

---

# GOVERNING

---

# TEXAS

---



**ANTHONY CHAMPAGNE**  
**EDWARD J. HARPHAM**  
**JASON P. CASELLAS**





# Governing Texas







# Governing Texas



Anthony Champagne

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS

Edward J. Harpham

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS

Jason P. Casellas

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON



W. W. NORTON & COMPANY  
NEW YORK • LONDON

**W. W. NORTON & COMPANY** has been independent since its founding in 1923, when William Warder Norton and Mary D. Herter Norton first published lectures delivered at the People's Institute, the adult education division of New York City's Cooper Union. The firm soon expanded its program beyond the Institute, publishing books by celebrated academics from America and abroad. By mid-century, the two major pillars of Norton's publishing program—trade books and college texts—were firmly established. In the 1950s, the Norton family transferred control of the company to its employees, and today—with a staff of four hundred and a comparable number of trade, college, and professional titles published each year—W. W. Norton & Company stands as the largest and oldest publishing house owned wholly by its employees.

---

Copyright © 2017, 2015, 2013

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

*Editor:* Peter Lesser

*Assistant Editor:* Samantha Held

*Project Editor:* Christine D'Antonio

*Manuscript Editor:* Ellen Lohman

*Managing Editor, College:* Marian Johnson

*Managing Editor, College Digital Media:* Kim Yi

*Production Manager:* Ashley Horna

*Media Editor:* Spencer Richardson-Jones

*Associate Media Editor:* Michael Jaoui

*Media Editorial Assistant:* Ariel Eaton

*Media Project Editor:* Marcus Van Harpen

*Marketing Manager, Political Science:* Erin Brown

*Art Director:* Rubina Yeh

*Text Design:* Tamaye Perry

*Photo Editor:* Trish Marx

*Information Graphics:* Kiss Me I'm Polish LLC, New York

*Composition:* Achorn International, Inc.

*Manufacturing:* Courier—Kendallville

Permission to use copyrighted material is included in the credits section of this book, which begins on page A43.

**ISBN 978-0-393-28367-9** (pbk.)

W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10110

wwnorton.com

W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., 15 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

# Contents in Brief

<b>1</b> • The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas	3
<b>2</b> • The Texas Constitution	43
<b>3</b> • Texas in the Federal System	85
<b>4</b> • Political Parties	111
<b>5</b> • Campaigns and Elections	143
<b>6</b> • Interest Groups and Lobbying	179
<b>7</b> • The Legislature	209
<b>8</b> • The Executive Branch	247
<b>9</b> • The Judiciary	289
<b>10</b> • Local Government	323
<b>11</b> • Public Finance	361
<b>12</b> • Public Policy	399
<b>13</b> • Crime and Corrections Policy	445
Appendix	A1
Endnotes	A21
Answer Key	A41
Credits	A43
Glossary / Index	A45

# Contents



<b>Preface</b>	<b>XVI</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>XXI</b>

## **1 • The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas** **3**

<b>Texas Political Culture</b>	<b>5</b>
The One-Party State Persists	6
Provincialism Is Declining	6
Business Dominance Continues	6

<b>The Land</b>	<b>7</b>
The Gulf Coastal Plains	8
The Interior Lowlands	10
The Great Plains	10
The Basin and Range Province	10

<b>Economic Change in Texas</b>	<b>11</b>
Cotton	11
Cattle	12
Oil	13
High-Tech Industries	17
NAFTA and the International Economy	18
The Military in Texas	20
The Great Recession and the “Texas Miracle”	20

<b>The People of Texas</b>	<b>22</b>
Whites	23
Latinos	24
African Americans	26
Asians	28
Age	28
Poverty and Wealth	29

<b>Urbanization</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>WHO ARE TEXANS?</b> How Is the Texas Population Changing?	31

The Urban Political Economy	32
<b>TEXAS AND THE NATION</b> How Does Texas's Population Compare to Other Major States'?	33
<b>YOU DECIDE: VOICES OF TEXAS</b> Immigration in Texas	36
<b>Political Culture and the Future of Texas</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Study Guide</b>	<b>39</b>

## 2 • The Texas Constitution 43

### The Role of a State Constitution 45

#### The Texas Constitutions: 1836–1876 47

The Texas Founding	47
The Constitution of the Republic of Texas, 1836	50
The Texas State Constitution of 1845	53
The Constitution of 1861: Texas Joins the Confederacy	55
The Constitution of 1866: Texas Rejoins the Union	57
The Reconstruction Constitution of 1869	58
The Constitution of 1876	60

#### The Constitution of Texas Today 62

The Preamble	64
Article 1: Bill of Rights	64
Article 2: The Powers of Government	65
Article 3: Legislative Department	66
Article 4: Executive Department	66
Article 5: Judicial Department	68
Article 6: Suffrage	68
Article 7: Education	68
Article 8: Taxation and Revenue	69
Articles 9 and 11: Local Government	69
Articles 10, 12, 13, and 14	69
Article 15: Impeachment	69
Article 16: General Provisions	70
Article 17: Amending the Constitution	70

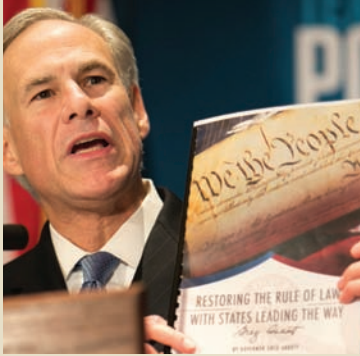
#### Recent Attempts to Rewrite the Texas Constitution 71

Sharpstown and the Failed Constitutional Reforms of 1974	72
Recent Amendments	72
<b>TEXAS AND THE NATION</b> Which State Has the Longest Constitution?	73
<b>WHO ARE TEXANS?</b> Who Votes in Texas Elections Amending the Constitution?	75





<b>YOU DECIDE: VOICES OF TEXAS</b> Proposition 2 and Same-Sex Marriage	77
<b>The Constitution and the Future of Texas</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Study Guide</b>	<b>81</b>



## 3 • Texas in the Federal System 85

<b>The Roots of American Federalism</b>	<b>87</b>
The Constitutional Roots of Federalism	88
Federalism in Early America	90
<b>Dual Federalism</b>	<b>92</b>
Marble-Cake Federalism	93
<b>TEXAS AND THE NATION</b> Federal Funds to Texas versus Other States	95
<b>Coercive Federalism: Texas and the Federal Government</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>WHO ARE TEXANS?</b> How Do Federal Funds Flow to Texas?	97
The States Respond	98
Major U.S. Constitutional and Statutory Restrictions on the States	99
The Equal Protection Clause	99
State Regulation of Voting	100
<b>YOU DECIDE: VOICES OF TEXAS</b> Voting Rights and Redistricting	101
Flexibility for States under the Constitution	103
Texas and the Obama Administration	104
<b>Federalism and the Future of Texas</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Study Guide</b>	<b>107</b>



## 4 • Political Parties 111

<b>The Roles and Structure of Political Parties in Texas</b>	<b>113</b>
Texas Parties in the National Context	113
Public Attitudes about Parties	115
The Contemporary Republican Party in Texas	116
The Contemporary Democratic Party in Texas	117
Democratic and Republican Party Organization	118
Third Parties in Texas	120
<b>TEXAS AND THE NATION</b> How Republican Is Texas?	121
The Tea Party Movement in Texas	124
Parties and the Media	124

