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**Government Course Syllabus**

*GOVT 2305*

*Spring, 2016, CRN # 90883*

*Fraga RM. # 350, Tuesday/Thursday, 9:30 am to 11 am*

3 Semester Credit Hours

48 Contact Hours

*16 weeks*

*Face to Face*

**Belinda Wilson**

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**Government Department Chair**

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Office Hours: *before and after class or by appointment*

**Course Description**

Origin and development of the U.S. Constitution, structure and powers of the national government including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public policy, civil liberties and civil rights.

**Prerequisite, Co-requisite**

Must have passed or co-enrolled in English 1301 (Composition I) as a co-requisite.

**Academic Program Learning Outcomes:**

1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.

3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.

4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.

5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.

6. Analyze the election process.

7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens

8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

**Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)**

1. Identify and describe the institutions of American national government.

2. Recognize and assume the responsibilities of citizenship by developing one’s critical thinking skills, engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media

**Core Objectives**

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) mandates that the core curriculum must ensure that students will develop the essential knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college, in a career, in their communities, and in life. Through the Texas Core Curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world, and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning. Students enrolled in GOVT 2305/2306 core curriculum courses will complete assessments designed to measure the following core objectives:

Critical Thinking Skills—to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information

Communication Skills—to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication

Personal Responsibility—to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

· Social Responsibility—to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making

Student assessment of proficiencies mandated by THECB may include testing, projects, or assignments.

**Course Calendar and reading schedule: It is the student’s responsibility to read the textbook according to the following schedule.**

***UNIT I***

*Week 1: January 19 – January 21*

Introduction: Course overview and requirements

Chapter 1: Introduction to American Politics

*Week 2: January 25 – January 28*

Continue chapter 1

Complete chapter 1

*Week 3: February 1 – February 4*

Chapter 2: The Constitution

Continue Chapter 2

*Week 4: February 8 – February 11*

Chapter 3: Federalism

Complete Chapter 3

*Week 5: February 15 – February 18*

**Exam I**

**UNIT II**

Chapter 4: Civil Liberties

*Week 6: February 22 – February 25*

Complete Chapter 4

Chapter 5: Civil Rights

*Week 7: February 29 – March 3*

Complete Chapter 5

Chapter 6: The News and Social Media

*Week 8: March 7 – March 10*

**Exam II**

**UNIT III**

Chapter 8: Interest Groups

*Week 9: March 14- March 18*

**SPRING BREAK!**

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*Week 10: March 21 – March 24*

Complete Chapter 8

Chapter 9: Political Parties/ **written assignment due**

*Week 11: March 28 – March 31*

Complete Chapter 9

Chapter 10: Elections and Campaigns

*Week 12: April 4 – April 7*

Chapter 11: Voting and Participation

Complete Chapter 11

*Week 13: April 11 – April 14*

**Exam III**

**UNIT IV**

Chapter 12: Congress

*Week 14: April 18 – April 21*

Complete Chapter 12

Chapter 13: The Presidency

*Week 15: April 25 – 28*

Chapter 15: The Judiciary

Complete Chapter 15

*Week 16: May 3 – May 5*

Chapter 16: Public Policy

Chapter 16: Public Policy

**FINAL EXAM: May 10, 2016**

**The Final Exam for this class will be on Tuesday May 10, 2016 at 9 am.**

**Please see me if you have any conflicts with the final exam schedule.**

**In order to best suit the needs of the class, the information on this syllabus is subject to change.**

**I will notify you if any changes occur.**

**Instructional Methods**

*This course is primarily lecture supplemented by class discussion and activities, documentary films and videos.* This course is conducted in a traditional classroom environment with instructor led discussion and inquiry by students. Students are expected to come to class having read the material assigned for that day in order to be able to contribute to discussions. Class discussions are liveliest and most beneficial when students utilize critical thinking skills as they learn the material in order to bring their own reactions and ideas to share with the class. This syllabus was constructed with the goal of dividing up

the textbook material into manageable segments so that the reading does not become overwhelming. From time to time there may also be online reading assignments; you will be notified of these in advance.

**Student Assignments and Grading Criteria**

Students’ performance in this course will be assessed via four exams and one written assignment. Values toward the total course grade for each of these is as follows:

Exam I – 20%

Exam II – 20%

Exam III – 20%

Exam IV – 20%

Written Assignment – 20%

Total: 100%

Exams will be 90% objective questions (multiple choice and true/false) and 10% essay questions. Additionally, there may be opportunities for extra credit in the form of class presentations or written assignments.

