In-Person | Spring Branch Rm 211 | T 11:00-12:15
3 Credit Hours | 48 hours per semester

Instructor: Donna Rhea
Office Phone: 713-718-5633
Office Hours: M,T,W: 8:45-9:15am; 1:45-3:15pm
Office Location: Spring Branch AD2

Please feel free to contact me concerning any problems that you are experiencing in this course. Your performance in my class is very important to me. I am available to hear your concerns and to discuss course topics.

Instructor’s Preferred Method of Contact
You can contact me through either my HCC email (preferred method of contact) or Canvas. Please use your HCC email addresses.

What’s Exciting About This Course

Students who finish GOVT 2306 will have completed one of the most relevant classes they will take during their college careers. State and local governments are the levels of government which affect most people often and directly, yet students rarely have the opportunity to learn about these governments. This is not a course which focuses on memorization--instead the focus is on developing analytical skills and applying those skills to understanding our state, cities, counties, and school districts.

My Personal Welcome

On behalf of the Government Department, I welcome you to the study of Texas Government at Houston Community College. This is a hybrid course which combines online assignments and lectures with in-class lectures and in-class testing. Students will need to be proficient with computers and other necessary electronic devices to access instructional material.
**Prerequisites and/or Co-Requisites**

GOVT 2306 requires college-level reading and writing skills. The minimum requirement for enrollment in GOVT 2306 include concurrent enrollment in or successful completion of ENGL 1301. If you have enrolled in this course having satisfied this prerequisite, you have a higher chance of success than students who have not done so. Please carefully read and consider the repeater policy in the HCCS Student Handbook.

**Eagle Online Canvas Learning Management System**

This section of GOVT 2306 will use Eagle Online Canvas (https://eagleonline.hccs.edu) to supplement in-class assignments, exams, and activities. This course is a hybrid course which uses Eagle Online Canvas as a support site for course information, lecture, materials, organization, and gradebook. While exams are taken in class, homework assignments will be submitted online through Canvas.

HCCS Open Lab locations may be used to access the Internet and Eagle Online Canvas. It is recommended that you use FIREFOX or CHROME as your browser.

**HCC Online Information and Policies**

Here is the link to information about HCC Online classes including the required Online Orientation for all fully online classes: http://www.hccs.edu/online/

**Scoring Rubrics, Sample Assignments, etc.**

Each online assignment will contain specific assignment weighting, directions, and questions for students to answer https://eagleonline.hccs.edu/login/ldap

**Instructional Materials**

**Textbook Information**

Text: *Texas Politics Today, 2017-2018 edition* by Jones, Maxwell, and Crain. There are several ways to obtain this text. We will discuss the options in class.

**Tutoring**

HCC provides free, confidential, and convenient academic support, including writing critiques, to HCC students in an online environment and on campus. Tutoring is provided by HCC personnel in order to ensure that it is contextual and appropriate. Visit the HCC Tutoring Services website for services provided.

**Libraries**

The HCC Library System consists of 9 libraries and 6 Electronic Resource Centers (ERCs) that are inviting places to study and collaborate on projects. Librarians are available both at the libraries and online to show you how to locate and use the resources you need. The libraries maintain a large selection of electronic resources as well as collections of books, magazines, newspapers, and audiovisual materials. The portal to all libraries’ resources and services is the HCCS library web page at http://library.hccs.edu.
Supplementary Instruction
Supplemental Instruction is an academic enrichment and support program that uses peer-assisted study sessions to improve student retention and success in historically difficult courses. Peer Support is provided by students who have already succeeded in completion of the specified course, and who earned a grade of A or B. Find details at http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/supplemental-instruction/.

Course Overview

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.

Core Curriculum Objectives (CCOs)

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.

Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

1. Identify and describe the institutions of the State of Texas government
2. Identify and evaluate information sources for political news, data, and opinion.
3. Analyze the effects of the historical, social, political, economic, and cultural forces on politics and government.

Course Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs)
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.

**Learning Objectives**

Learning Objectives for each CSLO can be found [here](#).

