

FALL 2013  
HCCS DISTANCE EDUCATION  
EAGLE ONLINE, INTERNET  
**GOVERNMENT 2306**

*Texas Government: Texas Constitution & Topics*

**EIGHT-WEEK TERM: January 13, 2014-March 9, 2014**

**CRN 81389**

**Professor:**

John Ben Sutter, M.A., J.D.

**Phone:**

713.718.7112 (*It is much better to e-mail me than to phone me!*)

**Fax:**

713.718.7312

**E-Mail:**

EAGLE ONLINE email or [johnben.sutter@hccs.edu](mailto:johnben.sutter@hccs.edu)

**Office Address:**

John Ben Sutter, Government Professor  
Houston Community College, Southeast College  
6815 Rustic  
Houston, TX 77087

I teach government through the HCC Southeast College. I have been with HCC full-time since 2000 (and I have been teaching DE classes online for most of the time I have been here). Prior to that, I was on the government faculty at Wharton County Junior College. I also taught at Austin Community College and other community colleges. Before that I was Director of Special Projects for the Texas Attorney General, Special Assistant to the McLennan County District Attorney, Public Relations Director for the Texas Automobile Dealers Association (a lobby group in Austin), National Advertising Sales Manager for Steven Publishing Corporation (a medical magazine publisher), press secretary for Mike Andrews first campaign for Congress (he served as Congressman for Houston's 25<sup>th</sup> District for some 10 years), press secretary for Lyndon Olson's congressional campaign (he didn't win, but he later became CEO of Travelers' Insurance Group and U.S. Ambassador to Sweden), Washington press secretary to Congressman W.R. Poage of the 11<sup>th</sup> District of Texas, and reporter and weathercaster for KCEN-TV, the NBC affiliate in Waco. I continue to work in politics and with politicians today outside of my teaching responsibilities.

I've spent a good portion of my life in government and politics and I believe that gives me a unique perspective in teaching the subject. I consider politics important...and rarely dull. I've been interested in and involved with politics all my life. Indeed, for much of my adult life it has been both my vocation and my avocation. It is important for every American to understand politics and government. It is, despite what many of my students at the first of each semester believe, dramatically important in *your* life. Having spent so much time involved in government and politics, I approach teaching government classes not so much as "political science" but as a practical, meat-and-potatoes examination of how government works and how politics affects you. I seek to introduce you to the practical, relevant aspects of government to let you know why and how it plays a dramatically significant role in your life. You might not be interested in politics or government, but government is certainly interested in you! And the more you know about it, the better you can advance and protect your interests and build a better community and nation for you and your family.

I have a B.A. in communication and journalism from Baylor University and an M.A. in political science from Baylor. I hold a *Juris Doctorate* from South Texas College of Law and did advanced coursework in Government at the University of Texas in Austin. My wife, Jaye Ramsey Sutter, is a graduate of Baylor and South Texas College

of Law. She teaches government and criminal justice at the Southwest College of HCC and at the University of Houston main campus.

A distance education course can seem, at times, a lonely experience in comparison to a face-to-face class on campus. But you are not alone in this. Write me at any time and I will respond as soon as possible. Ask any question, report any problem, make any comment, or just give me the word that you need any kind of help with the course. I am here for you, and I want you to succeed.

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Lyle C. Brown, Joyce A. Langenegger, Sonia R. Garcia, Ted A. Lewis, Robert E. Biles, *Practicing Texas Politics, 15th Edition, 2014*, Wadsworth Cengage Learning (publisher). This loose leaf edition is available from the HCC Bookstore. The paperback edition is also by Brown, Langenegger, Garcia, Lewis, and Biles, entitled *Practicing Texas Politics, 2013-2014 Edition*, Wadsworth Cengage Learning (publisher). The paperback edition can be purchased from other online sources. Its ISBN is 13: 978-1-133-94949-4. You must have either of these editions (same content) for this course.

## Recommended Books:

🔄 Study guides are available online which track the material in *Practicing Texas Politics* and can be purchased from the HCC Bookstore or from the publisher.

