Course	**GOVT 2306.005, State and Local Government**
Professor	Robert Lowry
Term	Spring 2019
Meetings	Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 3-3:50 pm, HH 2.402

Professor's Contact Information

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General Course Information

Prerequisites	None
Course Description	This course is a survey of state and local government and politics with special reference to the constitution and politics of Texas. We will be emphasizing the comparative approach to studying state and local government, politics and public policy in all 50 states. However, class time and readings will be devoted to the Texas state constitution in particular, and we will discuss many examples of Texas institutions, politics and policies throughout the semester.
Learning Objectives/Outcomes	Students should, at the completion of the course, be able to: 1. Apply important theoretical and scholarly approaches to understanding state and local institutions' behavior, citizen involvement and interactions between citizens and institutions of government. 2. Describe the development of the Texas Constitution. 3. Describe state and local political systems and their relationship to federal government.

	4. Identify, describe and analyze various mechanisms of citizen political involvement including public opinion, political parties and interest groups and electoral processes. 5. Understand the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government in Texas. 6. Analyze issues, public policies and political culture in Texas.
Required Texts & Materials	The following books are available in the UTD bookstore and should be purchased (digital copies are also available): **Kevin B. Smith and Alan Greenblatt, *Governing States and Localities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press, 6th ed., 2018** [Referred to in the assignments as S&G] **Note1**: A variety of supplementary materials, including chapter summaries, study questions, and video presentations, are available online at https://edge.sagepub.com/smithgreenblatt6e **Note2**: Students who want to save a few dollars may purchase a copy of the 5th edition, available through outlets such as Amazon.com. The caveat, of course, is that you are responsible for everything covered in class. **Banks Miller and Jennifer S. Holmes, *Readings in American State and Local Government*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, 2017** [Referred to in the assignments as M&H] In addition, there is one chapter from Champagne and Harpham, *Governing Texas: An Introduction to Texas Politics* posted on eLearning that we will cover February 1. Students are not required to print material available electronically.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

The following schedule of topics is approximate and is subject to adjustment.

Date	Topic(s)	Reading Assignment(s)
Jan. 14	Course introduction	
Jan. 16	The comparative method	S&G chap. 1
Jan. 18	State political culture	S&G chap. 1; M&H, pp. 18-47
Jan. 21	**NO CLASS – MLK DAY**	
Jan. 23	Federalism	S&G chap. 2; M&H, pp. 2-17
Jan. 25	"	"
Jan. 28	State constitutions	S&G chap. 3; M&H, pp. 90-106
Jan. 30	"	"
Feb. 1	The Texas Constitution	Champagne and Harpham – posted on **eLearning**
Feb. 4	State and local public finance	S&G chap. 4
Feb. 6	"	"
Feb. 8	Catch-up & Review	
Feb. 11	**Test 1**	
Feb. 13	Elections, voting, and public opinion	S&G chap. 5; M&H, pp. 50-53, 67-82
Feb. 15	"	"
Feb. 18	Redistricting and gerrymandering	M&H pp. 54-66, 83-88
Feb. 20	Parties and interest groups	S&G chap. 6; M&H, pp. 108-128
Feb. 22	"	"
Feb. 25	Campaign finance	M&H, pp. 130-136
Feb. 27	Legislative branch	S&G chap. 7; M&H, pp. 138-152
Mar. 1	"	"
Mar. 4	Catch-up & review	
Mar. 6	**Test 2**	
Mar. 8	Governors and other executives	S&G chap. 8; M&H, pp. 154-164
Mar. 11	"	"
Mar. 13	State Courts	S&G chap. 9; M&H, pp. 166-188
Mar. 15	"	"
Mar. 18-22	**NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**	
Mar. 25	Bureaucracy and public administration	S&G chap. 10
Mar. 27	"	"
Mar. 29	Local & metropolitan government	S&G chaps. 11, 12
April 1	"	"
April 3	"	"
April 5	Catch-up & review	

April 8	**Test 3**	
April 10	State and local economic policies	M&H pp. 190-194
April 12	K-12 education	S&G chap. 13
April 15	"	"
April 17	Crime and punishment	S&G chap. 14
April 19	"	"
April 22	Health & welfare	S&G chap. 15; M&H pp. 207-213
April 24	"	"
April 26	Environment	S&G chap. 16; M&H pp. 196-206
April 29	"	"
May 1	Catch-up & review	
May 3	**Test 4**	

Course Policies

Grading Criteria	Course grades will be based on four exams on February 11, March 6, April 8, and May 3. Each exam will receive equal weight. The final grading scale will be no stricter than the conventional 90-80-70-60 cutoffs, with plusses and minuses.
Late Work	Make-up exams will be given in the event of a documented medical, family or work emergency. If such a situation arises, you should notify me as soon as possible.
Class Attendance	I will not take attendance, but you are strongly encouraged to attend class and take notes. I will be covering material in class that supplements the assigned readings. This material may be on the exams. In addition, while I will post the outline from each class on eLearning I will not be posting detailed lecture notes.
University Policies	Additional UTD policies regarding student conduct and discipline, campus carry, academic integrity, email use, withdrawing from class, grievance procedures, incomplete grades, disability services, religious holy days, and resources to help you succeed can be found at http://coursebook.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/.

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.