**Make-up Policy**

**There are NO make-up exams. Students who have missed an exam will not be allowed to take it at a later date.** However, if you have a medical reason, or a valid personal/family emergency please notify the instructor vie email ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM or before if possible with proper documentation to discuss an alternative.

**Grading Scale**

90-100%= A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

less than 60% = F

**Instructional Materials**

***Gateways to Democracy: An Introduction to American Government,* Third Edition.John G. Geer*, et.al.*** Cengage Learning. 2014. Boston, MA. Various online articles of current interest may be assigned during the semester. We also will be watching various documentary films and videos relevant to each unit.

**HCC Policies**

**ADA Policy:** If you have any special needs which affect your ability to learn in this class, please inform me. Appropriate steps will be taken to assist you with your needs. Any student with a documental disability (physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the ADA counselor at the beginning of each semester. There is a Disability Support Services Office at each campus. To find the name of the ADA counselor at your campus, visit [www.hccs.edu](http://www.hccs.edu), then click future students, scroll down the page and click on the words Disability Information. Faculty members are authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 requires that institutions have policies that protect students’ rights with regard to sex/gender discrimination. Information regarding these rights are in the HCC website under Students-Anti-discrimination. Students who are pregnant and require accommodations should contact any of the ADA Counselors for assistance.

**Student Rights and Responsibilities:** It is important that every student understands and conforms to respectful behavior while at HCC. Sexual misconduct is not condoned and will be addressed promptly. Know your rights and how to avoid these difficult situations.

Log in to [www.edurisksolutions.org](http://www.edurisksolutions.org) Sign in using your HCC student e-mail account, then go to the button at the top right that says **Login** and enter your student number.

**Scholastic Dishonesty:**

HCCS students are responsible for conducting themselves with honor and integrity in fulfilling course requirements. Penalties and/or disciplinary proceedings may be initiated by HCC System officials against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty.

"Scholastic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating on a test includes but is not limited to: Copying from another student's test paper; using unauthorized materials during a test, unauthorized collaboration with another student during a test; knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of a test; and bribing another person to obtain a copy of a test. Plagiarism includes the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work. Collusion includes the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work.

*For written assignments, plagiarism will result in a grade of zero (0) for the assignment.*

***Attendance****:* Students are expected to attend class regularly. Students are responsible for materials covered during their absences.

**Withdrawals:**

Students who take a course for the third time or more must now pay significant tuition/fee increases at HCC and other Texas public colleges and universities. At HCC, it is an additional $50 per credit hour. If you are considering course withdrawal because you are not earning passing grades, confer with your instructor/ counselor as early as possible about your study habits, reading and writing homework, test-taking skills, attendance, course participation, and opportunities for tutoring or other assistance that might be available. Also, the state of Texas has passed a new law limiting new students (as of Fall 2007) to no more than six withdrawals throughout their academic career in obtaining a baccalaureate degree.

*The drop/withdrawal date this semester is April 5, 2016.*

**Repeating Courses:**

As a result of recent Texas legislative changes, please be advised that HCC is charging additional tuition for students who enroll in the same class three or more times at HCC. While it is the hope of HCC that students will be successful in their first attempt at classes, we realize that life demands, academic struggles, and other issues may

result in students needing to take the same class more than once. Speaking with an advisor will help you develop student success skills, improving your overall academic performance. If a student

repeats a course in which a grade (A-F) has been received, the highest grade received at HCC is the permanent grade for the course and will be used in computing the GPA. All grades earned in a given course will be reflected on the transcript. Other colleges may compute the GPA differently than HCC.

**HCC Student Handbook:**

Please note that it is each student’s responsibility to read and be familiar with the HCC Student Handbook. Please see:

<http://central.hccs.edu/students/student-handbook/>

**Distance Education**

The Distance Education Student Handbook contains policies and procedures unique to the DE student. Students should have reviewed the handbook as part of the mandatory orientation. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the handbook's contents. 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 this link:

<http://de.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/distance-education/student-services/pdf/2015-HCC-DE-Student-Handbook-%28Revised-5_28_15%29_will.pdf>