<b>Texas’s History as a One-Party State</b>	<b>125</b>
The Era of Conservative Democrats	126
<b>WHO ARE TEXANS?</b> When Did Texas Become Republican?	127
The Growth of the Republican Party	128
The Disappearance of Conservative Democrats	130
<b>YOU DECIDE: VOICES OF TEXAS</b> Should the Tea Party Movement Launch a Third Party?	131
<b>Texas Party Politics Today</b>	<b>132</b>
Party Unity and Disunity	133
Urban, Rural, and Suburban Influences on Partisanship	134
African Americans in Texas Political Parties	136
Latinos in Texas Political Parties	137
<b>Political Parties and the Future of Texas</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>Study Guide</b>	<b>140</b>

## 5 • Campaigns and Elections 143

<b>Features of Elections in Texas</b>	<b>145</b>
Primary Elections	145
General Election	146
Special Elections	147
Running as an Independent	147
<b>Participation in Texas Elections</b>	<b>148</b>
The Rules: Who Can Vote?	148
Redistricting: Where Do People Vote?	154
<b>YOU DECIDE: VOICES OF TEXAS</b> Voter Identification Laws	155
Turnout: Who Votes?	159
<b>WHO ARE TEXANS?</b> Who Votes in Texas Statewide Elections?	161
The Importance of the Republican Primary	162
<b>TEXAS AND THE NATION</b> How Did Texans Vote in 2016?	163
<b>Campaigns</b>	<b>164</b>
Candidates: Who Runs?	164
Money	164
Outside Groups	165
Parties	166
Strategy	167
Important Issues in Texas Campaigns	168
Media	172
<b>Campaigns, Elections, and the Future of Texas</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>Study Guide</b>	<b>175</b>





## 6 • Interest Groups and Lobbying 179

### **Interest Groups in the Political Process 181**

Resources and Strategies of Interest Groups	181
Interest Groups and Democratic Politics	182
Interest Groups and Policy Makers	184
Types of Interest Groups and Lobbyists	185
Getting Access to Policy Makers	186

<b>YOU DECIDE: VOICES OF TEXAS</b> Should Former Legislators Be Lobbyists?	191
Who Represents Ordinary Texans?	192

### **Another Side to Lobbying 192**

Getting Out the Vote	193
Defeating Opponents	194

<b>WHO ARE TEXANS?</b> Which Interest Groups Contribute the Most?	195
---	-----

<b>TEXAS AND THE NATION</b> Registered Lobbyists: How Does Texas Compare?	197
Interest-Group Capture	199

### **Individuals as Lobbyists 201**

### **Interest Groups and the Future of Texas 203**

### **Study Guide 205**



## 7 • The Legislature 209

### **Structure of the Texas Legislature 211**

Bicameralism	211
Sessions of the Legislature	212
Membership	213

<b>WHO ARE TEXANS?</b> Who Are the Members of the Texas Legislature?	215
--	-----

### **Powers of the Legislature 216**

Legislative Powers	216
--------------------	-----

<b>YOU DECIDE: VOICES OF TEXAS</b> A Full-Time or Part-Time Legislature?	217
--	-----

Nonlegislative Powers	218
-----------------------	-----

### **How a Bill Becomes a Law in Texas 219**

Introduction in the House	222
Referral	222
Committee Action	222
Floor Action	222
Conference Committee	224

<b>TEXAS AND THE NATION</b> How Representative Is the Texas Legislature Compared with Other States?	225
The Governor	226
Additional Players in the Legislative Process	228
<b>Power and Partisanship in the Legislature</b>	<b>230</b>
Leadership	230
Centralizing Power: Sources of the Leadership's Power	232
Partisan Voting in the Texas Legislature	235
<b>Redistricting</b>	<b>237</b>
Power and Partisanship in the Redistricting Battle	239
<b>The Legislature and the Future of Texas</b>	<b>241</b>
<b>Study Guide</b>	<b>242</b>

## 8 • The Executive Branch 247

<b>The Governor</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>TEXAS AND THE NATION</b> How Much Power Does the Texas Governor Have?	251
Qualifications	252
Election and Term of Office	252
Campaigns	254
<b>WHO ARE TEXANS?</b> Who Elected Governor Greg Abbott in 2014?	255
Removal of a Governor	256
Succession	256
Compensation	257
Staff	257
Executive Powers of the Governor	258
Legislative Powers of the Governor	264
Judicial Powers of the Governor	266
<b>The Plural Executive</b>	<b>267</b>
Lieutenant Governor	269
Attorney General	271
Commissioner of the General Land Office	272
Agriculture Commissioner	273
Comptroller of Public Accounts	274
Secretary of State	275
Accountability of the Plural Executive	276
The Plural Executive and the Governor	276
<b>Boards, Commissions, and Regulatory Agencies</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>YOU DECIDE: VOICES OF TEXAS</b> A Plural or Single Executive?	277
Multimember Appointed Boards	278

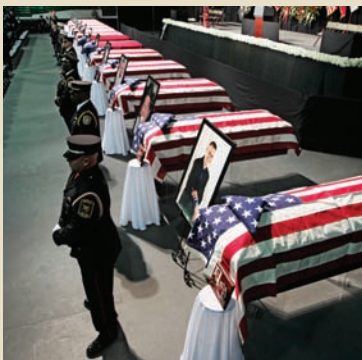


Appointed Single Executives	279
Multimember Elected Boards	280
Making Agencies Accountable	283
<b>The Executive Branch and the Future of Texas</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>Study Guide</b>	<b>285</b>



## 9 • The Judiciary 289

<b>Court Structure</b>	<b>291</b>
<b>The Legal Process</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>Judicial Politics</b>	<b>299</b>
Initial Appointment of Judges by the Governor	300
The Elections Become Highly Partisan	300
Issues Involving the Texas Judiciary and Proposed Reforms	302
<b>YOU DECIDE: VOICES OF TEXAS</b> Elected or Appointed Judges?	303
<b>TEXAS AND THE NATION</b> Comparing How Texas Selects Its Judges to the Rest of the Country	309
<b>WHO ARE TEXANS?</b> Who Are Texas's Judges?	311
<b>Issues in the Texas Court System Today</b>	<b>312</b>
Civil Cases and Tort Reform	312
The Regulation of the Legal Profession	312
Judicial Conduct	315
<b>The Judiciary and the Future of Texas</b>	<b>317</b>
<b>Study Guide</b>	<b>319</b>



## 10 • Local Government 323

<b>County Government in Texas</b>	<b>325</b>
What Are the Functions of County Government?	325
Numerous County Offices: Checks and Balances or Built-In Problems?	327
The Challenges of County Government	330
<b>City Government in Texas</b>	<b>333</b>
Forms of Government in Texas Cities	335
A Tale of Five Cities	338
<b>YOU DECIDE: VOICES OF TEXAS</b> Houston's "Bathroom Ordinance"	339
<b>WHO ARE TEXANS?</b> Who Governs Texas's Cities?	343

