

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

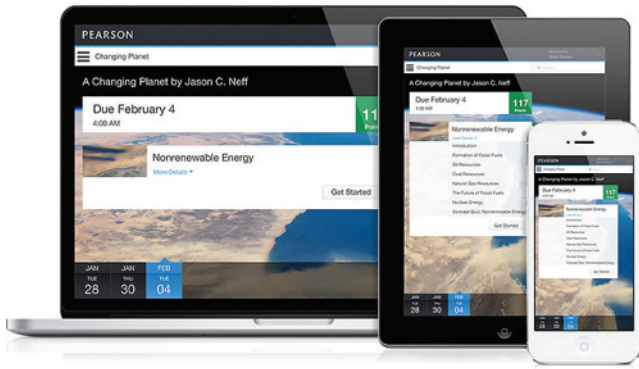
in the Lone Star State

2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION EDITION

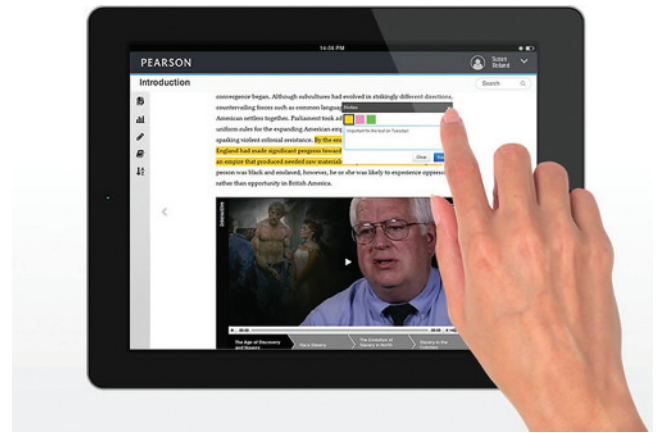
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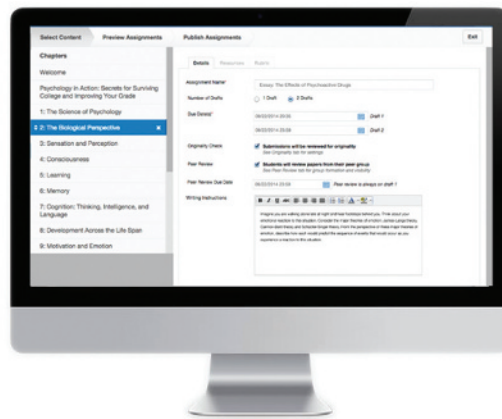
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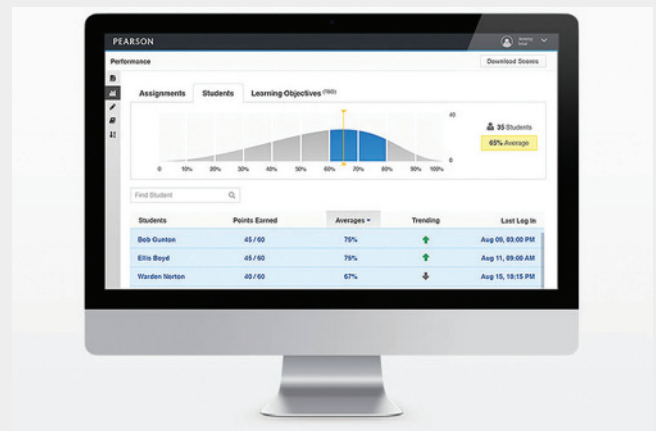
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Government and Politics in the Lone Star State

2016 Presidential Election Edition

Tenth Edition

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Preface

Partly because of Governor Rick Perry's decision not to seek reelection in 2014 after a record-setting tenure as Texas governor, there were major changes in state government's statewide executive offices—the plural executive—in 2015. All these new officeholders were Republicans, and Republicans remained in control of the legislature and the two highest appellate courts. So, conservatives—led by the new governor, Greg Abbott, and the new lieutenant governor, Dan Patrick—still set the tone and the priorities in Austin. But that did not keep Texans, as a whole, from having strong political differences over a host of issues, ranging from abortion and education to transportation and voting rights, that extended into the 2015 legislative session and beyond.

In this tenth edition of *Government and Politics in the Lone Star State*, we discuss the priorities, contributions, and controversies of these new officeholders and update developments in the major issues. As in previous editions, we also describe and analyze Texas government and politics from multiple perspectives—that of political scientists who have taught a variety of courses in national, state, and local politics; that of a journalist who covered state Capitol politics for almost forty years; and that of a consultant who has worked with local governments in redrawing political boundaries for elected officials. We incorporate general theories of political science into each chapter to provide a conceptual framework for the reader. For example, the chapter on political parties draws from research on party realignment and explains how Texas politics transformed from one-party Democratic control to the current period of Republican dominance. The chapter on the legislature draws from the concept of institutionalization, addressing changes that occurred as the legislature adapted to a more complex political environment. Although the theoretical aspects of the narrative's analysis are critical building blocks, we also use anecdotes to focus on how the theory plays out in current political events and policy decisions.

Tucker Gibson and Clay Robison have collaborated on numerous government and politics works, including previous editions of *Government and Politics in the Lone Star State*, since 1991. They were joined in 2013 by Joanne Connor Green of the Department of Political Science at Texas Christian University. She has contributed to the expanded treatment of the mass media in Texas, political socialization, public opinion, political behavior, gender politics, and federalism. In addition to her teaching and research interests in several subfields of political science, Dr. Green has given considerable attention to effective teaching and has collaborated on a publication about how “teaching matters.”

In this tenth edition, we once again attempt to guide readers through the historical, economic, demographic, and political environment that has made Texas government and political culture what it is. We also explain Texas's governmental institutions, their functions, the players who influence them, and how all these factors compare to governmental institutions in other states. Our updates in major policy areas reflect political and policy priorities that will continue to evolve as Texas's demographic and political cultures continue to evolve. Our goal is to help readers learn how to navigate their government and political system, to be informed voters, and, if they wish, to become active participants in the dynamic policymaking process.