\*Adam Robinson, *What Smart Students Know: Maximum Grades, Optimum Learning, Minimum Time* (outstanding study tips; highly recommended for all students)

\**American Heritage Collegiate Dictionary, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> edition* (you should *always* have a good dictionary at your side when reading; this is a good dictionary)

\*You can order them at [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com) or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

---

## GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Four (4) examinations (on-line) and one (1) research paper. Professor *drops* the lowest of the five grades (four exams grades and the research paper grade). The final course grade is the average of the remaining four grades.

---

## READING AND TEST SCHEDULE:

**Unit 1: Texas Politics, Federalism, Texas Constitutionalism, and Local Government**

**EXAM ONE, AVAILABLE DATES: JANUARY 28-29, TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY**

### Textbook Readings:

Chapter 1: The Environment of Texas Politics

Chapter 2: Federalism and the Texas Constitution

Chapter 3: Local Government

***Unit 2: Political Parties, Campaigns, Elections, and Interest Groups***

**EXAM TWO, AVAILABLE DATES: FEBRUARY 11-12, TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY**

**Textbook Readings:**

- Chapter 4: Political Parties
- Chapter 5: Campaigns and Elections
- Chapter 6: The Politics of Interest Groups

***Unit 3: The Legislative and Executive Branches of Texas Government***

**EXAM THREE, AVAILABLE DATES: FEBRUARY 25-26, TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY**

**Textbook Readings:**

- Chapter 7: The Legislature
- Chapter 8: The Executive
- Chapter 9: Public Policy and Administration
- Chapter 11: Finance and Fiscal Policy

***Unit 4: The Texas Judicial System***

**EXAM FOUR (“Final” Exam), AVAILABLE DATES: MARCH 6-8, THURSDAY-SATURDAY**

**Textbook Readings:**

- Chapter 10: Law, Courts, and Justice

## **OTHER IMPORTANT DATES:**

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| January 13:  | Classes Begin  |
| January 21:  | Official Day of Record (Students who fail to log into class on or before this date are dropped by the college from the class for non-attendance) |
| February 18: | Last Day for Student/Administrative Withdrawals (4:30 p.m. deadline)   |
| March 2:     | Instruction Ends   |
| March 9:     | Semester Ends  |
| March 17:    | Grades must be reported by instructor to administration no later than this date  |

---

## **OFFICE HOURS:**

I am available throughout the week for problems, questions, comments, and advice. You should email me here via Eagle Online internal email and I will attempt to answer your questions or concerns via email. If you wish to have a dialogue, we can meet in a chat room to discuss matters and I will arrange that with you at a mutually agreeable time on campus. I would recommend that if the matter is urgent you email me also at my HCCMail address at [johnben.sutter@hccs.edu](mailto:johnben.sutter@hccs.edu) and, in the subject line, write “Govt2306, CRN 81389” and write “URGENT” if the concern needs immediate attention. I will respond ASAP. Remember, I am here for you and will do all I can to assist you.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

### **Purpose of the Course:**

Government 2306 is one of two courses designed to introduce students to the study of the origin and development of the Texas constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and inter-governmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas. This particular survey of the Texas state system of government includes the fundamental principles of political science, the study of the Texas state constitution, the state legislative, executive and judicial branches, local governments, methods of participation, and analysis of contemporary policies. This course is fully transferable to all Texas State colleges and universities.

### **Course Student Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.
2. Describe state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.
6. Analyze the state and local election process.
7. Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas.

### **General Course Information:**

Course Semester Credit Hours: 3 hours

Course Contact Hours: 48 contact hours

Course Continuing Education Units: 0 (zero)

Course Prerequisites: College-level reading and college-level writing

Instructional Methods: Course material and interchange with instructor is conducted on computer via the Internet. Students must complete assigned textbook readings from required textbook as well as lecture notes, review materials, and other learning as provided by instructor on the Eagle Online course site. Interaction with instructor and fellow students will be through email communication, chat room dialogue, discussion assignments and open discussion of issues and concerns among students. Students will also be responsible for writing discussion postings on assigned topics and are to complete a major research paper during the term.

Student Assessments: See "Exams," "Participation," and "Research Paper" below.