<b>Special Districts</b>	<b>344</b>
<b>TEXAS AND THE NATION</b> How Extensive Are Texas's Local Governments?	345
Types of Special Districts	346
School Districts	346
Nonschool Special Districts	347
Problems with Special Districts	349
Councils of Government (COGs)	351
<b>Financial Issues Facing Local Government</b>	<b>352</b>
Capital Appreciation Bonds	352
Local Government Pensions	353
<b>Local Government and the Future of Texas</b>	<b>356</b>
<b>Study Guide</b>	<b>357</b>

## 11 • Public Finance 361

<b>What Is the Budget?</b>	<b>363</b>
<b>Spending and Revenue in Texas</b>	<b>365</b>
Trends in State Spending	365
Revenue in Texas	366
<b>TEXAS AND THE NATION</b> Who Pays the Highest State Taxes?	369
The Question of the Income Tax in Texas	371
Other State Revenue	372
<b>State Funds</b>	<b>374</b>
<b>WHO ARE TEXANS?</b> Who Pays the Most State Taxes in Texas?	375
<b>The Texas Constitution and the Budget</b>	<b>378</b>
<b>YOU DECIDE: VOICES OF TEXAS</b> What to Do with a Budget Surplus	379
<b>The Budgetary Process</b>	<b>383</b>
<b>Budget Crises in Twenty-First-Century Texas</b>	<b>387</b>
Looking Beyond the Budget Crisis of 2011	390
<b>Public Finance and the Future of Texas</b>	<b>392</b>
<b>Study Guide</b>	<b>394</b>

## 12 • Public Policy 399

<b>The Policy-Making Process</b>	<b>401</b>
Rationality in Policy Making	402





<b>Education Policy</b>	<b>404</b>
The Roots of Education Policy in Texas	406
Desegregation	407
Equity in the Public School System	407
<b>WHO ARE TEXANS?</b> Who Attends Public School in Texas?	409
Educational Excellence and Accountability in Texas	411
Education Policy in a New Era	414
<b>Welfare Policy</b>	<b>416</b>
Poverty in Texas	416
Welfare in Texas, 1935–96	418
The Idea of Dependency and Welfare Reform in the 1990s	419
Evaluating Welfare Reforms	421
<b>Medicaid and Health Care Policy</b>	<b>422</b>
Medicaid	423
Broader Health Care Issues in Texas	426
The Affordable Care Act	428
<b>YOU DECIDE: VOICES OF TEXAS</b> Abortion Policy in Texas	429
<b>TEXAS AND THE NATION</b> What Are the Trade-Offs in Texas Public Policy?	431
<b>Water Policy</b>	<b>432</b>
Water Law in Texas	434
Planning Authorities and Water Policy	435
<b>Public Policy and the Future of Texas</b>	<b>438</b>
<b>Study Guide</b>	<b>439</b>

## 13 • Crime and Corrections Policy 445

<b>Categorizing Crime in Texas</b>	<b>447</b>
Felonies and Misdemeanors	447
Punishing Crime	447
<b>The Criminal Justice Process</b>	<b>449</b>
Arraignment and Posting Bail	450
Grand Jury Indictment	450
Pretrial Hearings	450
Trial and Sentencing	451
Does the Criminal Justice System Create Criminals?	451
Crime and Texas District Attorneys	452
Crime and Criminal Defense	454
<b>Crime, Corrections, and the Texas Prison System</b>	<b>455</b>
History of the Prison System	455
<b>WHO ARE TEXANS?</b> Who Is in Prison in Texas?	457



The Prison System Today	458
<b>TEXAS AND THE NATION</b> How Does Criminal Justice in Texas Compare to Other States?	461
The Death Penalty	462
<b>YOU DECIDE: VOICES OF TEXAS</b> Cite and Release: Necessary Cost-Savings or Soft on Crime?	463
Self-Defense and Concealed / Open Carry of Handguns	466
<b>The Integrity of the Texas Criminal Justice System</b>	<b>468</b>
How Fair Is the Criminal Justice System?	468
<b>Reforms</b>	<b>473</b>
The Politics of Criminal Justice Reform	474
<b>Criminal Justice and the Future of Texas</b>	<b>477</b>
<b>Study Guide</b>	<b>479</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>A1</b>
<b>Endnotes</b>	<b>A21</b>
<b>Answer Key</b>	<b>A41</b>
<b>Credits</b>	<b>A43</b>
<b>Glossary / Index</b>	<b>A45</b>



# Preface

**O**UR GOAL in this text is to offer readers a broad understanding of the factors that are reshaping political processes and institutions in the Lone Star State in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. We are particularly concerned with explaining how the principles underlying constitutional government in Texas are being reworked in the face of new political, economic, and demographic changes. By supplementing our institutional analysis with concrete examples from everyday political life in Texas, we hope to show the reader that politics and government in Texas are not only important to their lives but endlessly fascinating as well.

## Features of the Third Edition

Another, related goal of the book is to provide students with extensive pedagogical support throughout each chapter. In every chapter, several features engage students' interest and help them master the learning objectives for the topic.

- **Updated “What Government Does and Why It Matters” chapter introductions** draw students into the chapter by showing them why they should care about the chapter's topic.
- **Chapter Goals** appear at the start of the chapter and then recur at the start of the relevant sections throughout the chapter to create a more focused, active reading experience.
- **NEW Core Objectives are woven into every chapter**, helping students gain proficiency with critical thinking, effective communication, personal and social responsibility, and quantitative reasoning.
- **Updated “Who Are Texans?” infographics** engage visually oriented students with a “statistical snapshot” of the state related to each chapter's topic. Through accompanying quantitative reasoning questions, these features help students grasp the political implications of demographic, political, economic, and regional diversity in Texas. Related exercises in the online coursepacks and slides in the instructor PowerPoints make it easy for instructors to bring these graphics into their online or face-to-face classrooms.
- **Updated “Texas and the Nation” infographics** enable students to compare Texas's government and politics to other states'. Critical thinking questions accompany each “Texas and the Nation” graphic and encourage students to engage deeply with the graphics and draw their own conclusions. Related exercises in the online coursepacks and slides in the PowerPoints make it easy for instructors to bring these graphics into their online or face-to-face classrooms.
- **Revised “You Decide: Voices of Texas” boxes in every chapter** address controversial issues in Texas politics that students care about. These boxes encourage students to think beyond their knee-jerk reactions, consider all sides of the debate, and think about communicating their own effective arguments.

- **NEW “Future of Texas” sections at the end of every chapter** examine how Texas government and politics are likely to change in light of Texas’s shifting demographics and economy.
- **Extensive end-of-chapter review sections organized around Chapter Goals** include section outlines, practice quiz questions, and key terms. Students have everything they need to master the material in each section of the chapter.