We are passionately committed to democracy and, although we may sound skeptical at times, have not lost faith in Texas citizens. Democracy is predicated not only on the right but also on the obligation of citizens to participate in a wide range of political activities. Our passion for democracy leads us to call for open, transparent government; public access to information about the actions of public officials; informed and civil discourse that recognizes intense differences of political opinions; and accountability on the part of those who hold public office.

New to This Edition

This tenth edition of *Government and Politics in the Lone Star State* includes the same pedagogical features students currently enjoy in traditional American Government textbooks. Students who have completed the 2305 course will find this material extending their learning experience seamlessly into 2306. In addition to revisions that cover recent changes in the political landscape and public policy, factual information has been updated extensively from start to finish. Other new or significantly revised material includes:

- Refinements to content and chapter structure to assist students in mastering the learning outcomes prescribed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Increased use of *The Texas Poll*, conducted periodically by the University of Texas and *The Texas Tribune*, to support more detailed analyses of political socialization, public opinion, political behavior, party identification, and differences among Republicans, Tea Party Republicans, and Democrats
- Extensive use throughout the book of the most recent demographic data, coupled with efforts to demonstrate how students can use census data that are easily accessible
- Updates on the 2016 elections in Texas
- Updates on the Texas legislature, including leadership changes, heightened partisanship, and recent legislative initiatives that impact local governments
- Updates on border issues, including trade with Mexico, border security, illegal drug trafficking, and immigration, including controversial immigration issues raised during the 2016 presidential election
- Expanded efforts to compare the institutions and operations of Texas governments to those of other states
- Updated analysis of the state's interest group system
- Updates on major policy issues, including budget and taxation, education, criminal justice, health and human services, environmental challenges, and transportation
- Updates on the firestorm surrounding the enactment of a voter photo identification law and new restrictions on voter registration drives
- An expanded assessment of the changing role of the mass media in Texas politics, including additional emphasis on the role and misuse of social media in political campaigns and of government and corporate communications

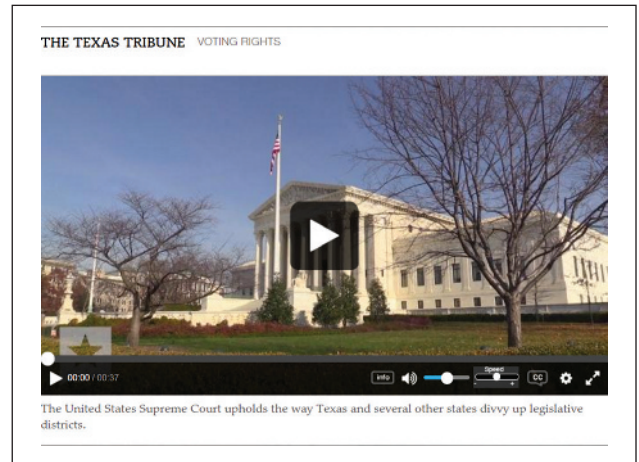
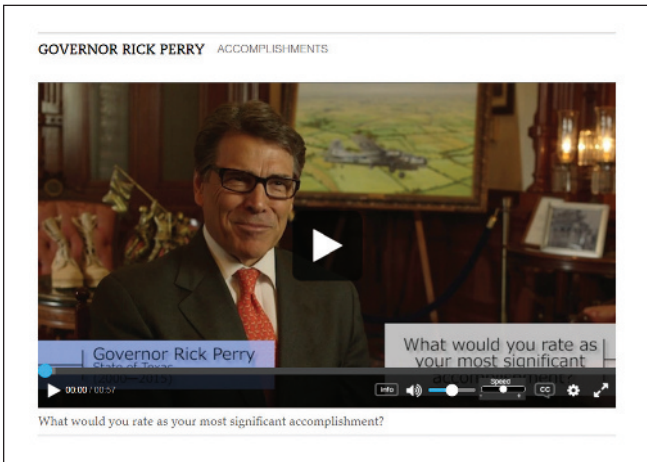
Revel™

Educational Technology Designed for the Way Today's Students
Read, Think, and Learn

Providing educational technology for the way students read, think, and learn today, Revel contains a fully digital experience that includes frequent updates of articles and data to illustrate the most current state of government and politics in Texas.

Students can interact with multiple types of media and assessments integrated directly within the authors’ narrative:

- Chapter-opening **Current Events Bulletins** feature chapter-related news articles (refreshed twice yearly).
- Chapter-specific **videos**, five per chapter, can be found in-line in all Revel chapters. New video excerpts from *The Texas Tribune*, as well as existing videos featuring Texas politicians, judges, lobbyists, political activists, bureaucrats, and journalists, introduce students to current issues and larger debates that address key topics found in each chapter.



- **Interactive maps, figures, and tables** featuring Social Explorer technology allow updates to the latest data, toggles to illustrate movement over time, and clickable hot spots with pop-ups of images and captions. “Think About” questions that feature hide/reveal answers also accompany some figures and tables so students can further explore important chapter illustrations.

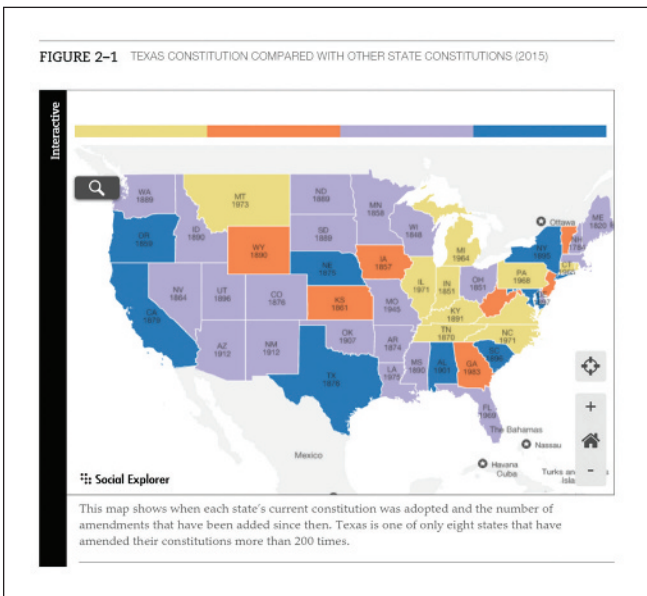


TABLE 9-1 PUBLIC OPINION OF TEXANS ON SELECT PUBLIC POLICIES BY PARTY

	Democrat	Independent	Republican
Strongly disapprove of the job performance of President Obama*	4	46	82
Support stricter gun control laws*	71	47	15
Strongly support immediate deportation of undocumented immigrants*	14	33	43
Support same-sex marriage*	65	46	24
Believe there is too much expression of religious freedom*	47	29	9

- **Interactive scenarios** in some chapters allow students to explore critical issues and challenges facing elected officials, bureaucrats, political activists, voters, and educators in Texas, and apply key chapter concepts in realistic situations.