HCC Policy Statements: See “Important HCC Policies” below (and go to the HCC site for college policies for which students in this course are responsible: <http://de.hccs.edu/de/de-student-handbook>)

Program/Discipline Requirements: Social sciences comprise at least 15 semester hours of each student’s core curriculum. Most students are required to take six hours of government (both Govt2305 and Govt2306).

Evidence of Basic Intellectual Competencies in the HCCS Core Curriculum: Upon completion of this course, you will have fulfilled the core competencies requirements set by the State of Texas including the following:

- *Reading*: Student are required to do extensive reading this semester in their textbook and supplemental reading assignments, current events, opinion discussion assignments, term paper research, examinations, and online discussions.
- *Writing*: Students will be required to demonstrate and further develop college-level writing skills through discussion assignments, a research paper assignment, online discussions, and other online assignments.
- *Speaking*: “Speaking” competency will be demonstrated through student written communication including discussion page exchanges, email exchanges with instructor, and communication with fellow students on the student open discussion site on the course Web site.
- *Listening*: Student will demonstrate this skill through interpreting class directions, showing and understanding of the syllabus, online discussions, email exchanges with instructor, and responding to communication with fellow students.
- *Critical Thinking*: Students will demonstrate their skill in understanding and analyzing concepts and ideas presented in the class through assigned textbook readings, examinations, opinion discussions, a research paper assignment, online reviews, and current events discussions.
- *Computer Literacy*: All work in this course require use of a computer; use of Eagle Online; email exchanges with instructor; preparation and electronic submission of all written assignments; use of the Internet for research paper assignment research; accessing Web sites for current events, for accessing textbook-related Web sites, and for accessing other Web sites related to the course as assigned.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **COURSE POLICIES:**

### **SYLLABUS:**

It is your responsibility to (1) read the entire Syllabus (as well as the DE Handbook), (2) follow the instructions included in it, (3) meet all deadlines, and (4) ask your professor if you have questions—please ask **AFTER** you read the Syllabus and the DE Handbook. You are accountable for all the information in the Syllabus and DE Handbook.

### **GRADES:**

Graded activities: Five grades: Four (4) examination grades and one research paper grade. **I will drop the lowest of the five class grades.** If you miss an exam, for example, the zero grade you receive would be the one I drop and the final grade would be the average of the three remaining test grades and the research paper grade. If you do not submit a research paper, the zero grade for the assignment would be dropped and the final course grade would be the average of your four exams.

Final Grade: Determined by an average of the remaining four of the five grades for the semester (with the lowest of the five grades dropped). The exams will be over the four study units noted in the schedule above. There will be no comprehensive exam. The “final” exam will be the fourth unit exam. All exams will be given on-line

Your final grade is determined by average of four semester grades, each worth 25% of your final grade. You will have five grades at the end of the semester. I will drop the lowest of the five grades and average the remaining four grades. Your course grade is determined by averaging the four grades based on the following scale:

A=100-90 B=89-80 C=79-70 D=69-60 F=59 and below.

Rounding rules typically apply.

You will receive a grade of “FX” if you fail to attend class and take your exams. You will receive an “F” in this class if your final grade is less than 60%. Receiving an “F” or “FX” (failure) may negatively impact your ability to receive financial aid. It is YOUR responsibility to submit college-level quality work in a timely fashion or to withdraw yourself from the course by the deadline if you cannot complete your work satisfactorily.

You will receive the grade you earn in this class. Please do not write or call me saying “I need [an A...a B...you to give me a better grade because I paid for this course...to pass] in order to [keep my scholarship...get into pharmacy school, nursing school, dental school, the University of Houston...to stay in this country...to keep my parents from disowning me] and I am [begging you...pleading with you...baking you a cake...following you...going to complain to your boss, the dean, the president, the police, the Supreme Court]. I don’t “give” you a grade. You “earn” a grade, and then I record the grade you earn. I hope you get the grade you want in this class, but you will earn it. So, please don’t plead or beg for a better grade...it demeans you and embarrasses me.

### EXAMS:

**You will take all exams online on your course site on EAGLE ONLINE.** You will not take any exam on campus. You never need to appear on campus for any assignment related to this course.

