

# **The Political Economy of Texas**

**AECO 4090.001 and 5050.001**

**Spring 2009**

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## **Course Guide**

The purpose of this course is to introduce a variety of topics and analytical approaches that can assist us in understanding the “political economy” of Texas. By political economy, we are referring to the economic, political and social dynamics that influence the public policymaking process and outcomes in the state of Texas and its political subdivisions. Emphasis will be placed on economic matters and policy problems in their institutional setting. Texas’ relationship to the national and international economies will also be emphasized.

Evaluation of student performance will be based on two examinations, class participation, and a short written “policy report.”

There is no required text for the course. Instead, students will be asked to read a variety of articles and monographs that can be purchased at CopyPro (Hickory and Fry Sts). The principal topics and readings are shown below.

In addition, students are encouraged to read either the Dallas Morning News or the Fort Worth Star-Telegram on a regular basis since class discussions and examinations will be based in part on current events.

*Note: Any student with a qualifying disability as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the instructor by the 12th class day to arrange for any special needs.*

| <b>Date</b>         | <b>Topic</b>  |
|---------------------|---|
| Jan. 21 and 28      | I. The Lay of the Land                              |
| Feb. 4 and Feb. 11  | II. An Overview of the Texas Economy                |
| Feb. 18 and Feb. 25 | III. Texas in the National and Global Economies     |
| Mar. 4              | IV. Texas' Natural Resources                        |
| March 11            | Mid-term Examination 388 Chilton Hall               |
| Mar. 25 and Apr. 1  | V. Government, Politics and the Electorate in Texas |
| April 8             | VI. Texas Taxes and Intergovernmental Finance       |
| April 15            | VII. Social Indicators in Texas                     |
| Apr. 22 and Apr. 29 | VIII. Patterns of Urban Development in Texas        |
| May 6               | IX. Texas' Business Climate and the Future          |
| May 13              | Final Examination 388 Chilton Hall                  |

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR ISSUE PAPER: AECO 4090 and 5050

State/local tax structure  
Judicial selection  
Workers' compensation  
Funding of elementary/secondary education  
Funding of higher education  
Regulation of telecommunications  
Regulation of oil and gas production  
Product liability insurance  
Congressional redistricting  
Legislative redistricting  
Funding of county hospitals  
Economic development in South Texas  
Texas-Mexico border issues  
Funding of election campaigns in Texas  
Texas' tort system  
Cities vs. suburbs  
Funding welfare programs in Texas  
Water development policy  
Prison and corrections  
Mental health issues  
General health problems in Texas – e.g., Colonias  
Improving educational outcomes  
Policy implications of demographic change  
Adjusting to defense cuts  
Texas' influence in Washington  
Constitutional spending cap

NOTE: Students may choose other topics with the permission of the instructor.