SCENARIOS YOU ARE A TEXAS JUDGE

Interactive

Work through the scenarios below to learn about some of the issues a Texas Supreme Court justice must take into consideration when weighing his or her role as an interpreter of state laws and as a politician.

The Texas judiciary is a complicated assortment of local and statewide courts handling civil and criminal cases. Because most state judges are elected on partisan ballots, they must balance their roles as jurists with those of elected officials.

In these scenarios, you are the chief justice of the Texas Supreme Court. You will be involved in deciding important legal issues in civil lawsuits, and you also will make decisions about procedures and practices that shape the state's judicial system.

appellate court A court that handles appeals from lower court decisions. The primary intermediate appellate courts in Texas are the Courts of Appeals. The highest appellate courts are the Texas Supreme Court for civil cases and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals for criminal cases. Appellate courts do not retry cases; rather, they review the decisions of lower courts for compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements and procedures. They decide whether to affirm, or uphold, a lower court decision, overturn it, or return it to the lower court for further action.

Texas Supreme Court A nine-member court with final appellate jurisdiction over civil lawsuits in Texas.

writ of mandamus A court order directing a lower court or a public official to take a certain action.

civil lawsuit A noncriminal legal dispute between two or more individuals, businesses.

Reset Back Next

- Chapter review can be found in interactive **Review the Chapter** summaries that utilize Learning Objectives and flashcards featuring key terms and definitions.

REVIEW THE CHAPTER INTEREST GROUPS AND POLITICAL POWER IN TEXAS

Interactive

Click on each chapter Learning Outcome below to reveal the section summary.

What Are Interest Groups?
13.1 Differentiate interest groups from other types of organizations and describe the role of interest groups in democracies.

Interest Group Theory
13.2 Apply the pluralist and elitist theories of political behavior to Texas.

Interest Groups and the Policymaking Process
13.3 Describe the tactics involved in direct and indirect lobbying.

Dominant Interest Groups in Texas
13.4 Describe the characteristics of interest groups active in Texas.

Resources and Power of Interest Groups
13.5 Describe sources of interest group power and the contemporary challenges facing interest groups in Texas.

LEARN THE TERMS INTEREST GROUPS AND POLITICAL POWER IN TEXAS

LEARN THE TERMS INTEREST GROUPS AND POLITICAL POWER IN TEXAS

Interactive

Start Over Swap 0/14 REVIEWED · 0 MASTERED

public interest group

Got It! Next Previous

- **Assessments** tied to primary chapter sections, as well as full chapter exams, allow instructors and students to track progress and get immediate feedback.
- **Integrated Writing Opportunities** To help students reason and write more clearly, each chapter offers two varieties of writing prompts:
 - **Journal prompts**, related to chapter videos featuring interviews with notable Texans, ask students to consider critical issues that relate to topics at the module level.

Shared writing prompts, related to specific *Texas Tribune* articles found at the end of every chapter, encourage students to address multiple sides of an issue by sharing their own views and responding to each other's viewpoints, encouraging all to interpret current events in Texas communities.

Learn more about Revel

<http://www.pearsonhighered.com/revel/>

Features

We are committed to helping readers move beyond learning about government and politics to “doing politics.” We believe in civic education and political participation. We also recognize that most students who read this text will not become political scientists or elected officeholders. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that informed citizenship is the only way individuals can exercise some control or influence over those who make political or policy decisions.

Therefore, this book is written to help students navigate their way through the political process—from dealing with bureaucrats at City Hall, to carrying out their responsibilities as jurors, to weighing their choices when voting for elected officials up and down the ballot. We provide a historical perspective to help readers understand the evolving heritage that has shaped contemporary political issues and help them anticipate and influence future changes that will occur in their lifetimes.

To provide greater focus and direct the reader to think about the core themes of each chapter, we have structured our analysis around learning objectives, and then structured the chapter summaries and conclusions around these learning objectives. Thus, the structure of the text includes:

- **Learning objectives** tied to the major headings in every chapter that identify the key concepts students should know and understand with respect to Texas politics and government, and which also structure the end-of-chapter summaries
- **“Review the Chapter”** sections organized around the learning objectives that summarize and highlight the most important concepts covered in each chapter
- A **running marginal glossary** that clearly defines bolded key terms for students at the points in the chapters where the terms are discussed
- A **fully updated art and photo program** that provides a friendly and accessible reading experience, whether in print or online

Here is a summary of the content covered in each chapter of this tenth edition:

- **Chapter 1** focuses on the political culture of Texas. It draws, in part, from the formative ideas of Alexis de Tocqueville and the scholarship of Daniel Elazar. It attempts to explain the conservative patterns in Texas politics and what some scholars refer to as “Texas exceptionalism.” Early migration and settlement patterns shaped the state’s political culture, and throughout Texas history, race and ethnicity have played a major role in state politics. Drawing on recent U.S. censuses and *American Community Surveys*, this chapter describes the economic and social attributes of the main ethnic and racial groups living in Texas and links these demographic factors to contemporary politics and public policy discussions that follow in later chapters.
- **Chapter 2** presents a brief summary of the state’s constitutional history and discusses how Texas’s earlier constitutions influenced the current document, the Constitution of 1876. Texas functioned under a Mexican constitution prior to independence, but its later constitutions drew primarily from the general tradition of American constitutionalism. The chapter outlines the main provisions of the Constitution of 1876 and the restrictions it imposes on state government. It also discusses similarities and differences among state constitutions and the U.S. Constitution.