Examinations will be objective—multiple choice/true-false questions, 50-100 objective questions with a two-and-a half hour (150 minute) time limit from start of exam (time limit *strictly enforced*). Content on the exam will come from your textbooks, additional reading assignments as required, current events and from any postings which I make on **Eagle Online** as additional course content (e.g., lecture notes). You will have a two-day period of availability for each of the four exams during which you may take the 150 minute exam.

Each of your exams will be available on-line for specific dates which are listed on your syllabus above. You **must** take each exam during the available time periods. The exams are 150 minute, strictly timed, and there will be a penalty for using more than the allotted time. Exams with be **OPEN NOTES**. You may use any handwritten or typed notes which you have prepared from the review materials I provide you. (See below.) Your notes, however, should be only a “safety net” in the sense that you will *not* have time during the exam to scour your notes for each and every question. You should study for the exam as you would a test where you have no open notes. You will have only time to refer to your notes when you are stumped or forget an occasional answer. For your own good **you should NOT attempt to use your textbook when taking**

**the exam.** During the 150 minute timed exam you do **not** have sufficient time to look up answers in the textbook. Using the textbook will delay you significantly and you might fail to complete all the questions, thus losing significant points on the examination.

The 150 minute time limit for each 50-100 question exam is strictly enforced.

### **WORK/REVIEW SHEET OF TERMS FOR EACH EXAM:**

A “work sheet of terms” will be posted on our **Eagle Online** course-site well prior to each examination. You can prepare your review for the exam using your textbook and with materials I provide you on the course-site, providing definitions, explanations, analysis of the terms on the work sheet. I will take your questions via email about the material up until the night before the exam period. Writing (typing) out the terms and studying your completed work sheet of terms is **crucial** to your success in the class. Read your assignments from the textbook carefully.

I recommend you preview the material (read through the material quickly, looking for headings and subheadings in the chapter, notes in the margins, etc.); then read the material again, slowly and closely, making notes, looking up material whenever needed (e.g., if do you know what a word means in a sentence, you **MUST** look it up in a dictionary or you may not understanding what your reading about in the entire paragraph), and filling out your work sheet of terms; then, finally, review the material in its entirety, reading through it quickly to see if you missed anything.

Carefully complete your work sheet of terms, study what is now your review sheet, and then use it sparingly when taking your test. Do all this and you’ll do well in this class.

Fully and comprehensively working up your work sheet of terms for each unit is ***THE major portion of your work in the course.*** You have four tests. Those are the only graded assignments in the course. To effectively prepare for those exams you need to focus heavily on preparing the work sheet of terms completely and carefully. It will take a lot of time and effort. This is why I don’t give you a bunch of “make-work” little assignments like you had in high school. Focus on your reading, making your notes, and studying those completed notes.

### **RESEARCH PAPER:**

Instructions for your research paper will be posted on our **Eagle Online** course-site sometime after the first exam and **is due by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, March 3.** The instructions will detail comprehensive directions and requirements. Papers must meet the stated requirements (such as for minimum page length, minimum sources, Internet research, use of Chicago Manual of Style [Turabian]). I check research papers *very closely* for plagiarism and verify material in the research paper against Internet sources. Do not cheat, please, because I do not want to record your paper grade as a failing grade (see “Cheating” below).

Your paper *must be* submitted to me electronically as a Microsoft Word document attachment via **Eagle Online** email attachment no later than **11:59 p.m. on Monday, March 3.**

**Late papers are NOT accepted.** If you do not submit your research paper assignment by the deadline, you will receive a **ZERO** for the assignment. If you commit plagiarism in any part of your paper, you will receive a **ZERO**. If you fail to cite your sources within the text of your paper, you will receive a **ZERO**. No exceptions.

Since research papers are due toward the end of the semester, I do not post your research paper grades. If you wish to receive your research paper grade, you must email me at [johnben.sutter@hccs.edu](mailto:johnben.sutter@hccs.edu) with that request at the close of the semester.

You should submit your research paper to HCC's online tutoring service, AskOnline (<http://hccs.askonline.net>), for review and recommendations. Be sure to send AskOnline your instruction sheet for the paper along with the paper so they know all the particulars of the assignment. (You don't want to flunk the paper, for instance, because you didn't cite and document the sources correctly.)