## Revisions to the Third Edition

In the third edition of *Governing Texas*, we have tried to provide students with the most up-to-date account of Texas government and politics. Every chapter was scrutinized with help from dozens of outside reviewers, and we have tried to provide the most current examples and data throughout the text. Highlights of the new edition include:

- Chapter 1 (The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas) has been fully updated with the most recent available economic and demographic data. Material has also been added to help students understand the complexity of political culture in Texas and the impact of military bases in the state.
- Chapter 2 (The Texas Constitution) has been updated and refined to include more material on the Texas Founding. Article 1 of the Texas Constitution (the Bill of Rights) has also been included in the appendix with this edition to enhance students’ ability to work with original documents while thinking about the role played by the evolving constitution in the state.
- Chapter 3 (Texas in the Federal System) has been rewritten to take into account court decisions that have affected Texas, including recent rulings on the state’s voter identification law.
- Chapter 4 (Political Parties) has been updated throughout with particular attention to the growing influence of the Tea Party in state Republican Party politics. The chapter also highlights the role of the Latino community in changing Texas and Democratic Party competition.
- Chapter 5 (Campaigns and Elections) includes a new opener highlighting the mayoral races in San Antonio and Houston, emphasizing why students should care about what happens in elections at the municipal level. This chapter also includes a revamped and updated section on recent changes to electoral practices, including redistricting, voter ID litigation, and *Evenwel v. Abbott*.
- Chapter 6 (Interest Groups and Lobbying) includes many updated examples and stories to highlight the changing role of interest groups in state politics, and devotes considerable attention to recent attempts at ethics reform.
- Chapter 7 (The Legislature) begins with a new opener highlighting Joe Straus’s speakership and tensions within the Republican Party. It includes an updated discussion of the two-thirds rule in the State Senate as well as data updated to reflect the changed composition of the legislature.
- Chapter 8 (The Executive Branch) has been significantly rewritten to take into account all the new officials in the Executive Branch. Comparisons are also made between the actions of current officials and those of previous ones—for example, between Governor Perry and Governor Abbott.

- Chapter 9 (The Judiciary) has been updated throughout, with new content added regarding judicial ethics and misconduct.
- Chapter 10 (Local Government) has been significantly rewritten to account for changes in local governments and local officials. Most importantly, discussion of the financial problems facing local governments has been rewritten to make those problems and their causes clearer and easier to understand.
- Chapter 11 (Public Finance) has been fully updated with the data made available to political leaders for the 2017 legislative session. An enhanced discussion of the challenges of both budgetary surpluses and deficits is also included.
- Chapter 12 (Public Policy) has been fully updated. New discussions of the problems facing policy makers in education and health care have been added focusing on the importance of recent court decisions. Explicit linkages have also been made between theories of the policy-making process and the substantive policy areas. A new graphic has been added investigating de facto segregation at the local level in the state.
- Chapter 13 (Crime and Corrections Policy) has been updated so that current developments such as the Sandra Bland case and the Waco Biker case are discussed. New criminal justice reforms, such as the new method for selecting grand juries, are also addressed.

We believe that these changes will assist professors in teaching students the nuts and bolts of Texas government and politics, as well as the broad themes and issues that will shape the Lone Star State in the coming decades.

## Resources for Assessment and a Dynamic Classroom Experience

The media package for *Governing Texas*, Third Edition, offers all of the tools needed for effective assessment, targeted self-study, and dynamic classroom presentations—either online or face-to-face. Features include the following.



### Norton Coursepacks: Our Content, Your Course

Rachel Bzostek, *University of Texas, Tyler*

Linda Veazey, *Midwestern State University*

Sharon Navarro, *University of Texas, San Antonio*

Ahad Hayaud-Din, *Brookhaven College*

Easily add high-quality Norton digital media to your online, hybrid, or lecture course—all at no cost. Norton Coursepacks work with and leverage your existing Learning Management System, so there's no new system to learn, and access is free and easy. Comprehensive Coursepacks are ready to use, right from the start, but are easy to customize, using the system you already know and understand. Norton Coursepacks include exclusive multimedia content and assessment tools that are not found anywhere else, such as test banks and quizzes, interactive learning tools, and exercises covering chapter objectives and tagged to State Learning Outcomes. Every chapter includes:

- Video exercises to help students retain and apply information through current events

- “Who Are Texans?” and “Texas and the Nation” animated infographics to guide students through interpreting data
- Simulations to get students thinking about how Texas government really works
- **Updated** “You Decide” exercises to help students engage varying views on contemporary issues
- “By the Numbers” exercises to help students practice quantitative skills by exploring key datagraphics from the text

### **Norton Ebook: Same Great Book, at a Fraction of the Price**

Norton ebooks allow students to access the entire book and much more; students can search, highlight, and take notes with ease, as well as collaborate and share their notes with teachers and classmates. The *Governing Texas*, Third Edition, ebook can be viewed on any device—laptop, tablet, phone, even a public computer—and will stay synced between devices.

### **Lecture PowerPoints**

Ronald Vardy, *Wharton County Junior College*

The third edition of *Governing Texas* offers fully customizable lecture slides with clicker questions, teaching ideas, and discussion questions in the instructor-only notes field. “Who Are Texans?” and “Texas and the Nation” slides feature popular infographics and pop quiz questions for the optimal lecture experience.

### **Art Slides**

Photographs and drawn figures from the book are available for classroom use.

### **Instructor’s Manual**

Linda Veazey, *Midwestern State University*

The *Instructor’s Manual* includes chapter outlines, class activities, and group discussion questions. Each chapter also offers suggested video clips with links and discussion questions.

### **Test Bank**

Sharon Navarro, *University of Texas, San Antonio*

The revised test bank assesses chapter learning goals and Texas Student Learning Outcomes, applies Bloom’s Taxonomy across these goals and outcomes, and improves the overall quality and accuracy of our assessment through extensive peer review.

### **InQuizitive**

Guided by an editorial team of experienced teachers, InQuizitive for *Governing Texas* provides formative, adaptive assessment that reinforces reading comprehension with a focus on the key concepts and learning objectives of Texas politics. Guiding feedback helps students understand why their answers were right or wrong and steers them back to the text. Student knowledge is strengthened through questions that compel analysis of Texas politics and government; animated and static infographics; and images, charts, and graphs from this text. Each InQuizitive question is correlated with not only the chapter learning objectives but the state learning objectives for the Texas government course as well.

To learn more about InQuizitive, visit <http://books.wwnorton.com/books/inquizitive/overview/>.

## About the Authors

Over the past 25 years, we have worked together on a number of books that have studied various aspects of government and political life in Texas. We come to the study of Texas politics and government from very different backgrounds.

Anthony Champagne was born in Louisiana as the French surname suggests. His mother's family, however, were pioneer farmers and ranchers in Hopkins County, Texas. It was growing up with Louisiana and Texas connections that gave him a lifelong interest in politics. When he moved to the University of Texas at Dallas in 1979, he immediately visited the Sam Rayburn Library in Bonham. Sam Rayburn was one of the Texas's most influential political figures. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1912 and served until his death in 1961. During that time, he was chairman of one of the most influential committees of the House, was Majority Leader, Speaker, and Minority Leader of the House. He is responsible for much of the major legislation in the New Deal and for his key role in the politics of the Truman, Eisenhower, and early Kennedy Administrations. A chance meeting at the Sam Rayburn Library with H. G. Dulaney, Sam Rayburn's secretary for 10 years, led to the opportunity to do over 130 oral histories with persons associated with Sam Rayburn. As a result, Champagne was completely hooked on studying Texas politics. He was particularly interested in the transformation of the state from an overwhelmingly Democratic state to a Republican bulwark. And, he was interested in how Texas changed from being a key partner with the national government in the cooperative federalism of the New Deal period to a state whose leaders are frequent critics of national power today. Political change in the state from the Sam Rayburn era to today is a key research focus of his.