- **Chapter 3** places the government and politics of Texas within the nation's federal framework. This chapter explores the state's changing relationship with the national government, its dependency on federal funds, and elements of interstate relationships, as well as the unitary relationship between state and local governments. It also discusses Texas's relationship and interdependency with Mexico.
- **Chapter 4** focuses on local governments, including counties, cities, and special districts. The state creates local governments and defines most of their powers and functions, and some recent legislation has placed additional constraints on local governments. In many respects, local governments have developed without a statewide or comprehensive perspective on how they should interact or coordinate public services in urban and suburban areas. Consequently, some have overlapping or possibly competing jurisdictions. In other instances, special districts have been created to serve narrowly defined objectives when no other government was available.
- **Chapter 5** covers the Texas legislature, a part-time institution that meets regularly for only five months every two years and has the primary responsibility of enacting public policy and appropriating the billions of dollars that go into each biennial budget. The chapter describes a more complex institution than that which existed forty years ago. Although now using computer-age technology, the legislature still operates within the restrictions that were written into the state constitution in the nineteenth century. And, while many other industrialized states developed complex party structures within their legislatures, voting alignments in the Texas legislature historically were based more on ideology than on party affiliation. Political parties, however, are beginning to exercise more influence on selected issues.
- **Chapter 6** describes the plural executive, which is part of the reason that, historically, the governor of Texas has been ranked, from an institutional standpoint, as one of the weaker governors in the United States. Although the powers of the office are institutionally weak, some governors, such as Rick Perry, have developed a strong role in state policymaking, using a number of informal and personal resources. This chapter focuses primarily on the governor, but the analysis also includes the other offices of the plural executive and their responsibilities in the administrative structure of state government.
- **Chapter 7** focuses on how policy is developed and carried out by the 1.4 million public employees who work for state and local governments in Texas. The execution and implementation of public policy is a governmental responsibility assigned to thousands of state and local agencies. Despite the anti-bureaucracy sentiment rooted in the state's conservative political culture, governments grow as population increases and new or expanded programs are implemented. Bureaucrats do much more than shuffle paper. They are involved in every stage of the policymaking process. Texans expect that public services—roads, water treatment, trash collection, and education, to name a few—will be provided effectively and efficiently.
- **Chapter 8** discusses the Texas judicial system, which is structured around five levels of courts with overlapping jurisdiction among some courts. Except for municipal judges, Texas judges are elected in partisan elections. Most other states use appointments—some with retention elections—or nonpartisan elections. Many Texans, including some judges, dislike the high cost of judicial campaigns and the implication that campaign contributions influence judicial decisions. However, the legislature has refused to change the partisan election system. This chapter also discusses the criminal justice system and the effect of politics on criminal justice.
- **Chapter 9** focuses on the political behavior of Texans, public opinion and core political values, and the processes by which citizens obtain their political beliefs and learn to engage in political processes. In addition to general election results, this chapter relies heavily on surveys conducted with Texas voters. The techniques of polling are also discussed.

- **Chapter 10** is structured, in part, around theories of party realignment, detailing the transformation of the state from one-party Democratic control to Republican domination. The current discussion of the state’s potential to move from “red” to “purple” status is essentially a discussion of the potential for another party realignment in Texas in the future. This chapter draws from V. O. Key’s three-part concept of the political party in the electorate, as an organization, and in government.
- **Chapter 11** examines elections and campaigns with the purpose of explaining differences in the ways Texans engage in the political process. The chapter discusses issues such as changing campaign technology and increasing campaign costs, as well as the individuals and interest groups who contribute large sums of money to political candidates and the questions raised by their contributions.
- **Chapter 12** focuses on the mass media in Texas, which continue to undergo major changes. The media link citizens to those in office. What the public knows about politics and the actions of officeholders comes, directly or indirectly, through the media, either the traditional media or, increasingly, social media. The media have traditionally played a major role in shaping public policy, although that role continues to evolve. In this edition, additional attention is given to the expanding role of social media and of government and corporate communications. Despite access to multiple sources of information, it is not clear how well informed most Texans are about politics and the decisions of elected officeholders.
- **Chapter 13** discusses both the criticisms frequently directed at interest groups and the positive role of these groups in bringing like-minded people together in pursuit of collective action and political participation. A number of theoretical issues are raised in this chapter regarding interest groups and democracy, including questions of political power and influence that are nested in the “elitist-pluralist” debate. Inequities exist in the resources, power, and influence of Texas interest groups, but the chapter emphasizes that no group has a monopoly on power and the actions of governments, and that there are occasions when marginal groups are effectively mobilized to shape public policy according to their interests. Public policy can be understood in terms of the roles that groups play at every stage of its development.
- **Chapter 14** provides theoretical perspectives on the policymaking process and then applies these concepts to state finances, the budgeting process, educational policies, the criminal justice system, health and human services, environmental policies, and transportation. The chapter also updates recent developments in all these issues.

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Pearson is pleased to offer the following resources to qualified adopters of *Government and Politics in the Lone Star State*. Several of these supplements are available to instantly download on the Instructor Resource Center (IRC); please visit the IRC at www.pearsonhighered.com/irc to register for access.

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We run the risk of overlooking individuals who have provided assistance in our research and writing, but we want to start our acknowledgments with Jennifer Jacobson, Renee Eckhoff, and their colleagues at Ohlinger Publishing Services. In addition to providing technical support and instruction, it was their job to keep us on schedule, coordinate the activities of the three authors, provide suggestions for improving our work product, and help with new photos and features. A note of thanks also goes to Kristin Jobe of Integra-Chicago for her editorial support.

In this and the previous edition, new pedagogical technologies were integrated in the presentation of data. We give a great deal of credit to Jeff Marshall for how these tools were conceptualized and subsequently developed by a host of technical staff members. Dickson Musslewhite has supported our work on Texas government for many years, and a hearty Texas thank you is in order for his ongoing support.

We are pleased with the interviews interspersed throughout the online Revel edition of this book conducted by the authors with elected public officials and others engaged in contemporary public affairs in Texas. A note of thanks goes to Joshua Johnson for a job well done with the videography and editing. We also are very grateful, of course, to the interviewees: Gary Bledsoe, Eva DeLuna Castro, Tony Garza, Gina Hinojosa, Donna Howard, Wallace Jefferson, Jenny LaCoste-Caputo, Ed Martin, Rick Perry, Evan Smith, Kathie Tovo, Arlene Wohlgemuth, and Nelson Wolff. We also are grateful to *The Texas Tribune* for the use of some of their videos and other materials.