### **PARTICIPATION:**

You should check your **Eagle Online** site at least every other day for postings and other new material.

**ALWAYS GO TO THE MAIN PAGE WHEN YOU CHECK IN ON EAGLE ONLINE AND LOOK UNDER THE "ANNOUNCEMENTS" AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE FOR ANY CURRENT INFORMATION I HAVE POSTED FOR YOU ABOUT THE COURSE.**

You MAY be asked to participate in class discussions based on topics I assign related to the unit we are studying at the time, or related to a significant current event at the time. (Since we are so pressed for time in our five week term, we may need to forego much of the class discussions I would normally require.)

Participation in class discussion is an essential element of a college class and you will be able to be involved in virtual discussions via our course-site discussion page. I will take note of any student's complete lack of involvement in class discussions throughout the semester. No or poor participation in class virtual discussion **may lead to a penalty of up to 5 points on your final grade.**

I will *not* penalize anyone for stating his or her opinions. If the professor states a political opinion in on-line discussion, it is only to spur discussion, not to proselytize or criticize. Your opinions are your own, are valuable and are not subject to grading by the professor. Your grasp and knowledge of the material presented, however, is graded (i.e., I don't care, particularly, what you think as long as you do think!). I do demand, however, proper decorum from my students. No "flaming," "name-calling" or other breaches of behavior. One can disagree, but do so agreeably. Respect one another and respect yourself by recognizing a need to behave in an adult, responsible fashion.

I will check email and general discussion postings daily and respond within 48-hours or sooner to questions or problems. Feel free to ask questions about the material. I encourage you to post on the main discussion page topics and questions for fellow students and, if you wish, set up study chat rooms or meetings in person to review. It is your class and you may work together on your preparations. Study groups prove effective for many people. I leave it up to you to establish them if you wish.

### **PREPARATION:**

This course is reading intensive and requires a great deal of self-discipline and pacing on the part of the student to succeed. I provide you with terms and review material to work with as you study and prepare for your examination. If you use that material and spend a significant amount of time with your textbooks in preparation, you should do well. *But it is up to you.*



This course is for college credit. It will be taught, tested and graded on a college level. A great deal of reading is required for this exam and self-discipline is a must. This web-based course will cover the same material as in the traditional on-site class. You will **NOT BE REQUIRED TO ATTEND ANY ON-SITE CLASSES, EXAMS OR LECTURES**. Everything is on-line. You must be self-disciplined to take an Internet class since the external motivation and pacing that accompanies attending class in person regularly will not be available to you. It is incumbent upon you to wisely monitor your time and schedule.

Preparation is important. Read your assignments in a timely fashion. Follow the news each day. I recommend you check [www.texastribune.com](http://www.texastribune.com) (The *Texas Tribune*) and [www.chron.com](http://www.chron.com) (The *Houston Chronicle*) on a daily basis *I will on occasion test on current events on the exams.*

The grade you get is the grade you *earn* in this class. And I am more than willing to assist any student with his/her studies and preparations for class, exams or papers so that he/she can earn the grade desired. But the essential burden rests with you.

### **EAGLE ONLINE INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT:**

You will access your government course using Eagle Online as the Internet program. You may access the course from your home computer, from HCCS Open Lab locations, or any reliable computer with a reliable Internet connection. To log on to Eagle Online, go to <https://hccs1.mrooms3.net/login/index.php>. Be sure to bookmark this URL on your browser for ease of access.

