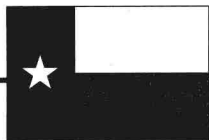


A photograph of the Texas State Capitol building at night. The building is illuminated from within, showing the interior of the dome and the columns of the portico. A bright lightning bolt streaks across the dark, stormy sky above the building. The overall scene is dramatic and atmospheric.

TEXAS POLITICS

SIXTH EDITION

RICHARD H. KRAEMER ★ CHARLDEAN NEWELL ★ DAVID F. PRINDLE



Texas Politics

Sixth Edition

Lesson	Chapter	Pages
1	1	2-19; 24-30
2	2	33-57
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5	3	60-99
6	1	20-23
	5	132-39

REVIEW JUNE 14 @ 7PM

Lesson	Chapter	Pages
7	no readings	no readings
8	5	138
9	4	101-129
10	5	139-57; 159-61
11	5	157-59
12	6	172-97

REVIEW JUNE 28 @ 7PM

Lesson	Chapter	Pages
13	6	164-72
14	7	204-30
	8	234-45
15	8	245-60
16	7	200-04
17	9	261-88
18	10	290-320

REVIEW JULY 12 @ 7 PM

Lesson	Chapter	Pages
19	13	378-407
20	15	444-47
21	11	322-33; 342-46
	12	365-72
22	11	333-39
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24	12	351-57
25	11	339-42
26	12	360-63

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Texas Politics

Sixth Edition

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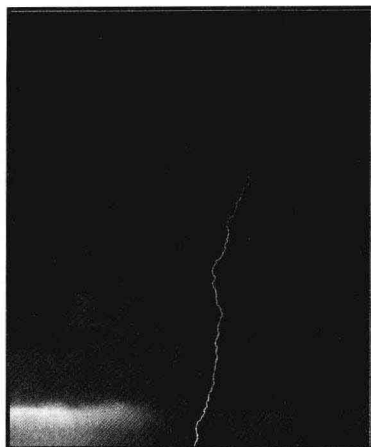
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THE COVER PHOTOS

The front cover—lightning striking the capitol building—shows the relationship between nature and Texas governmental institutions. The back cover illustrates nature unaffected by human institutions: lightning strikes the Texas badlands north of Benjamin. Our theme—lightning—for this edition symbolizes the forces that have struck the state in the form of changing political alignments and state finances.

The front photo, taken by Larry Kolvoord, shows the Texas Capitol building during a lightning storm.

The back cover photo, taken by Wyman Meinzer, shows lightning striking the Texas badlands north of Benjamin.

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PREFACE

Government and politics are important aspects of modern life. Government includes institutions and policies, while politics refers to political behavior and action. Both touch our daily lives in many ways. The traffic officer who stops us for speeding, the sales tax we pay with each retail purchase, the governor of Texas, congressional elections, the relations between the United States and Russia, and support/protest of the right to choose an abortion are all examples.

Yet, while the typical undergraduate student has studied a considerable amount of history, including aspects of government and politics, that student often has had little exposure to a focused look at political institutions and behavior. The Markle Commission on the Media and the Electorate reported in 1990, "American voters today do not seem to understand their rightful place in the operation of democracy."¹ The midterm elections of 1994 seemed to indicate that citizen interest was reawakening, a sign that we regard as hopeful. Powerful messages were sent to the nation's politicians to the effect that:

- ★ incumbents had become complacent;
- ★ government's role as an instrument to promote social equity had been overplayed and further legislation such as health care reform was unwelcome;
- ★ more formal controls were needed to curb government, including term limits, a presidential item veto, and a balanced national budget.

At the same time, Texas did the "unthinkable"—turned out of office a governor who enjoyed a 60 percent approval rating for job performance.

Political turmoil does not necessarily equate to good public policy, however. The same year as the Markle report, the upscale British magazine, *The Economist*, reported that "public policy [in Texas] is . . . in shambles," and *60 Minutes* and *Saturday Night Live* both derided Texas politics.² The 1995 legislative was filled with proposals for carrying concealed weapons, insisting that welfare mothers find jobs even without available child care, and tort reform that would make it impossible for some individuals who were impaired for life to collect any damages if they could not prove malice on the part of the individual causing the problem. Thus, public policy may still be in shambles!