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We have read and reread this material and checked and rechecked the data. If there are errors, the fault is ours.

About Your Authors

Tucker Gibson taught for forty-three years at Trinity University, focusing on state and local government, political parties and interest groups, public policy, and religion and politics. He has assisted governments in Central Texas in redistricting, owned a market research firm, and consulted with political candidates and businesses. In addition to multiple editions of this book, he has coauthored the Texas chapters in numerous national and Texas government textbooks published by Pearson.

Clay Robison covered state government and politics in Texas for almost forty years as a journalist, including twenty-six years as Austin Bureau Chief for the *Houston Chronicle*, before retiring in 2009. He now is a public affairs and communications specialist for the Texas State Teachers Association, based in Austin. He is coauthor of *Politics in America: Texas Edition*.

Joanne Connor Green is Professor of Political Science at Texas Christian University. Green studies the role of gender in American politics. She and her colleagues are examining how the presence of women and non-Caucasian representatives in state legislatures affect public policies, specifically as they pertain to elders, the disabled, and children. Joanne Connor Green, who is also interested in promoting civic engagement, regularly speaks to community groups regarding campaigns and elections as well as gender in American politics.

The Social and Economic Environment of Texas Politics

1



A PATH TO CITIZENSHIP

Foreign born military service members and veterans became new U.S. citizens during a naturalization ceremony on Veterans Day at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio. Several hundred people attended the ceremony, held annually to commemorate veterans of the U.S. armed forces.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1.1** Assess major challenges facing Texas in the twenty-first century, p. 3.
- 1.2** Describe the political myths used to define and interpret the political culture of Texas, p. 5.
- 1.3** Compare and contrast the political subcultures of Texas, p. 7.
- 1.4** Describe the history and characteristics of the major population groups in Texas, p. 9.
- 1.5** Assess the impact of demographic and economic changes on the political system of Texas, p. 15.

If the legendary Texas drawl is to survive, it will have to become multilingual. Maybe it already has, at least in major metropolitan complexes such as Houston and Dallas.

The Houston area is not only home to several million people but also, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, host to 145 languages spoken regularly in the area.

Only 3.5 million of the 5.6 million people, ages 5 or older, who live in the nine-county region comprising Houston, The Woodlands, and the Sugarland Metro Area speak only English at home, the Census Bureau reported. The second most prevalent language

among area residents is Spanish, spoken by 1.6 million people. Approximately 92,000 residents speak Vietnamese; almost 65,000 speak Mandarin, Cantonese or some other Chinese language; 30,000 speak various African languages; and 24,500 speak Hindi. Another 22,000 speak Arabic; 21,100, French; 12,800, German; 11,600, Korean; 7,400, Russian; and 3,300, Nepali. And the list goes on, including many languages that most Texans didn't even know existed. The Dallas–Fort Worth area is even more diverse, with 156 languages spoken by its residents.¹

Based on the *2014 American Community Survey*, 4.5 million or approximately 17 percent of Texas's 27 million residents were reported to have been born in countries other than the United States. Only 35 percent of those foreign-born residents are now U.S. citizens. Of the other foreign born residents, many have complied with federal laws and are residing in the state legally. Others are classified as non-authorized residents, and organizations that study demographics and population trends have developed different totals for these populations residing in Texas, with estimates ranging from 1.5 to 1.7 million.²

The face of Texas has changed dramatically over the past generation and will continue to change. The white population that dominated the state for more than a century is being overtaken by the Hispanic population, which, aided by immigration, soon will constitute a majority of Texas's residents. These changes are creating new cultural and political challenges—and offering new cultural and political opportunities—for the nation's second most-populous state.

Change, meanwhile, hasn't occurred only in the ethnic and racial makeup of Texas. The state's legendary frontier image of cowboys and wide-open spaces has been replaced by the reality that almost 90 percent of the state's population now lives in cities and ever-expanding suburbs. Three of the nation's ten largest cities—Houston, San Antonio, and Dallas—are in Texas and are among the fastest-growing cities in the nation.

During much of the twentieth century, oil and natural gas dominated the state's economy, creating popular images of wildcatters striking it rich in the oil patch. But that economy has diversified, and oil and gas producers now work alongside high-tech companies, telecommunications giants, and an assortment of manufacturing, shipping, service, and transportation industries. Agriculture also remains an important industry in some parts of Texas.

Not unlike many other states, Texas struggles with a host of twenty-first-century growth-related problems, both in infrastructure and public services. Roads and highways in urban and suburban areas are clogged, and air pollution is an ever-present problem for many communities. State policymakers must continually weigh the electricity needs of a growing population—and the potential for rolling blackouts during 100-degree Texas summers—with the environmental risks posed by power plants. Texas also must figure out how to ensure an adequate water supply for an ever-increasing demand, a necessity stamped with a special sense of urgency during a record drought in 2011.

Rooted in a conservative political culture of individualism and self-help, Texas policymakers, Republicans and Democrats alike, have historically supported a low-tax, low-regulatory climate favoring business interests. State leaders also have used public financial resources to stimulate economic development and subsidize the private sector. This has made Texas a national leader in job creation, attracting people from other states as well as other countries. Some of the wealthiest men and women in the world call Texas home. But millions of Texans live below the poverty line, and Texas has some of the poorest counties in the nation. This high incidence of poverty is compounded by immigrants, many of whom arrive with little money, are poorly educated, and have limited job skills. But the state's conservative political values have produced policies that consistently rank Texas near the bottom of the states in spending on education, welfare, and health care for the poor, issues that are becoming more critical with the state's population growth, including immigration.

Government officials are making decisions every day that affect our daily lives. You may not be conscious of most of these decisions, but occasionally something happens,

such as an increase in college tuition, higher taxes, or a law allowing handguns on college campuses, that you definitely notice and may dislike. However, if you don't know who made the decision and why, you won't have a chance of doing anything about it. It takes a conscious effort to be informed about your government and political leaders, but it is worth the effort because knowledge is potential power.