- **Help:** If you need help learning how to use Eagle Online, Web based Eagle Online Help Desk site is available at <http://bbcrm.edusupportcenter.com/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=8513>. In the middle of the page you will find "Most Popular" topics with information on a number of issues of importance to you in using Eagle Online. If you are unfamiliar with Eagle Online you will definitely want to look at use site. If you have any technical difficulty, contact HCC technical support services.
- **Report a Problem:** If you need technical assistance on using Eagle Online or your computer in relation to this course, go to the HCC Distance Education Web site at <http://de.hccs.edu>, look under "TECH SUPPORT" on the right hand side of the page, then click on "Eagle Online Help Desk." You can phone for help, chat *live* with a tech person, or submit a help ticket under "Support Options" on the right hand side of the page.
- **Bookmark Direct Link to Get Help:** The direct URL link to the EAGLE ONLINE HELP DESK is <http://bbcrm.edusupportcenter.com/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=8513>. Bookmark this URL on your browser as a "Favorite" for ease of access. If you have any technical difficulty, contact this site immediately. REMEMBER: I am your professor. I teach government. I am not a computer tech. If you're having a technical problem you need to contact HCC technical support, not me.
- **Be Sure You're Using a Reliable Computer and ISP:** All exams are taken open note and wherever you have a solid Internet service provider connection. If you get "kicked off the Internet," I cannot and will not restart an exam for you due to test integrity and security. That will simply be the exam grade that will be dropped. If there is a problem with the HCCS system, we will discuss contingency plans but I get a notice from HCCS when they have an Internet outage and without that, I am not getting involved with a problem between you and your Internet Service Provider. I do not have the power to fight cable or ISPs.

- **Online Testing Problems:** If you have any problems with getting on the Eagle Online to take an exam, you need to contact Distance Education tech support. 713-718-2000 (option 4, option 2, or option 3; student don't have to wait for the recorded message).
- I am not technical support. I cannot open an exam for you. I do not know why your computer will not allow you to take the exam because I have no vast reservoir of technical ability with regard to your computer or to Eagle Online.

### **TECHNICAL COMPLIANCE:**

This class is a distance-education class using Eagle Online for notes, lectures and assessments. Each student must maintain Internet access throughout this course. Additionally, students are expected to maintain a state of technical compliance, including (but not limited to): up-to-date software as required by the instructor; a reliable computer (or access to one); a stable Internet connection; and use of the Firefox browser when using Eagle Online. The instructor is not required to give consideration for lost/missing/unacceptable work stemming from technical non-compliance and/or end-user technical issues. Failure to maintain Internet access shall **not** constitute a valid excuse for missed work. Any student who cannot keep up with the coursework owing to a lack of computer or Internet must drop the course. Any student found to have quit logging in and whom the Professor is unable to contact is subject to receiving an "FX" grade which is a flunking grade.

If a student has not reset his/her email profile within PeopleSoft to reflect that email which he/she uses most often, the Eagle Online system will default to delivering notifications and messages to that student's HCC default email address, i.e., yourfirstname.yourlastname@student.hccs.edu<mailto:yourfirstname.yourlastname@student.hccs.edu> (please click here<<http://webmail.hccs.edu>> to access the HCC Webmail system). The Professor is not responsible for communicating with students who fail to follow this instruction.

### **IMPORTANT HCC POLICIES AND DE STUDENT SERVICES:**

The **Distance Education Student Handbook** contains policies and procedures unique to the DE student. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the handbook's contents and part of the mandatory orientation. The handbook contains valuable information, answers, and resources, such as DE contacts, policies and procedures (how to drop, attendance requirements, etc.), student services (ADA, financial aid, degree planning, etc.), course information, testing procedures, technical support, and academic calendars. Refer to the DE Student Handbook by visiting the HCC DE Web site (<http://de.hccs.edu/student-services>) then clicking on "**DE Student Handbook.**"

It is very important that you click on the DE Student Handbook link above and read the handbook completely and carefully. As an HCC student and a student in this class, you are held responsible to adhere to be aware of and adhere to all of the policies contain in the DE Student Handbook. Please be sure to go to this Web site and review these important policies. Pay close attention to registration issues, withdrawal, ADA issues, and other critical issues relating to your class.

Again, it is important that you are familiar with all the policies in the DE Student Handbook. As a distance education student you are held responsible for adhering to all these policies.

### ATTENDANCE AND WITHDRAWAL POLICIES:

While I encourage you to log onto your Eagle Online course every day or two to check for mail, announcements, new assignments, and such, your online attendance is officially registered only for academically related activities which include testing; tutorials (which would include such things as email communication with me on Eagle Online and downloading material for exam review), academic conferences; computer-assisted instruction; completing an academic assignment; paper, or project; or participating in online discussions relative to academic matters relating in some way to the course). Given that you are the likely reason you would ever sign into the class would be related to your course work, your attendance is noted for virtually every instance you sign into the class online.