This book is designed to help students learn more about the government and politics of Texas with the hope that this knowledge will encourage them to be active citizens and to help shape carefully conceived public policy. *Texas Politics* emphasizes how government is organized and how it works. It further emphasizes the forces that shape political decisions in Texas, how Texas politics has changed, and what the future might hold.

¹Michael Oreskes, "Study Finds 'Astonishing' Indifference to Elections," *New York Times*, May 6, 1990, 16.

²"Sadly, Inept Texas Public Policy Draws World Attention," *Austin American-Statesman*, April 5, 1990, A12.

The first chapter sets the scene by providing both a brief history of our state and a theoretical framework for Texas politics. How government is organized, what its basic functions are, the importance of interest groups in Texas politics, the transitional nature of the political party system, the floundering economy and resulting revenue crisis in the state, issues of continuing concern to citizens and public officials alike, and basic citizen rights are all a part of this volume. We hope to pique our readers' interest enough that they will want to know more about the structure and dynamics of governing the second-largest state in the nation, and we have even included a research guide to aid those intrigued enough with Texas politics to learn on their own.

The authors are political scientists and, like other observers of politics, view their role as going beyond mere description. Unlike politicians, who tend either to defend the present governmental system or to excoriate it with radical change in mind, political scientists point out the differences between governmental practices and democratic political theory. We examine the faults of the system and suggest needed changes. Our bias is in favor of democracy because we think that democracy provides the greatest opportunity for humans in terms of both their individual and community development. We have a commitment to the twin democratic principles of individual freedom and equality and to the rule of law that underpins democratic systems; to the idea that citizens can and should participate in all aspects of politics; to the system of public education that participation requires; to the making of public policy in public, not in private; to the notion that the essence of democracy is diversity; and to the tolerance that is essential to achieve it. We are therefore both descriptive and critical. In the eloquent words of former President John F. Kennedy, "Men who create power make an indispensable contribution to the Nation's greatness, but the men who question power make a contribution just as indispensable."

Many people have helped in the preparation of the sixth edition of this book. Professors Jeremy Curtoys, Tarleton State University; Stefan W. Haag, Austin Community College; Gary E. Lipscomb, Texas A&M University, Kingsville; Lee Augustus McGriggs, College of the Mainland; Marilyn Mertens, Midwestern State University; James A. Robertson, Northeast Texas Community College; Gaye Lynn Scott, Austin Community College; Dennis Toombs, San Jacinto College; and Geoff Wells, Wayland Baptist University, served as formal reviewers of the fifth edition and made many helpful suggestions for revision. Our colleagues at the University of Texas at Austin and the University of North Texas also made many useful suggestions. We gratefully acknowledge the work of Robert E. Williams, who left Texas for Pepperdine University but who took with him his interest in Texas government and politics, thus allowing him to prepare the instructor's manual. Sometimes we agreed with the reviewers but were unable to comply with their suggestions because of space limitations. Nevertheless, many changes in this edition are due to their comments and the comments of colleagues across the state who called our attention to points deserving coverage or correction. We are similarly indebted to our students who raised provocative questions and pointed out places where greater clarity would be appreciated.

Additionally, we thank the many elected officials, legislative staff members, and state agency staff members who provided us with information, clarification, and graphics material. We especially thank Ben Sargent, winner of the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning, for again graciously permitting the use of his outstanding cartoons. Of course, any errors of fact or interpretation are ours alone.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface xi

Chapter 1 **THE CONTEXT OF TEXAS POLITICS** **1**

Introduction 2
Texas History: A Chronology 3
Texas as a Democracy 19
Texas and American Federalism 19
The Texas Political Culture 20
Social and Political Attitudes 24
Economy, Taxes, and Service 26
The People of Texas 28
Our Agenda 29
Summary 30
Key Terms 30
Study Questions 31

Chapter 2 **THE CONSTITUTIONAL SETTING** **33**

Introduction 34
Purposes of Constitutions 35
Texas Constitutions 37
The Present Texas Constitution 39
Constitutional Revision 47
Constitutional Politics 52
Summary 55
Key Terms 57
Study Questions 57