Our democratic system doesn't force a citizen to participate in the political life of a community, the state, or the nation. You may be indifferent toward government and politics, believe you are too busy to pay much attention, or believe your input won't have any effect. But active and engaged citizen participation is essential to the health of our political system. And active participation in public life and the political process is most likely to be effective when it is based on "self interest rightly understood," and those self-interests are tied to the interests of the community or society as a whole.³

Your authors are committed to active citizen participation in politics and public affairs, and in our teaching and writing we have made an effort to go beyond helping readers and students understand the structure and operations of the political system. We also try to help people navigate state and local politics in Texas because we want our readers to know how to "do politics." To get started, we introduce in this chapter the environment, or milieu, in which the 5,000 or so governmental institutions in Texas function. This will include discussions of the state's people, including many of those who shaped the state's governmental institutions and its political system; the historical development of the state's political traditions and culture; and the state's changing economy. Subsequent chapters will focus on the state's constitution, its governmental institutions, the political process, forces that affect the political process, and the historical development of major policy decisions. Along the way, we will compare Texas's institutions, policies, and political climate with those of other states, so you can view Texas from a national perspective and decide for yourself if your government is on track or needs to do some things differently.

Above all, we hope that this book will help convince you that your involvement—your ability to navigate your government—is important to your own self-interests as well as the vitality of the Texas political system.

Challenges of the Twenty-First Century

1.1 Assess major challenges facing Texas in the twenty-first century.

The issues cited at the beginning of this chapter are just some of the challenges of contemporary Texas politics. They reflect the fundamental conflicts between competing interests and the way Texans decide "who gets what, when, and how."⁴ Government and politics are the systems that we have developed to structure conflict; develop an orderly and stable process by which competing interests can be expressed; and, finally, decide who will benefit and who will pay the bill.

As we begin our analysis of Texas government and politics, we ask why Texans and their public officials make the political choices they do. Why, for example, do expenditures for public education in Texas rank low in comparison to most other states? How do we account for Texas's **regressive tax** system, which requires low-income and middle-income citizens to pay a higher proportion of their income in state and local taxes than do the wealthy? Why do Texans let their state rank near the bottom of all the states in expenditures for public welfare?⁵

These policy issues are directly linked to a variety of other questions about government and the political system. Why are Texans content to live under a state constitution that most scholars regard as obsolete? Why, until recently, was Texas a one-party Democratic state? Why do Republicans now dominate state politics?

regressive tax

A tax that imposes a disproportionately heavier burden on low-income people than on the more affluent.

And what difference, if any, does this make in public policies? Does a small group of powerful individuals determine the primary policy decisions for the state, or are there various competitive centers of power? Do Texans believe they are paying more but getting less for their tax dollars? Are Texans increasingly disenchanted with government?

For many Texans, state and local governments work just fine. There is minimal intrusion into their lives, or, at least, little intrusion of which they are aware. They appreciate the absence of a personal income tax, and if they own a business, their profits may benefit from Texas's relatively low regulatory climate, allowing them to hire more employees and make more money. These factors help spur Texas's population growth as one of the highest rates in the country.

For better or worse, political choices affect Texans personally. They pay the costs, even though they may not receive the benefits of every policy decision. The actions or inactions of governmental leaders can have an immediate and direct effect on people's lives, and, from time to time, those holding positions of power have made—or neglected to make—decisions of critical importance to millions of Texans. Water, for example, has been a perennial issue for state and local leaders, but only piecemeal progress had been made to develop sufficient water resources for population growth and economic expansion before a devastating drought struck Texas in 2011 and persisted in some areas of the state until the spring of 2015. A few small communities even ran out of water or came dangerously close, and some larger cities began worrying about their future water supplies. The heightened crisis prompted the legislature and Texas voters to approve a new \$2 billion water fund for new reservoirs and other water projects in 2013, but even more preparation needs to be done. Cuts in education, health care, and other public services—or increases in tuition at state-supported universities—often result when the Texas legislature refuses to increase taxes.

Each generation has to address fundamental questions about the role of government, the relationship of the people to that government, and what can be done to make government more responsive and responsible. When one hears or reads of many of the contemporary policy debates or policy failures, there is a real sense of *déjà vu*—we have seen these problems and issues before. Funding of public education, a major problem now, also was an issue during the Texas revolution of 1836, the Reconstruction era after the Civil War, and throughout much of the state's history. There also are new issues, such as the legalization or decriminalization of marijuana, same-sex marriage, and climate change. But many of today's issues are enduring issues of government and politics.

The fundamental changes in the social, economic, and political structure of the state require new solutions. Funding public education in the days of the one-room schoolhouse was one thing. Funding today's educational system in a way that provides equity among the state's 1,000-plus school districts is much more complex.

The demographics, or population characteristics, of the state have changed dramatically since the 1940s, when Texas was still predominantly rural. Texas is now an urban state with urban problems. With more than 27 million residents, Texas is second only to California in population. Its ethnic and racial composition has changed, and it is now home to a large number of individuals who were born and reared in other parts of the United States or outside the country—people who have a limited sense of Texas history and politics. Although oil and natural gas are still important to the state's economy, business leaders, government officials, and economists promote **economic diversification** as the dominant theme. Change places heavy demands on the state's governmental institutions, and Texans will need to give increased attention to modernizing and adapting their government to new realities.

In this chapter, we introduce you to the people of Texas, the views they have of themselves, the state's political subcultures, and its economy. We refer to these factors

economic diversification

The development of new and varied business activities. New businesses were encouraged to relocate to or expand in Texas after the oil and gas industry, which had been the base of the state's economy, suffered a major recession in the 1980s.



ONE OF THE NATION'S BUSIEST PORTS

The Port of Houston comprises 25 miles of facilities within the 52-mile Houston Ship Channel. For a number of years, the port has been ranked first in the United States in “foreign waterborne tonnage,” and more than 200 million tons of cargo move through the port annually.

generally as the “political environment,” a concept developed by political scientist David Easton to refer to the milieu, or context, in which political institutions function.⁶ To understand the government and politics of Texas, one must have a keen sense of its people, the similarities and differences in their respective histories, and the population and economic changes that have occurred since independence and statehood. Although much of our discussion focuses on broad patterns or characteristics of the political environment, individual and collective behavior of groups will determine ultimately how our governments respond to changing conditions.

