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Edwin Larry Dickens: Texas Politics Study Guide

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EDWIN LARRY DICKENS: TEXAS POLITICS
STUDY GUIDE, 1996
Steven Alan Samson

Chapter One: Of Texas, and Things Texan: The Culture

1. What is a culture? Why is important to know the cultural context of peoples' ideas and actions?

2. *History* Identify three stages of development in Texas. What are some features of the settlement of New Spain by the Spaniards? Where were the major forts located? What circumstances led to Mexican independence?

3. Discuss the patterns of Anglo settlement in Texas and characteristics of the rural-land frontier. What other European and non-European groups settled? What parts of the United States provided the greatest numbers of settlers?

4. *Ideology* Identify the three political subcultures of Daniel Elazar's model. What are the characteristics of each?

5. Identify seven developments that have shaped the dominant ideology and psychology of Texas. How did the Civil War affect Texans? Identify some contributions of religious fundamentalism to the culture. What circumstances account for the populist revolt and the influence of Social Darwinism?

6. *Population* How has the racial and ethnic character of the Texas population changed since the Second World War? Identify some of the social and economic trends late in the twentieth century.

7. *Economics* What were the principal Texas products of the late rural-land frontier stage. How did things change with the onset of the industrial-urban stage? What were the chief industries? How did this stage affect the population?

8. What changes have been associated with the post-industrial metropolitan-technological stage of development? What are some of the chief areas (geographic as well as occupational) of economic growth? How does income distribution vary?

Key Terms

mestizos	Moses Austin	land grants
Manifest Destiny	municipal corporations	Jacksonian democracy
moralistic	individualistic	traditionalistic
populism	religious fundamentalism	Social Darwinism
Spindletop oil field		

Chapter Two: The Texas Constitution

1. Identify some steps in the development of English constitutional principles. Describe the chief assumptions of John Locke's social contract theory. Identify the basic features of state constitutions.

2. *Development of Constitutions* Identify the six 19th century constitutions that preceded the current Constitution of 1876. What were the chief provisions of each?

3. Characterize the atmosphere in which the Constitution of 1876 was drafted and the principles upon which it was based. Why is it so lengthy? How did it reflect the traditionalistic-individualistic character of the state itself?
Why is much policymaking done by constitutional amendment?

4. *Question of Constitutional Revision* How frequently have efforts been made to revise the Texas Constitution? Why have they failed? What steps were taken in 1973-1975? Identify the chief obstacles to constitutional revision at that time. What has been the ptrevailing attitude about revision since that time?

Key Terms

Magna Carta	Mayflower Compact	John Locke
Article VI	Constitutions of 1827, 1836, 1845, 1861, 1866, 1869, 1876	
Coahuila-Texas Colonization Law		Washington-on-the-Brazos
Sam Houston		Radical Republicanism
Griffenhagen Report		Constitutional Revision Commission

Chapter 5: The Texas Executive

1. *Development of the American State Executive* Identify the three stages of development of the office of state executive and their chief characteristics. What were the consequences of the reform movement that opposed the spoils system?

2. *General Characteristics of the Texas Executive* What contradiction within the Jacksonian tradition characterizes the Texas executive. Why cannot the Texas governor be considered a true chief executive officer (CEO)? How did the Railroad Commission acquire such power and independence?

3. What changes were brought about by the Gilmer-Aikin laws of the late 1940s? What are the formal and informal requirements to serve as governor of Texas? How may the governor be removed from office?

4. *Powers of the Governor of Texas* Identify the chief roles of the governor. What powers does the governor exercise as chief of state? As chief legislator? Why isn't the governor an effective chief executive?

5. *The Plural Executive and Administrative System of Texas* Identify the current members of the plural executive. Why was the state treasurer's office abolished in 1995? Identify the five major categories of administrative units, including boards and commissions.

Key Terms

spoils system	Gilmer-Aikin laws	long ballot
impeachment	Legislative Budget Board	senatorial courtesy
attorney general	comptroller of public accounts	secretary of state
Texas Railroad Commission	State Board of Education	
commissioner of the state land office		commissioner of agriculture
administrative departments	college and university boards of regents	
occupational licensing boards	regulatory boards	promotional agencies

Chapter 6: The Texas Court System

1. Identify the two categories of state law and describe the scope of each. What characteristics distinguish the two? Identify two types of crime.

2. Identify the three levels of the state court system and the specific types of courts at each level. Identify the jurisdiction of each type of court.

3. Identify the five methods various states use to select judges. What is the method used in Texas? How does it reflect the heritage of Jacksonian democracy and traditionalistic culture?

4. What problems have been noted concerning the organization and operations of the Texas court system?

5. What are the three main stages of criminal procedure? Identify the agencies responsible for handling each stage. What is unusual about the state's prison system? What accounts for these developments and what are some consequences? How does Texas compare with other states in terms of its crime rate?

Definitions
original jurisdiction: The legal authority to hear a case for the first time.
appellate jurisdiction: The authority to hear an appeal of a lower court's decision.
exclusive jurisdiction: The exclusive authority to settle a case.
limited jurisdiction: The authority to hear only certain types of cases, such as small claims, traffic offenses, and/or misdemeanors.
grand jury: The type of jury that investigates whether there is sufficient evidence to bring a case to trial.
petit jury: The jury used in a trial to determine guilt or innocence.
district (or county) attorney: The local prosecutor.

Terms

justice of the peace courts	small claims courts	municipal (city) courts
commissioners court	county judge	district courts
statutory county courts at law	courts of appeals	Supreme Court
Court of Criminal Appeals	Missouri Plan	long ballot
indictment		

Chapter Seven: Local Government in Texas

1. *Types of Local Government* What is the legal status of a local government? Identify the chief types of local governments. What are the functions of counties and

municipalities? What is the difference between general law and home rule cities? What are townships? What specific purposes are served by special districts?

2. *County Government in Texas* What is the origin of the county and how important was it in the settlement of the South? What have been the chief functions of counties? Describe the structure of the County Commissioners Court and the principal elected officers of the county.

3. *Municipal Government in Texas* How do home rule and general law cities differ? Identify the differents forms municipal governments may take. How did each form originate? How do they differ in operation?

4. *Special Districts* Describe the structure and functions of the independent school district. What is the "Robin Hood" plan? Identify other special districts used in Texas. What purposes do they serve?

5. *Problems* Identify some of the chief social problems faced by the growing metropolitan areas. What are some of the chief organizational or structural problems facing all local governmments? What are regional councils of government?

Key Terms

county	municipal corporation	township
special districts	County Commissioners Court	county sheriff
county clerk	district clerk	county attorney
tax assessor-collector	county treasurer and auditor	justice of the peace
constable	home rule municipalities	ordinances
general law municipalities	strong-mayor council form	weak-mayor council form
council-manager form	commission form	councils of government
metropolitan areas		