Chapter 3 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT** **59**

Introduction 60
Counties: Horse-Drawn Buggies? 60
Cities: Managed Environments 74

Special Districts: Our Hidden Governments	89
Regional Planning Bodies	94
Local Government: Prospects for the Future	94
Leadership in Local Government	96
How to Participate in Local Government	97
Summary	97
Key Terms	98
Study Questions	98

Chapter 4

INTEREST GROUPS AND LOBBYING

101

Introduction	102
Interest Groups	103
Interest Group Activities	103
Major Interest Groups in Texas	116
Regulation of Lobbying	126
Conclusion	127
Summary	127
Key Terms	128
Study Questions	128

Chapter 5

IDEOLOGY AND POLITICAL PARTIES

131

Introduction	132
Ideology	132
Political Socialization	134
Interests	139
Texas Political Parties—A Brief History	141
Functions of Political Parties	146
Party Organization	147
Two Parties, Three Factions	151
Third Parties in Texas	157
Summary	159
Key Terms	160
Study Questions	160

Chapter 6

VOTERS, CAMPAIGNS, AND ELECTIONS

163

Introduction	164
Voters	164
Registration	167

Texas Turnout—Government by the People?	169
Election Campaigns	172
Public Elections	185
Election '94	189
Conclusion	195
Summary	196
Key Terms	197
Study Questions	197

Chapter 7

ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE 199

Introduction	200
Functions of Legislative Bodies	201
Structure of the Legislature	204
Membership Characteristics	215
Internal Organization of the Legislature	220
General Criticism and Suggested Reforms	227
Summary	230
Key Terms	230
Study Questions	230

Chapter 8

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS 233

Introduction	234
Power of the Presiding Officers	235
Limits on Presiding Officers	242
How a Bill Becomes a Law in Texas	245
Legislative Dynamics	251
Evaluation and Reform	254
Nonlegislative Lawmaking	257
Summary	259
Key Terms	260
Study Questions	260

Chapter 9

THE GOVERNOR 261

Introduction	262
Basic Structure of the Office	262
Characteristics of Governors	267
Roles of the Governor and the Limits on Those Roles	270
Formal Roles and Limitations	270

Informal Roles and Limitations	281
Leadership Style	283
Summary	287
Key Terms	288
Study Questions	288

Chapter 10

THE ADMINISTRATIVE STATE

289

Introduction	290
Big Government: How Did It Happen?	291
Characteristics of Bureaucracy	295
Bureaucratic Survival Techniques	298
What Happens to the Public Interest?	303
Harnessing the Administrative State	304
State Administrative Agencies	310
Regulating the Regulators	317
Suggested Reforms	318
Summary	319
Key Terms	320
Study Questions	320

Chapter 11

THE JUDICIARY

321

Introduction	322
The Myth of the Nonpolitical Judiciary	322
The Judiciary	325
The Courts in Crisis	330
The System of Justice	342
Conclusion	347
Summary	347
Key Terms	348
Study Questions	348

Chapter 12

THE SUBSTANCE OF JUSTICE

349

Introduction	350
Civil Liberties	350
Civil Rights	360
Criminal Law	365

Torts and Tort Reform	372
Conclusion	375
Summary	375
Key Terms	375
Study Questions	376

Chapter 13

THE STATE ECONOMY AND THE FINANCING OF STATE GOVERNMENT

377

Introduction	378
The Texas Economy	379
Where Does the Money Come From?	380
Where Does the Money Go?	399
Execution/Spending	402
Summary	405
Key Terms	406
Study Questions	406

Chapter 14

ISSUES IN PUBLIC POLICY

409

Introduction	410
The Business of Business	413
Policy Initiatives	414
Poverty and Welfare	416
Saving the Environment	424
Higher Education	430
Conclusion	436
Summary	437
Key Terms	437
Study Questions	438

Chapter 15

THE FUTURE OF TEXAS POLITICS

439

Introduction	440
The Texas Political System	440
The Coming Challenges	443
The Future of Texas Democracy	451
Summary	453
Study Questions	454