Edward Harpham, in contrast, was born in Montreal to second generation Canadian parents who immigrated to the United States soon after his birth. His family's migration over the last 100 years from Sheffield to Toronto (1919) to Delaware (1952) to Texas (1978) and the industries that employed the family (auto service industry, chemical industry, and academia) mirror the demographic changes that have reshaped much of the population movement in the United States and Texas throughout the twentieth century. Trained as a political theorist with a deep interest in political economy, Harpham's move to Texas sparked an interest in how economic changes in the late twentieth century were changing the contours of the state's traditional political life in new and unexpected ways. At the heart of his work lies an abiding interest on the role that ideas play in shaping the growth and development of political institutions and public policies in the modern information age.

Jason Casellas was born in New Orleans and has always had an interest in state and local politics. His grandfather was a professor of Spanish literature at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. He inspired him to pursue a career as a professor. After graduating from Loyola University in New Orleans, he attended graduate school at Princeton University where he earned a Ph.D. in Politics. His dissertation and book examined Latino representation in state legislatures and Congress, with Texas as one of the key states in his study. Even though he was not born in Texas, he got there as fast as he could. He moved to Texas in 2005 to take an assistant professorship at the University of Texas at Austin, where he continued his immersion in all things Texas. In 2013, he moved not very far to the University of Houston, where he is now an associate professor. Most of his extended family fortuitously reside in all parts of the Houston area. He has continued to teach, research, and comment on Texas politics with a specific expertise in the growing Latino population, and how it might transform the state in the future.

# Acknowledgments

**WE ARE GRATEFUL** for the suggestions that we have received from many thoughtful and experienced government instructors across the state. For their input on the plan and execution of this book, we thank:

Jason Abbott, *Hill College*  
Lee Almaguer, *Midland College*  
Marcos Arandia, *North Lake College*  
Ellen Baik, *University of Texas–Pan American*  
Robert Ballinger, *South Texas College*  
Annie Johnson Benifield, *Lone Star College–Tomball*  
David E. Birch, *Lone Star College–Tomball*  
Robin Marshall Bittick, *Sam Houston State University*  
Walt Borges, *University of North Texas at Dallas*  
Patrick Brandt, *University of Texas at Dallas*  
Gary Brown, *Lone Star College–Montgomery*  
Lee Brown, *Blinn College*  
Jonathan Buckstead, *Austin Community College*  
Daniel Bunye, *South Plains College*  
James V. Calvi, *West Texas A&M University*  
Michael Campenni, *Austin Community College*  
Larry Carter, *University of Texas at Arlington*  
Max Choudary, *Northeast Lakeview College*  
Mark Cichock, *University of Texas at Arlington*  
Adrian Clark, *Del Mar College*  
Tracy Cook, *Central Texas College*  
Cassandra Cookson, *Lee College*  
Leland M. Coxe, *University of Texas at Brownsville*  
Rosalyn Crain, *Houston Community College–Northwest*  
Sandra K. Creech, *Temple College*  
Kevin Davis, *North Central Texas College*  
Steve Davis, *Lone Star College–Kingwood*  
Henry Dietz, *University of Texas at Austin*  
Brian K. Dille, *Odessa College*  
Douglas Dow, *University of Texas at Dallas*  
Jeremy Duff, *Midwestern State University*  
David Edwards, *University of Texas at Austin*  
Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha, *University of North Texas*  
Lou Ann Everett, *Trinity Valley Community College*  
Victoria Farrar-Myers, *University of Texas at Arlington*  
John P. Flanagan, *Weatherford College*  
Ben Fraser, *San Jacinto College*  
Joey Fults, *Kilgore College*  
Frank J. Garrahan, *Austin Community College*  
Will Geisler, *Collin College*  
David Garrison, *Collin College*  
Mandi Gilligan, *El Centro College*  
Shaun M. Gilligan, *Cedar Valley College*  
Terry Gilmour, *Midland College*

Randy Givens, *Blinn College*  
Donna Godwin, *Trinity Valley Community College*  
Elsa Gonzalez, *Texas State Technical College–Harlingen*  
Larry Gonzalez, *Houston Community College–Southwest*  
Christine Gottemoller, *Del Mar College*  
Paul Gottemoller, *Del Mar College*  
Kenneth L. Grasso, *Texas State University*  
Heidi Jo Green, *Lone Star College–CyFair*  
Sara Gubala, *Lamar University*  
Yolanda Hake, *South Texas College*  
Sabrina Hammel, *Northeast Lakeview College*  
Jeff Harmon, *University of Texas at San Antonio*  
Tiffany Harper, *Collin College*  
Billy Hathorn, *Laredo Community College*  
Ahad Hayaud-Din, *Brookhaven College*  
Virginia Haysley, *Lone Star College–Tomball*  
Tom Heiting, *Odessa College*  
John Hitt, *North Lake College*  
Kevin Holton, *South Texas College*  
Taofang Huang, *University of Texas at Austin*  
Casey Hubble, *McLennan Community College*  
Gregory Hudspeth, *St. Philip’s College*  
Glen Hunt, *Austin Community College*  
Tammy Johannessen, *Austin Community College*  
Doris J. Jones, *Tarrant County College*  
Joseph Jozwiak, *Texas A&M Corpus Christi*  
Christy Woodward Kaupert, *San Antonio College*  
David Kennedy, *Lone Star College–Montgomery*  
Edward Korzetz, *Lee College*  
Melinda Kovacs, *Sam Houston State University*  
Heidi Lange, *Houston Community College–Southwest*  
Boyd Lanier, *Lamar University*  
James Lantrip, *South Texas College*  
David Lektzian, *Texas Tech University*  
Raymond Lew, *Houston Community College–Central*  
Frank Lewis, *Texas State Technical College–Harlingen*  
Bob Little, *Brookhaven College*  
Robert Locander, *Lone Star College–North Harris*  
Nicholas Long, *St. Edward’s University*  
George Lyon, *El Paso Community College*  
Mitzi Mahoney, *Sam Houston State University*  
Lynne Manganaro, *Texas A&M International University*  
Sharon Manna, *North Lake College*  
Bobby J. Martinez, *Northwest Vista College*