The Myths of Texas's Political Culture

1.2 Describe the political myths used to define and interpret the political culture of Texas.

Although most Texans have only a cursory knowledge of their state's governmental institutions, political history, and contemporary public policy, they do have views—often ill defined—of the state, its people, and its culture. Key elements of these views, shared by millions of Texans, are described by some scholars as **political myths**.

In recent years, serious scholarship has focused on myths as a way to assess the views people have of their common historical and cultural experiences. A myth can be regarded as a “mode of truth that codifies and preserves moral and spiritual values” for a particular culture or society.⁷ Myths are stories or narratives that are used to describe past events, explain the significance of those events to successive generations, and provide an interpretive overview and understanding of a society and its culture.⁸ Myths provide a world picture or, in our case, a picture of the state of Texas. Myths serve, in part, to affirm the values, customs, and beliefs of Texans.⁹ The relevance of a myth depends, in part, on the degree to which it approximates the events it describes and its pervasiveness in the literature, symbols, rituals, and popular culture of the state. The daily lives of many Texans are so infused with elements of these myths that some people scarcely recognize that their attitudes, views, or behavior have been shaped by these narratives. Even newcomers to the state can be easily assimilated into the political culture built on these myths.

political myths

Generally held views rooted in the political culture that are used to explain common historical and cultural experiences.

republic

A political system in which sovereign power resides in the citizenry and is exercised by representatives elected by and responsible to them.

individualism

An attitude, rooted in classical liberal theory and reinforced by the frontier tradition, that citizens are capable of taking care of themselves with minimal governmental assistance.

THE TEXAS RANGER

Even in the modern era, Texas Ranger Gerry Villalobos, a Hispanic American, has ridden horseback to search for criminal suspects in the rough, remote country near Fort Stockton in far West Texas. However, to many earlier generations of Hispanics and other minorities, the Texas Ranger represented a symbol of violent suppression.

The Sources of Texas's Political Myths

Texas has produced its own myth of origin, which continues to be a powerful statement about the political system and the social order on which it is based. For many Texans, the battle of the Alamo clearly serves to identify the common experiences of independence and the creation of a separate, unique political order.¹⁰ No other state was a **republic** prior to joining the Union, and several scholars argue that independence and “going at it alone” from 1836 to 1845 resulted in a cultural experience that distinguishes the Texas political system from that of other states.¹¹ The state’s nickname—the Lone Star State—is a constant reminder of this unique history. A set of heroes came out of the formative period of Texas history, including many who fought and died at the Alamo or secured Texas independence on the San Jacinto battlefield. Texas schoolchildren are introduced to these heroes at a very early age with field trips, or “pilgrimages,” to the Alamo in San Antonio and visits to the San Jacinto monument in Houston.

The Texas mythology also includes the Texas Ranger and the cowboy. There is considerable lore about the invincible, enduring ranger defeating overwhelming odds. Newspapers and dime novels in the nineteenth century introduced readers throughout the United States to the cowboy, who was often portrayed as an honest, hardworking individual wrestling with the harsh Texas environment.

The cowboy’s rugged **individualism**, with strong connotations of self-help and independence, symbolizes a political culture in Texas that does not like to look to government as a solution to many of its problems.¹² It is the kind of individualism that continues to be exploited by political candidates in campaign ads and by the state legislature in limited appropriations for welfare, health care, and other public-assistance programs. This legacy of individualism and risk taking is further reinforced by the stories of wildcatters who made and lost fortunes in the early days of oil exploration in the state.

The frontier to which the Texas Ranger and the cowboy belong is part of a cultural myth of limited government and unlimited personal opportunity. The Texas frontier experience also perpetuates the myth of “land as wilderness and land as garden.”¹³ The hostile Chihuahuan Desert of the far southwestern part of the state eventually



gives way to the more Edenic green of the Piney Woods of East Texas. Descriptions of space, distance, and size are pervasive in a great deal of the literature on the state. Literally thousands of books written about Texas provide varied perspectives on the geography and topography of the land. One might argue that the “wide-open spaces” of the frontier shaped Texans’ views of their autonomy, independence, and vulnerability. They have clearly shaped attitudes toward land and the legal rights to use land as one sees fit.

Political Myths of the Majority

The Texas myths, however, have been primarily the myths of the white (Anglo) population and have limited relevance to the cultural and historical experiences of many African American, Hispanic, or Asian Texans, including newly arrived immigrants. From the 1840s to the mid-1960s, these latter groups were excluded from full participation in Texas politics and the state’s economic and social life. To many Hispanics, for example, the Texas Ranger is not a hero, but a symbol of ruthless suppression.

Since the 1970s, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans have made significant political and economic gains. Their share of the population has been increasing as well, and these three groups combined now constitute a majority of the state’s population. As this shift occurs, Hispanic and African American historical experiences are likely to be incorporated into the mythology of the state, and some components of the contemporary mythology will be challenged and redefined. These revisions may already be underway, as demonstrated by the heated debate over what actually took place during the battle of the Alamo and the role of Hispanics during the revolutionary period.¹⁴ Scholars also have turned their attention to the role of Texas minorities in the U.S. armed services and economic development in the state.

Disputing years of popular Texas beliefs, several scholars recently concluded that some of the Alamo’s heroes surrendered to Mexican soldiers and were executed, rather than fighting to the death. In 1991, after several years of trying, African Americans in Texas were successful in convincing the state legislature to make Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday a state holiday. June 19, the day slaves in Texas learned of their emancipation in 1865, also has significant meaning for the state’s African Americans and is celebrated as the Juneteenth holiday. For Hispanics, the *Cinco de Mayo* and *Diez y Seis* celebrations speak to common cultural and historical experiences with Mexico.

The Political Culture of Texas

1.3 Compare and contrast the political subcultures of Texas.

Texas shares the common constitutional, institutional, and legal arrangements that have developed in all fifty states, including a commitment to personal liberties, equality, justice, the rule of law, and popular sovereignty with its limitations on government. But there are cultural differences among the states and even among regions within individual states. Texas is a highly diverse state, with racial and ethnic differences from one region to another and divergences in political attitudes and behavior that are reflected in the state’s politics and public policies.