Appendix

A RESEARCH GUIDE TO TEXAS POLITICS 455

Texas Politics: A Great Place to Do Research 455

Getting Started 455

Developing a Bibliography 456

Keeping Up with Texas Politics 459

Doing Original Research on Texas Politics 463

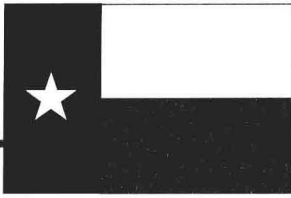
Conclusion 470

Helpful Locations for Getting Information 470

Glossary G-1

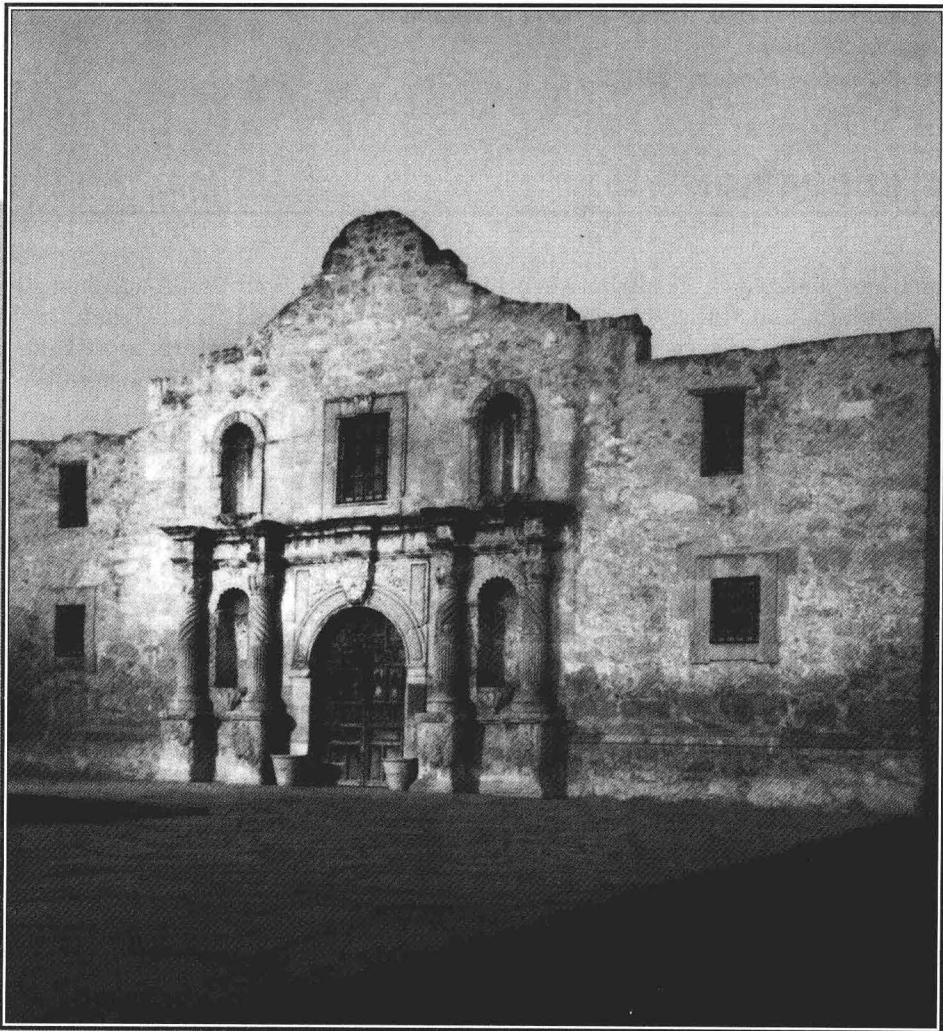
Index I-1





CHAPTER 1

THE CONTEXT OF TEXAS POLITICS



The Alamo in San Antonio symbolizes the state's colorful political history.



If I owned Hell and Texas, I'd rent out Texas and live in Hell.

Gen. Philip H. Sheridan

Fort Clark, 1855

If somebody's smart enough to move here, he must be all right.

Lynn Ashby

Houston journalist, 1977

All government is bad, including good government.