David McClendon, *Tyler Junior College*  
 Mike McConachie, *Collin College*  
 Elizabeth McLane, *Wharton County Junior College*  
 Lindsey McLennan, *Kilgore College*  
 Phil McMahan, *Collin College*  
 Eddie Meaders, *University of North Texas*  
 Gay Michele, *El Centro College*  
 Tom Miles, *Texas Woman's University; University of North Texas*  
 Banks Miller, *University of Texas at Dallas*  
 Eric Miller, *Blinn College–Bryan*  
 Patrick Moore, *Richland College*  
 Sherri Mora, *Texas State University–San Marcos*  
 Dana Morales, *Lone Star College–Montgomery*  
 Amy Moreland, *Sul Ross State University*  
 Rick Moser, *Kilgore College*  
 Mark R. Murray, *South Texas College*  
 James Myers, *Odessa College*  
 Sugumaran Narayanan, *Midwestern State University*  
 Sharon Navarro, *University of Texas at San Antonio*  
 Jalal Nejad, *Northwest Vista College*  
 Glynn Newman, *Eastfield College*  
 Timothy Nokken, *Texas Tech University*  
 James Norris, *Texas A & M International University*  
 John Osterman, *San Jacinto College*  
 Cissie Owen, *Lamar University*  
 William Parent, *San Jacinto College*  
 David Putz, *Lone Star College Kingwood*  
 Himanshin Raizada, *Lamar University*  
 Prudencio E. Ramirez, *San Jacinto College*  
 John Raulston, *Kilgore College*  
 Daniel Regalado, *Odessa College*  
 Darrial Reynolds, *South Texas College*  
 Donna Rhea, *Houston Community College–Northwest*  
 Laurie Robertstad, *Navarro College*  
 Mario Salas, *University of Texas at San Antonio*  
 Larry Salazar, *McLennan Community College*  
 Michael Sanchez, *San Antonio College*  
 Raymond Sandoval, *Richland College*  
 Gilbert Schorlemmer, *Blinn College*  
 Mark Shomaker, *Blinn College*  
 Dennis Simon, *Southern Methodist University*  
 Shannon Sinegal, *Temple College*  
 Steve Slagle, *Texas State Technical College–Harlingen*  
 Brian William Smith, *St. Edward's University*  
 Michael Smith, *South Plains College*  
 Thomas E. Sowers II, *Lamar University*  
 John Speer, *Houston Community College*  
 Jeff Stanglin, *Kilgore College*  
 Jim Startin, *University of Texas at San Antonio*  
 Andrew Teas, *Houston Community College–Northwest*  
 Erica C. Terrell, *Richland College*  
 John Theis, *Lone Star College Kingwood*  
 Sean Theriault, *University of Texas at Austin*  
 James Thurmond, *University of Houston*  
 John Todd, *University of North Texas*  
 Delaina Toothman, *Texas State University*  
 Steven Tran, *Houston Community College*  
 Homer D. Trevino, *McLennan Community College*  
 Christopher Turner, *Laredo Community College*  
 Ronald W. Vardy, *University of Houston*  
 Linda Veazey, *Midwestern State University*  
 Albert Waite, *Central Texas College*  
 David Watson, *Sul Ross State University*  
 Clay Wiegand, *Cisco College*  
 Geoffrey Willbanks, *University of Texas at Tyler*  
 Neal Wise, *St. Edward's University*  
 Kathryn Yates, *Richland College*  
 Michael Young, *Trinity Valley Community College*  
 Tyler Young, *Collin College*  
 Rogerio J. Zapata, *South Texas College*

We thank the following University of Texas at Dallas students for their assistance: Lisa Holmes, Josh Payne, Ali Charania, Alan Roderick, Basel Musharbash, Liza Miadzvedskaya, and Sachi Dave.

At W. W. Norton, Peter Lesser provided editorial guidance throughout the process of developing and publishing the book. Project editor Christine D'Antonio and assistant editor Samantha Held kept everything organized. Copy editor Ellen Lohman helped polish the text. Production manager Ashley Horna made sure we ended up with a high-quality book, right on schedule. Media editor Spencer Richardson-Jones, associate media editor Michael Jaoui, and media editorial assistant Ariel Eaton worked with the authors of accompanying resources to develop useful tools for students and instructors. Our sincere thanks to all of them.

Anthony Champagne  
 Edward J. Harpham  
 Jason Casellas  
 December 2016

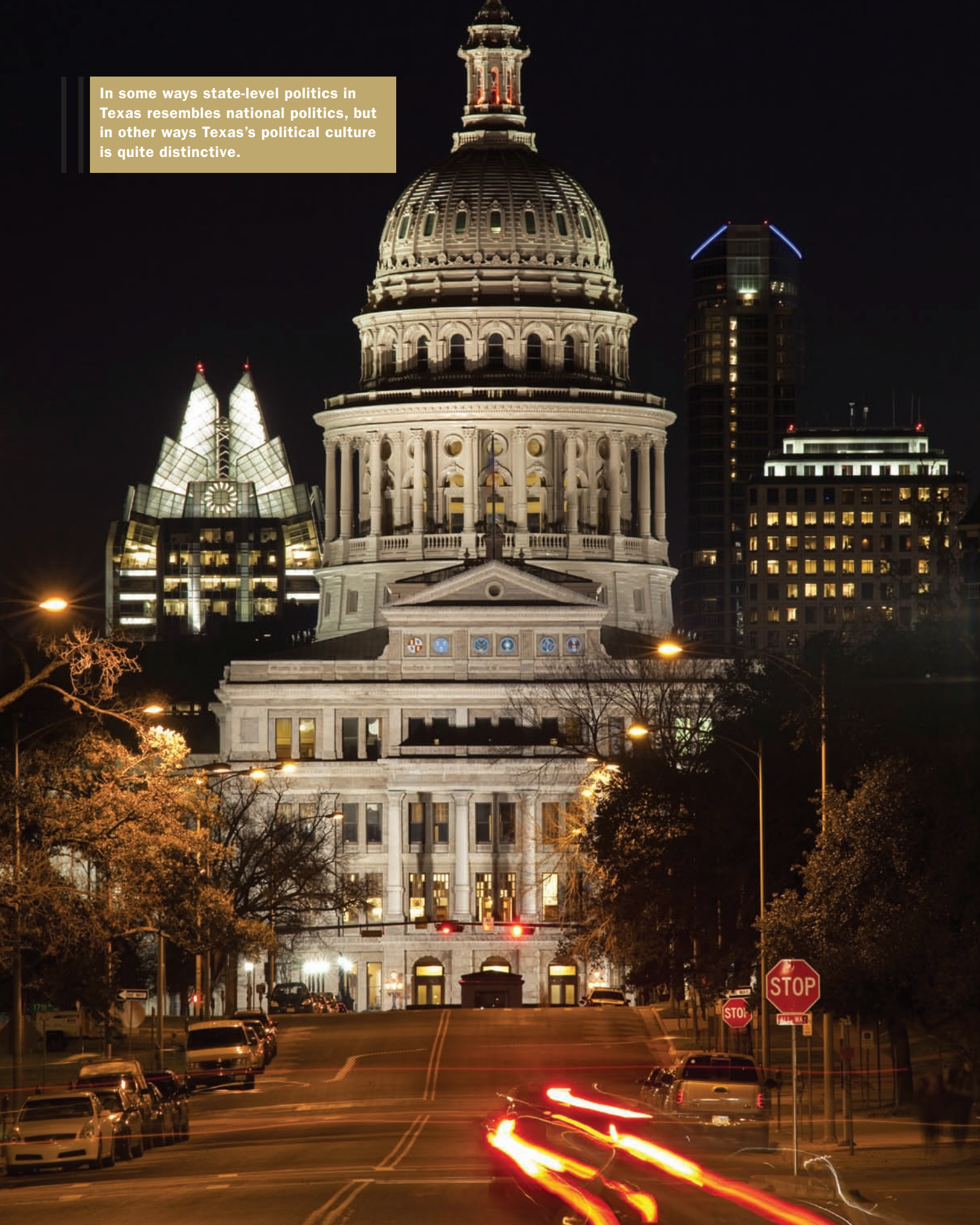


# Governing Texas





In some ways state-level politics in Texas resembles national politics, but in other ways Texas's political culture is quite distinctive.