The concept of **political culture** helps us compare some of these differences. Political culture has been defined as the “set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system.”¹⁵ The political culture of the state includes fundamental beliefs about the proper role of government, the relationship of the government to its citizens, and who should govern.¹⁶

political culture

A widely shared set of views, attitudes, beliefs, and customs of a people as to how their government should be organized and run.

These complex attitudes and behaviors are rooted in the historical experience of the nation, shaped by the groups that immigrated to the United States, and carried across the continent to Texas.

One authority on American political culture, Daniel Elazar, notes that three political subcultures have emerged over time in the United States: the individualistic, the moralistic, and the traditionalistic. All three draw from the common historical legacy of the nation, but they produced regional political differences. Sometimes they complement one another; at other times, they produce conflict.¹⁷

The historical origins of these three subcultures can be explained, in part, by the early settlement patterns of the United States and by the cultural differences among the groups of people who initially settled the eastern seaboard. In very general terms, the New England colonists, influenced by Puritan and congregational religious groups, spawned the moralistic subculture. Settlers with entrepreneurial concerns and individualistic attitudes tended to locate in the Mid-Atlantic states, whereas traditionalistic elites who aspired, in part, to recreate a semifederal society, dominated the initial settlement of the South.

Expansion toward the western frontiers progressed in identifiable migration patterns from the initial three settlement regions. Texas was settled primarily by people holding the individualistic and traditionalistic views of a political system. The blending of these two views, along with the historical experience of the Republic and frontier, contributed to the distinct characteristics of Texas's political culture.¹⁸

These two political subcultures have merged to shape Texans' general views of what government should do, who should govern, and what constitutes good public policy. Given the characteristics of these two traditions, one might well conclude, as have many scholars, that the Texas political culture is conservative. Politics in Texas tends to minimize the role of government, is hostile toward taxes—especially those that are allocated toward social services—and is often manipulated by the few for their narrow advantages at the expense of the general population. During much of its history, Texas was one of the least democratic states, with restrictions on voting rights, limited party competition, and low rates of voter participation.¹⁹

Some scholars, however, have reservations about the concept of political subcultures because the theory is difficult to test. Although these reservations are legitimate, we know of no other single theory that presents such a rich historical perspective on the relationship of settlement patterns in the state and the evolution of political attitudes and behavior.

The Individualistic Subculture

individualistic subculture

A view that government should interfere as little as possible in the private activities of its citizens while ensuring that adequate public facilities and a favorable business climate are available to permit individuals to pursue their self-interests.

The political view of the **individualistic subculture** holds that politics and government function as a marketplace. Government does not have to be concerned with creating a good or moral society but exists for strictly "utilitarian reasons, to handle those functions demanded by the people it is created to serve."²⁰ Government should be limited, and its intervention in the private activities of its citizens should be kept to a minimum. The primary function of government is to ensure the stability of a society so that individuals can pursue their own interests.

In this view, politics is not a high calling or noble pursuit but is like any other business venture in which skill and talent prevail and the individual can expect economic and social benefits. Politics is often perceived by the general public to be a dirty business that should be left to those willing to soil their hands in the political arena. This tradition may well contribute to political corruption, and members of the electorate who share this view may not be concerned when government corruption is revealed. New policies are more likely to be initiated by interest groups or private individuals than by public officials, and it is assumed that those elected to public office will pursue their self-interests.²¹

The Moralistic Subculture

The **moralistic subculture** regards politics as one of the “great activities of man in his search for the good society.”²² Politics, it maintains, is the pursuit of the common good. Unlike the attitude expressed in the individualistic subculture that governments are to be limited, the moralistic subculture considers government a positive instrument with a responsibility to promote the general welfare.²³ Politics, therefore, is not to be left to the few but is a responsibility of every individual. Politics is a duty and possibly a high calling. This cultural tradition has a strong sense of service. It requires a high standard for those holding public office, which is not to be used for personal gain. Politics may be organized around political parties, but this tradition produced nonpartisanship whereby party labels and organizations play a reduced role.²⁴ The moralistic subculture yields a large number of “amateur” or “nonprofessional” political activists and officeholders and has little toleration for political corruption. From the moralistic perspective, governments should actively intervene to enhance the social and economic interests of their citizens. Public policy initiatives can come from officeholders as well as from those outside the formal governmental structure.²⁵

moralistic subculture

A view that government’s primary responsibility is to promote the public welfare and that government should actively use its authority and power to improve the social and economic well-being of its citizens.

The Traditionalistic Subculture

The **traditionalistic subculture** holds the view that there is a hierarchical arrangement to the political order. This hierarchy serves to limit the power and influence of the general public, while allocating authority to a few individuals who comprise self-perpetuating elites. The elites may enact policies that benefit the general public, but that is secondary to their own interests and objectives. Public policy reflects the interests of those who exercise influence and control, and the benefits of public policy go disproportionately to the elites.

Family, social, and economic relationships, not mass political participation, form the basis for maintaining this elite structure. In fact, in many regions of the country where traditionalistic patterns existed, there were systematic efforts to reduce or eliminate the participation of the general public. Although political parties may exist in such a subculture, they have only minimal importance that is often subject to manipulation or control by elites. Many of the states characterized by the traditionalistic subculture were southern states in which factionalism within the Democratic Party replaced two-party politics.²⁶

traditionalistic subculture

A view that political power should be concentrated in the hands of a few elite citizens who belong to established families or influential social groups. Public policy basically serves the interests of this small group.

The People of Texas

1.4 Describe the history and characteristics of the major population groups in Texas.

The politics and government of Texas can be understood, in part, from the perspective of the people living in the state. What follows is an assessment of a select number of demographic, or population, characteristics of Texans. In subsequent chapters, we examine the relationship of race, ethnicity, and other demographic characteristics to partisan behavior, public opinion, institutional power, and public policy.

Native Americans

Only three small Native American groups (Alabama-Coushatta, Tigua, and Kickapoo) live on reservations in Texas, and the Native American population is approximately 1 percent of the state’s total population. Unlike Native Americans in Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona, those in Texas have little influence on governmental institutions, politics, or public policy.