Edward Abbey

The Journey Home, 1977

INTRODUCTION

Much has changed in Texas between the time General Sheridan made his oft-quoted evaluation of the state and newspaperman Lynn Ashby made his. In 1855 Texas was poor, sparsely settled, and offered few civilized comforts to a soldier assigned to garrison an outpost against Indian raids. Today, Houston is a bustling, air-conditioned metropolis with 1.6 million residents. We shall see, however, that in some ways the state has changed little since Sheridan's time. Texas is a constantly evolving mix of old and new.

Traditional ways of thought and behavior evolved to meet problems of the 19th century when Texas was settled by Americans of western European background. These habits persist today, despite serious new problems created in the latter decades of the 20th century. As Texans prepare themselves to meet the challenges of the 21st century, they have to ask themselves if the habits and institutions they have inherited are up to the job.

In this chapter, we will first summarize the history of Texas emphasizing the important political events and the development of the economy. We will then consider some of the most important principles of democratic theory and try to explain why it is vital to understand them. Next we will examine Texas's political culture and explore some of the social and political attitudes that have been of historical importance to the state. Then we will discuss the economy of Texas and the way it interacts with the state's political system. As an introduction to some of our discussions later in the book, we will next consider the origin and distribution of the state's population. Finally, we will briefly outline our agenda for the rest of the book.

TEXAS HISTORY: A CHRONOLOGY

THE EARLIEST DAYS

The history of Texas is as exciting as that of any region in the nation, and our myth-makers have embellished it a little more than in most states. Texas has existed under six flags: those of Spain, France, Mexico, the Republic (and state) of Texas, the Southern Confederacy, and the United States. Texas has seen the administration of 37 Spanish governors, 15 Mexican governors, 5 presidents of the Republic, and 48 state governors.¹

Humans have inhabited Texas for much longer than there has been such a thing as a state. Skull fragments found near Midland (dubbed “Midland Minnie”) and a complete female skeleton discovered near Leander have been dated at 10,000 to 13,000 years old; a larger Clovis-period (10,000–9,000 B.C.) site has been excavated in Denton County. At the time of the first European exploration in the 16th century, perhaps 30,000 to 40,000 Indians already inhabited what is now Texas, and some estimates run as high as 130,000. (Some American Indians prefer to be called Native Americans, although that term confuses because it implies that members of other races and ethnic groups cannot be native.) Among the major groups were the Caddo tribes of North and East Texas, Tonkawas in Central Texas, Karankawas along the coast, Coahuiltecans from the Rio Grande river to what is now San Antonio, Lipan Apaches and Comanches in West Texas, and Jumanos in the Trans-Pecos region. Determined to keep their lands, they violently resisted European settlement. Westward advancement in Texas cost 17 White lives per mile. We can only guess at the cost to the Indians, although it was probably much higher.

As early as 1519, just 27 years after the European arrival in the New World and a century before the English pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, Spanish explorer Alonso Alvarez de Pineda mapped the entire Gulf Coast. Several expeditions followed, but Spanish activity was not extensive until 1685, when the French explorer La Salle built a small fort in what is now South Texas. This threat of competition from their imperial rivals spurred the Spanish to establish a series of missions, beginning in 1690. The purposes of these missions were to extend the sphere of Spanish domination and civil law and to convert the native groups to Christianity. Spanish influence extended across South Texas, from present-day Louisiana to New Mexico, and by the time of the American Revolution in 1776, almost 2,300 Indians had been baptized.

But Spanish power was already waning because of economic and military factors. After one abortive attempt, Mexico achieved independence from Spain in 1821. What followed for Texas was, in the words of the *Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide*, “a period of freebooters, privateers, and filibustering expeditions.” Several American and Mexican adventurers led expeditions in unsuccessful attempts to establish control over Texas, and pirates—notably the Frenchman Jean Lafitte—operated out of Galveston Island, preying on Spanish shipping.

1. Much of this account draws on material in *Texas Almanac*, 1964–1965 (Dallas: A. H. Belo Corp., 1963), 35–54; *Texas Almanac*, 1986–1987, 163–224; and *Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide*, 1992–1993, 27–54, 324; and other footnoted material.