# The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas

**W**HY TEXAS'S POLITICAL CULTURE MATTERS In his *Travels with Charley*, John Steinbeck once described Texas as “a state of mind . . . a mystique closely approximating a religion.” Americans passionately loved or hated Texas. Steinbeck believed that Texas, despite its vast space, its varying topography, its many cultures and ways of life, had a cohesiveness that may be stronger than in any other part of America. He wrote, “Rich, poor, Panhandle, Gulf, city, country, Texas is the obsession, the proper study and the passionate possession of all Texans.”

Certain myths define the obsession that is Texas—and Texans—in the popular imagination. The cowboy who challenges both Native American and Mexican rule, the rancher and farmer who cherish their economic independence, the wildcatter who is willing to risk everything for one more roll of the dice, and the independent entrepreneur who fears the needless intrusion of government into his life—such are the myths about Texans.

These myths extend far into the popular imagination when we think about various politicians who have led the state since its founding: the visionary Stephen F. Austin locked in a Mexican jail after presenting Texas's grievances to the authorities, the military hero Sam Houston who wins the Battle of San Jacinto but is thrown out of office because of his rejection of secession, the irrepressible Ma and Pa Ferguson who both served as governors, and the larger-than-life Lyndon Baines Johnson who began his career as a schoolteacher in Cotulla, Texas, and completed it as a champion of civil rights and the poor.

The reality of Texas today, its people and its leaders, is much more complicated than the Texas of popular myths. Texas is not only the second-largest state in the Union, comprising more than 261,000 square miles; it is also the second most populous. In 2015, Texas is estimated to have a population of almost 27.5 million people, and that population is rapidly growing and becoming more and more diverse. Whites constitute 43.5 percent of the population, while Latinos constitute more than 38.6 percent. Approximately 12.5 percent of the population are African American, and 4.5 percent are Asian. Eighty-five percent of Texans live in urban areas, with many involved in an economy driven by high-tech industry and globalization. More than 27 percent of the population has a bachelor's degree. On the whole, Texans are young, with 26.4 percent under the age of 18 and 10.3 percent over the age of 65.

Throughout this text, we will examine how Texas is changing and creating new myths about the people, politics, and politicians found in the state. We should be careful before we fully accept



any of these myths. As in the past, the reality of Texas—its people and its politics—is much more complex than the myths we spin about it. Conservative Republicans may control today’s political agenda, but their long-term dominance in politics and government is not certain. Increasing racial and ethnic diversity points to a new Texas, one that looks sharply different from the one in the history books and one that appears to favor Democrats (the party preferred today by most Latinos, African Americans, and recent immigrants). The future of the state and its people will be determined in large part by the struggle between an assertive Republican majority and a Democratic minority trying to regain power as both parties try to address the various political, economic, and demographic challenges facing the state. Moving our understanding of governance and politics beyond the myths about Texas is the goal of this chapter and the book.

---

## CHAPTER GOALS



- Describe the defining characteristics of political culture in Texas (pp. 5–7)
- Explain how Texas’s geography has influenced its political culture (pp. 7–10)
- Trace the evolution of Texas’s economy (pp. 11–22)
- Explain how the population of Texas has changed over time (pp. 22–30)
- Describe Texas’s shift from a rural society to an urban one (pp. 30–38)



# Texas Political Culture



Describe the defining characteristics of political culture in Texas

Studies of Texas politics often begin with a discussion of Texas's **political culture**. Though the concept is somewhat open ended, states do often exhibit a distinctive culture that is the “product of their entire history.” Presumably the political culture of a state has an effect on how people participate in politics and how individuals and institutions interact.<sup>1</sup> Political scientist Daniel Elazar has created a classification scheme for state political cultures that is used widely. He uses the concepts of moralistic, individualistic, and traditionalistic to describe such cultures. These three state political cultures are contemporary manifestations of the ethnic, socioreligious, and socioeconomic differences that existed among America’s original thirteen colonies.<sup>2</sup>

According to Elazar, **moralistic political cultures** were rooted in New England, where Puritans and other religious groups sought to create the Good Society. In such a culture, politics is the concern of everyone, and government is expected to take action to promote the public good and advance the public welfare. Citizen participation in politics is viewed as positive; people are encouraged to pursue the public good in civic activities.

**Individualistic political cultures**, on the other hand, originated in the middle states, where Americans sought material wealth and personal freedom through commercial activities. A state with an individualistic political culture generally places a low value on citizen participation in politics. Politics is a matter for professionals rather than for citizens, and the role of government is strictly limited. Government’s role is to ensure stability so that individuals can pursue their own interests.

**Traditionalistic political culture** developed initially in the South, reflecting the values of the slave plantation economy (pre-1865) and its successor, the Jim Crow era (1876–1965). Rooted in preindustrial values that emphasize social hierarchy and close interpersonal, often familial, relations among people, traditional culture is concerned with the preservation of tradition and the existing social order. In such states, public participation is limited and government is run by an established **elite**. Public policies disproportionately benefit the interests of those elites.

States can, of course, have cultures that combine these concepts. One book classified California as having a “moralistic individualistic” political culture and New York an “individualistic moralistic” culture. Often, Texas is categorized as having a “traditionalistic individualistic” political culture.<sup>3</sup> Taxes are kept low, and social services are minimized. Political elites, such as business leaders, have a major voice in how the state is run. In spite of the difficulty in measuring the concept of political culture in any empirical way, it is a concept widely regarded as useful in explaining fundamental beliefs about the state and the role of state government.

When considering the political culture of a state, one must recognize that it is not a stagnant thing. Political culture can change over time. Texas is undergoing dramatic changes, including some change in its political culture. It is also difficult to classify the political culture of a state as large and as diverse as Texas in any one category. The liberal cultural norms of urban areas like Houston, Dallas, and Austin often stand in sharp contrast to those found in the conservative suburban and exurban areas of

**political culture** broadly shared values, beliefs, and attitudes about how the government should function and politics should operate; American political culture emphasizes the values of liberty, equality, and democracy

**moralistic political culture** the belief that government should be active in promoting the public good and that citizens should participate in politics and civic activities to ensure that good

**individualistic political culture** the belief that government should limit its role to providing order in society, so that citizens can pursue their economic self-interest

**traditionalistic political culture** the belief that government should be dominated by political elites and guided by tradition

**elite** a small group of people that dominates the political process



The seal of Texas reflects the state's individualistic political culture.

these cities. These, too, differ from the political cultures found in south Texas along the border or in the rural Panhandle of west Texas. In fact, Texas has many different political cultures or subcultures within its borders.<sup>4</sup>

To understand the complexity of political culture in Texas today, it is useful to consider three long-lasting patterns in Texas politics and the changes that they are undergoing: the one-party state, the idea of provincialism, and business dominance. We examine these elements of Texas political culture below.