You will **not** be withdrawn (“dropped”) by your professor for excessive absences. I do not automatically drop you from the course for attendance. (The college *will* drop you for non-attendance by the official date of record—see your academic calendar or “important dates” on this syllabus.) Hence, if you stop signing into the class and do not take your exams or other complete your other projects in the class, you will receive a failing grade in the course *unless* you have withdrawn from the class by the withdrawal deadline (which is posted under “Other Important Dates” toward the top of this syllabus and on the official academic calendar which you can find on the HCC main Web site [[www.hccs.edu](http://www.hccs.edu)]).

If a **student wishes to withdraw** from a class, he or she is able to do so online without having to consult a faculty member. If you want to drop the class, **you must withdraw yourself** online by the withdrawal deadline. Faculty at HCC are no longer allowed to assist a student by withdrawing the student at the student’s request for reasons other than excessive absences. It is my policy, however, not to drop a student from the class under any circumstance. It is solely the student’s responsibility to drop the class if he or she wishes to withdraw from the class. When a student attempts an online withdrawal request, he/she is referred to information that informs him/her of possible consequences the student may encounter through his/her withdrawal request. If a student is unable to withdraw online (i.e. the online withdrawal transaction was not allowed), the reason may be due to the student exceeding the “6 Drop Rule,” or some other reason. In such a case, the student should contact a Distance Education counselor for advising. Read your DE Student Handbook for further information on how to withdraw from an online class (<http://de.hccs.edu/student-services>).

Any student who has never attended (i.e., has not logged into the class at all) by the “Official Date of Record” (again, see “Other Important Dates” on your syllabus or the HCC academic calendar on the HCCS Web site for the Official Day of Record for your class) will be reported in the attendance class attendance roll submitted to the college by the professor as showing all absences and will be dropped from the course by Registration staff. HCC is not allowed to disperse financial aid funding for students who have never attended class by the Official Date of Record.

### MAKE-UP EXAMS:

- **No make-up exams** will be available for this course. You will have a two-day period during which to take your exam for each of the units. This provides you with sufficient time to attend to any personal emergencies or deal with any health problems during a testing period.
- **There is only one attempt for each exam. You are NOT given the exam more than once.**
- If you miss an exam *for whatever reason* you will receive a zero for that exam.
- I drop the lowest grade of the five course grades, so if you miss an exam that would be the grade I would drop. This policy will be strictly enforced.
- Any exception from this policy would require a written request submitted to me *and* to the Department Chairperson explaining why you are requesting an exception to the policy. A make-up exam may be provided if failure to take an exam is due to a system failure of Eagle Online, but those are quite rare and

proof must be provided. Other situations for make-up exams would only be due to the *most extreme* circumstance, such as death in the immediate family or illness...and verification **MUST** be provided by the student of such (a letter from the funeral home; a letter or memo from the hospital or doctor, etc.).

- My advice: *Don't miss an exam!*
- Write the dates for the exams in your personal calendar or planner when you get the reading and testing schedule so that you do not forget when your tests will be held.
- I do not give tests early. Tests are given on the scheduled dates.
- If you don't have a planner or a calendar, you buy one cheap at an office supply store or at the HCC College Bookstore. Or use Google Calendar or some other online calendar. Also, Eagle Online has a calendar which you can use online or print out to record your exam dates as well as exam and assignment dates from all your other classes! (Be sure, however, if you use the calendar on Eagle Online that all your postings on the calendar are set *for private viewing* otherwise everyone in class will see your calendar!)

### **EXTRA CREDIT:**

There are **no** "extra credit" assignment or points in the course. Don't ask for any.

You get the grade you earn. I do not "give" grades. I record the grade you earn. Do not ask me to give you a couple of points to improve your grade. You didn't earn those points. You will not get them. Save your effort. Don't even ask me. (What you *may* ask me if for help with the material during the semester or to help you improve your study skills so you can *earn* a better grade. But it is too late to ask me that after the semester is complete.)

### **CHEATING:**

Cheating on an examination or the research paper will not be tolerated. A failing grade will be entered for the exam or research paper and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Instruction for disciplinary action.

