and Texas Constitutions**

Online Course

Professor Drew Landry

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Levelland Campus

Administrative Building, rm 132

Office Number: (806) 716 – 4032

Office Hours: MW: 8 – 9:30am and 11am – 1pm; F: 10am – 12pm (noon) and/or by appointment

### **Course Description**

Enrollment limited to students who have already completed a minimum of six (6) SCH of Government courses but have not satisfied the statutory requirement for study of the federal and state constitutions. This course serves as “bridge” for those students. To put plainly, this is a course for students who completed Government 2302 but not 2301. Instead of forcing students to complete two (2) new classes, they may complete this short class while enrolled either in Government 2305 or 2306. Finally, due to this course studying the United States and state constitutions, specifically Texas, it will last five (5) weeks.

### **Course Requirements/Expectations**

This is an online, distance learning course. It takes a great deal of discipline, self-motivation, and effective time management to successfully complete an online course. Many students find it helpful to set aside specific times each week to complete the assignments.

While this course requires no prior knowledge of American politics, there is considerable reading related to a wide range of constitutional topics. It is essential that students complete the weekly readings *before* attempting to complete the assignments. We cover a great deal of material so it is critical that you take careful notes and keep abreast of the readings and assignments. If you feel you need extra help in managing the course materials, contact me and I will help you.

This course requires an internet connection and South Plains College recommends using Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, or Safari when completing the work. Internet Explorer, however, is not recommended for use.

## **Required Textbook**

No Required Textbook but several online resources mentioned below.

Declaration of Independence

([http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html))

U.S. Constitution (<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/>)

History of U.S. Constitution

([http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_history.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_history.html) and  
<http://www.history.com/topics/constitution>)

Texas Constitution (<http://www.constitution.legis.state.tx.us/>)

History of Texas Constitutions ([http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/7\\_2\\_0.html](http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/7_2_0.html))

## **Syllabus Agreement**

Every student has one (1) week to examine the syllabus. By remaining in this course beyond that point, the student indicates his/her acceptance of the syllabus and agrees to comply with the rules expressed or implied.

## **Grading Policy**

Since this is a seven (7) week course spaced into a fifteen (15) week semester, all class sessions will be available to complete at students' pace. All assignments, however, have specific due dates. While students may work ahead on the assignments, they may not work backwards.

### *Quizzes and Exams*

This course will be fairly straightforward. Students will read sections from one of the resources and will take five (5) quizzes and one (1) comprehensive exam. The comprehensive exam will consist of thirty – five (35) multiple choice questions from the material students already read and shall be worth three (3) points each.

Students may use the required resources to assist them on the quizzes but may not do so on the comprehensive exam. Please bear in mind that all quizzes and the exam are timed.

### *Rounding*

On the issue of “rounding up” on grades, I have a strict but fair policy. I do not “round up” for any border line student unless he/she has at least a “.9.” If a student has not attained a “.9,” then his grade will not be “rounded up.” If you want a better grade, you need to earn it.

### *Calculating Grades*

In calculating final grades, I keep it simple. I divide the points a student accumulates over the semester by the total points possible, then multiply that answer by one hundred (100). The result of the calculations will be the student's percentage for the semester.

### *Grading Scale*

100 – 90%	A
89 – 80%	B
79 – 70%	C
69 – 60%	D
59% and below	F

### **Communications**

There are many methods to contact me. The top of the syllabus states my office hours if you need a face to face discussion and you may schedule an appointment if those times do not work for you; my email if a quick explanation will suffice your question; and my office number if you need an over the phone conversation. I am dedicated to a two (2) business day response to any correspondence from you. Odds are in favor of me getting back to you sooner than that. If there is an emergency – which is defined as a test failing on you – then please email me immediately at my SPC account. Do ***NOT*** message me through Blackboard. In the event students need to get in contact with me, please send all communications to my South Plains College email. In doing so, please put the class in which you are enrolled in the subject line so I know how to specifically help you remedy the issue and remember to email in a professional setting.

### **Attendance Policy**

Regulating attendance in an online course is tricky. With that being stated, students will be considered “no longer attending” after two (2) consecutive incomplete assignments *and* not informing me the reason for such inaction. This is the fairest action for all students. The point of this is twofold: do not miss any assignments and notify me immediately if you will miss.

### **Academic Integrity**

Every student is expected and required to do his or her own work in this course and all other courses at South Plains College. “Offering the work of another as one’s own, without proper acknowledgment, is plagiarism; therefore any student who fails to give credit for quotations or essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines, and other reference works, or from the themes, reports, or other writings of a fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism,” as specified in the South Plains College General Catalog.

### **Academic English**

South Plains College requires all students to become proficient in “academic English,” a form of English typically used in academic, professional, and business contexts. While slang, regional idioms, and informal kinds of self – expression are appropriate in some contexts, they are out of place in academic writing. Professors expect all students to demonstrate proficiency in using the

conventions of academic English in all their written work, whether it is in – class exams, take home essays, or emails.

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

It is the policy of South Plains College and this instructor not to discriminate on the basis of age, race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation (choices of sports team, however, are fair game – ha).

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at Levelland Student Health & Wellness Center 806-716-2577, Reese Center (also covers ATC) Building 8: 806-716-4675, Plainview Center Main Office: 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611, or the Health and Wellness main number at 806-716-2529.

### **Computer Issues**

Having access to a properly functioning and update computer is absolutely necessary for this course. Students may arrange to visit the SPC computer lab, library, your local library, or someone else's computer, but using the excuse of a crashed computer will not be accepted for failing to complete tests or assignments. If a student does not have access to a functional computer, then do not take this course. Computer problems of any kind will not be excused. That is the nature of this computer course. If any student finds that unacceptable, then do not take the course.

### **Technical Support**

Email [blackboard@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:blackboard@southplainscollege.edu) or call (806)716-2180 for any and all technical problems with the Blackboard software (they are much better than me at solving computer problems).

### **Student Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the student to make sure all tests have been completed by their due date. Any test not completed by the due date automatically receives a zero (0). You are highly encouraged not to wait until the last minute to complete assignments. Technical and personal problems are not considered acceptable excuses for late work, since you are able to complete them well in advance of the date.

## **Amendments**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus at any time. Students will be notified of such change(s) with appropriate time to adapt.

## **Course Schedule**

Session One: Declaration of Independence

*Reading*: [Declaration of Independence](#)

*Quiz due*: January 31, 5:00pm

Session Two: Overview of the U.S. Constitution

*Reading*: [History of U.S. Constitution](#) and [More on U.S. Constitution](#)

*Quiz due*: February 14, 5:00pm

Session Three: U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights

*Reading*: February 28, 5:00pm

Session Four: Overview of the Texas Constitution

*Reading*: [History of Texas Constitution - Chapter Two](#)

*Quiz due*: March 13, 5:00pm

Session Five: Amending the Texas Constitution

*Reading*: [Article XVII](#); [List of Proposed Amendments to the Texas Constitution](#)

*Quiz due*: March 27, 5:00pm

Session Six: Comparing and Contrasting the U.S. and Texas Constitutions

*Reading*: [U.S. Constitution](#); [Texas Constitution](#)

*Quiz due*: April 10, 5:00pm

Session Seven: Review

*Final Exam Due*: May 1, 5:00pm