## The One-Party State Persists

For over 100 years, Texas was dominated by the Democratic Party. Winning the Democratic Party primary was tantamount to winning the general election. As we will see in later chapters, this pattern no longer holds. During the 1990s substantial competition emerged between the parties for control of the state legislature. Following redistricting in 2002 the Republicans secured a 7-vote majority in the state Senate and a 24-vote majority in the state House. Between 2002 and 2016 all major statewide elected offices were controlled by Republicans. One Court of Criminal Appeals justice switched to the Democratic Party in December 2013 after being elected as a Republican, but was defeated in the November 2016 general elections. The question today is not whether the political culture of Texas will continue to be defined by a powerful Democratic Party, but how that culture will be redefined by two forces: a powerful Republican Party in most suburban, exurban, and rural areas that is growing increasingly conservative and a Democratic Party that controls Texas's most urban areas.

## Provincialism Is Declining

**provincialism** a narrow, limited, and self-interested view of the world often associated with rural values and notions of limited government

A second pattern that once defined Texas political culture is **provincialism**, a narrow view of the world that is often associated with rural values and notions of limited government. The result often was an intolerance of diversity and a notion of the public interest that dismissed social services and expenditures for education. Some of the more popular politicians in Texas have stressed cornpone—a rural rejection of modern urban lifestyles—intolerance, and a narrow worldview rather than policies that might

offer advantages to the state as it competes with other states and with other nations. Like the one-party Democratic state, Texas provincialism has faded as a defining feature of the political culture. The growing influence of minorities, women, and gays in state politics, increasing urbanization, and Texas's relevance in the global economy have all undercut Texas's traditional provincialism.

### PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY: WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

- Do you agree with the popular myth that Texas is overly provincial—that is, intolerant, narrow minded, and overly critical of government? Why or why not?
- Do you think Texas needs to be more welcoming of outside interests and ideas? If so, what do you think government and the people could do to foster more open-mindedness in Texas?

## Business Dominance Continues

A third, continuing pattern that has helped define Texas's political culture is its longtime dominance by business.



*Ties between business and politics have always been close in Texas. Here, Governor Greg Abbott signs a bill prohibiting local government attempts to ban fracking as a way to continue to get oil and natural gas out of the ground.*

Labor unions are rare in Texas except in the oil-refinery areas around Beaumont–Port Arthur. Other groups that might offer an alternative to a business perspective, such as consumer interests, are poorly organized and poorly funded. Business groups are major players in Texas politics, in terms of campaign contributions, organized interest groups, and lobbyists.

This chapter will investigate the economic, social, and demographic changes that transformed Texas’s political culture during the twentieth century. These changes shook Texas government and politics in the 1990s and have continued to shape them in the second decade of the twenty-first century.

## The Land



**Explain how Texas’s geography has influenced its political culture**

Much of Texas’s history and political life has been shaped by the relationship forged between its people and the land. When Texas became a republic in 1836, it claimed 216,000,000 acres (approximately 350,000 square miles) of unappropriated land as its own. At its founding, Texas was land rich but money poor, having only \$55.68 in its treasury. Texas was the only state, other than the original 13 colonies, to keep control of its public lands when it entered the Union in 1845. Privatizing these public lands was probably the most important ongoing public policy pursued by the state through the Land Office in the nineteenth century. Although Texas turned a large portion of its public lands over to private ownership, it retained ownership of the minerals under

**privatization of public property** the act(s) by which Texas gave public land owned by the state over to private individuals for cultivation and development

some of this land, including land containing oil and natural gas. **Privatization of public property** established the property rules and regulations under which economic development would take place in the state. It also gave the state an ownership of mineral rights that would provide funding for elementary and secondary education as well as higher education for the next 160 years.

Privatization was not the only political issue surrounding land in Texas in the nineteenth century. The exact boundaries of Texas were contentious throughout the 1840s and 1850s. Following the Mexican American War, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 established the Rio Grande as the southern border of the state. Following a threat by Texas to use military force to reassert its land claims in the west, the Compromise of 1850 established Texas's current western borders. In exchange for \$10 million in federal bonds, Texas gave up claims to 67,000,000 acres of land in what are now New Mexico, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, and Oklahoma. The Compromise of 1850 enabled Texas to pay off the public debts incurred during the Republic and to retain 98,000,000 acres in public lands.<sup>5</sup>

Today, Texas is the second-largest state in size, next to Alaska. To understand the dynamics of political life and governance in Texas demands an appreciation of the vast spaces and topography that define the state.

Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of Texas's geography is its size. The longest straight-line distance across the state from north to south is 801 miles; the longest east–west distance is 773 miles. To put this into perspective, the north–south distance between New York City and Charleston, South Carolina, is 763 miles, cutting across six different states. The east–west distance from New York City to Chicago is 821 miles, cutting across five different states.

Distances alone do not tell the whole story of the diverse geography found in Texas. There are four distinct physical regions in Texas (Figure 1.1).<sup>6</sup> Their distinctive features have shaped politics in Texas in a number of important ways.

## The Gulf Coastal Plains

The Gulf Coastal Plains extend from the Louisiana border and the Gulf of Mexico, along the Rio Grande up to Del Rio, and northward to the line of the Balcones Fault and Escarpment. As one moves westward, the climate becomes increasingly dry. Forests become less frequent as post oak trees dominate the landscape until they too are replaced by the prairies and brushlands of central Texas.

The eastern portion of the Gulf Coastal Plains—so-called east Texas—is characterized by hilly surfaces covered by forests of pine and hardwoods. Almost all of Texas's timber production takes place here. It is also the home of some of Texas's most famous oilfields. To the west is the Blackland Belt. A rolling prairie soil made the Blackland Belt a prime farming area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was a major center of cotton production in Texas. Today, it is the most densely populated area of the state and has a diversified manufacturing base.

The Coastal Prairies around Houston and Beaumont were the center for the post–World War II industrial boom, particularly in the petrochemical industry. Winter vegetable and fruit production plays a major role in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, while livestock is important in the Rio Grande Plain, an area that receives less than

**FIGURE 1.1**

## The Physical Regions of Texas

SOURCE: Dallas Morning News, *Texas Almanac 2000–2001* (Dallas: Dallas Morning News, 1999), p. 55.



24 inches of rainfall on average every year and during the summer months experiences rapid evaporation.

Texas's political life grew out of the Gulf Coastal Plains. The land grants made available to Americans willing to come to Texas in the first half of the nineteenth century were located here. This region was the foundation of plantation life during the antebellum period when slavery flourished in the state. East Texas was the home of the first oil booms in Texas in the early decades of the twentieth century. The Dallas–Fort Worth area is located in the northwestern part of this region, once a bastion of a small Republican Party. A union movement grew out of the industrialized areas along the coast, providing support to a liberal wing of the Democratic Party. For the most part, though, the Gulf Coastal Plains were dominated by rural conservative values, be they located in the Democratic Party (from 1876 to the early 1990s) or in the Republican Party (from the 1990s to today). Urbanization and suburbanization in Houston and Dallas–Fort Worth have added new dimensions to the political life of this region. Urban areas have become increasingly Democratic, while suburban areas have become more Republican.