#### *Exams:*

- You must take your examinations alone. Do *not* take the test with anyone else.
- You must not share information you obtain from the exam with any other student.
- You may not copy or photograph any portion of the exam. Not only is this cheating, it is a violation of copyright law.
- You may not work with others during the taking of an exam.
- When you sign-on to take an exam you will have a time limit from sign-on to complete the exam. You are not allowed to go beyond the two-and-a-half hour time limit for the exam.
- Do *not* use other people's answers.
- If I suspect a student of cheating on the exam I will contact the student and ask for an explanation. I reserve the right to give a zero for the exam if I can substantiate cheating. If I suspect cheating I may require that the student take the test over on campus under proctored conditions. If cheating on a test can be proven you will receive a ZERO for the test and an F for the course!

#### *Research Paper:*

- You may not copy any materials into your research paper without attribution. In other words, you need to properly document the use of your sources in the research paper.
- Plagiarism is cheating and will cause you to receive a **ZERO** for your research paper. I CHECK PAPERS VERY CLOSELY FOR PLAGIARISM.
- A very useful Internet tool is [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) that compares material from papers versus the entire Internet. And usually by the end of the semester (which is when I receive your paper), I have a pretty good idea of how you write from your discussion essays and, thus, can tell if the writing style on your

research paper matches that of your test essays. If it doesn't, then I consider that probable cause to use [www.tunitin.com](http://www.tunitin.com).

- Any paper this is not fully documented is considered a plagiarized document. So, if you plagiarize a portion of the paper, you receive a zero for the entire assignment.
- Inadvertent plagiarism is plagiarism nevertheless.
- Write your own paper.
- Cite the sources used.
- I will be liberal when grading a paper from a student who turns in his or her own work. I am fairly generous, but I am not at all forgiving of plagiarism.

Best policy—do not cheat. It is dishonest, it is wrong, it is unfair to your classmates who work hard and do not cheat and, most importantly, it is bad for you on so many levels.

### **CONTACTING YOUR PROFESSOR:**

Email me on Eagle Online Mail or HCCMail ([johnben.sutter@hccs.edu](mailto:johnben.sutter@hccs.edu) and be sure to put "Govt2306, CRN81389" in the subject line when writing me at my HCCMail address; that information is not necessary when writing me on Eagle Online mail). I will respond, on the outside, within 24-36 hours. Do NOT, however, write me and always expect an immediate answer. I will try to get back to you as soon as possible. But the official policy I have is within 36 hours. Do NOT write with a request on deadline that cannot be responded to by me within that time frame. Again, I will work hard to get back to you quickly, probably well before the 36-hour time limit, but if you write and need something, know that you must provide me with a response time per this policy. Please: If I fail to respond, *write me again*. Sometimes, since I get so many email messages from students, I may inadvertently overlook an email or erase an email. On occasion, your email may not transmit properly. So, your perseverance in writing me again on the issue pays off. (Note also, that when I am away from my computer, I often check my HCCMail ([johnben.sutter@hccs.edu](mailto:johnben.sutter@hccs.edu)) on my iPhone or iPad and, therefore, may be able to respond quicker.)

Write me anytime you have a question or problem. Write me also if you have a comment or concern. If you see an error in the syllabus or an assignment or a test, write me and let me know. I will make good any errors I make. And I greatly appreciate knowing from my students when I make a mistake because I don't want my errors to adversely affect you in any way.

### **CHECK YOUR REGISTRATION:**

HCC may drop you from the course because of non-payment of your account or because you failed to log-in before the Official Date of Record. You might have trouble with your course registration but still have access to Eagle Online, be receiving normal communication from DE or the class. Verify your registration status with HCCS occasionally during the semester. You can do this online at your convenience. Details are in the Distance Education Handbook which is located online (and is required reading for any distance education student). The college WILL drop you from the class for financial aid or other registration problems and may erase all your grades and records from the course making it **impossible to reenter the course**, so stay on top of your registration issues!

*This course syllabus contains policies and procedures with which you must be familiar and comply, so be sure to read this syllabus carefully. Please report any errors, omissions, or inconsistencies to the professor that you may find in this syllabus. This syllabus is subject to change at the professor's discretion.*