**Student Success**

Expect to spend at least twice as many hours per week on your own in addition to the time you would normally spend during instruction. Additional time will be required for written assignments. The assignments provided will help you use your study hours wisely. Successful completion of this course requires a combination of the following:

- Reading the textbook
- Attending class in person and/or online
- Completing assignments
- Participating in class activities

There is no short cut for success in this course; it requires reading (and probably re-reading) and studying the material using the course objectives as your guide.

**Instructor and Student Responsibilities**

As your Instructor, it is my responsibility to:

- Provide the grading scale and detailed grading formula explaining how student grades are to be derived
- Facilitate an effective learning environment through learner-centered instructional techniques
- Provide a description of any special projects or assignments
- Inform students of policies such as attendance, withdrawal, tardiness, and make up
- Provide the course outline and class calendar which will include a description of any special projects or assignments
- Arrange to meet with individual students before and after class as required

As a student, it is your responsibility to:

- Attend class in person and/or online
- Participate actively by reviewing course material, interacting with classmates, and responding promptly in your communication with me
- Read and comprehend the textbook
- Complete the required assignments and exams
- Ask for help when there is a question or problem
- Keep copies of all paperwork, including this syllabus, handouts, and all assignments
• Be aware of and comply with academic honesty policies in the HCCS Student Handbook

Assignments, Exams, and Activities

Online Written Assignments

There will be 3 homework assignments over the course of the semester. Each one is weighted as 12% of your course grade for a total of 36%. **Assignments will not be accepted late, and no assignment grades will be dropped.** All of the assignments will be submitted online. **Be aware that the Canvas system will automatically submit your assignment to Turnitin.com and generate a plagiarism report for me.** Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. See Academic Integrity section later in the syllabus.

Exams:

There will be THREE non-comprehensive exams scheduled this term. Each exam will be comprised of multiple choice and essay questions. Exams 1 and 2 will each be worth 23% of your total course grade. Exam 3 will be worth 18% of your total course grade.

There will not be a comprehensive final but no exam grade will be dropped. **Students are required to bring Essay scantrons for the exams. Essay scantrons can be purchased in HCC bookstores. You should not write anything on these scantrons as they will be shuffled among all of the students.**

Additional guidelines pertaining to the exam are as follows:

1) Students will NOT be permitted to take any breaks at any point during an exam; make sure that all bodily needs have been met and all life distractions are taken care of PRIOR to taking the exam or can be taken care of AFTER turning in that exam.
2) Students should also power off all mobile devices and put them at the front of the room with their other personal possessions. **Please note that the use/possession of any electronic device during an exam will be considered proof of cheating and you will receive an F in the course.**

Extra Credit

**Extra credit opportunities to improve your grade will be posted in Canvas in the course introduction section. Extra credit is meant to help you boost your grade slightly and to provide you with enriching learning opportunities. It is not meant to raise your final course grade significantly.**

ANY STUDENT WHO ENGAGES IN ANY FORM OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY ON AN EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENT WILL LOSE ALL PREVIOUS EXTRA CREDIT POINTS AND WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO EARN ANY FUTURE EXTRA CREDIT POINTS.

Grading Formula

There will be 3 exams with exams 1 and 2 each exam counting as 23% of the total course grade. Exam 3 will count as 18% of the total course grade. There will be 3 online homework assignments. Each will count as 12% of the total class grade. **Assignments will not be accepted late, and**
no assignment grades will be dropped. Your grade will be based upon the standard college grading scale as follows:

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

HCC Grading Scale can be found on this site under Academic Information:  
http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/student-handbook/

Course Calendar

Course Calendar: Please note that the following list is preliminary and is subject to changes. 
Week 1:  Jan 14-18--Texas Constitution; Political Culture  
Week 2: January 22-25--City Government; Annexation  
Week 3: Jan 28-Feb 1--- Deed Restrictions, Zoning, Counties, Special Districts  
Week 4:  Feb 4-8-- Flooding, Funding, and Elections  
Week 5:  Feb 12---Exam 1

Week 6: Feb 19-22 Texas Judiciary  
Week 7: Feb 25-March 1--Texas Executive  
Week 8: March 4-8-- Texas Plural Executive; Texas Legislature

Spring Break: March 11-15

Week 9: March 18-22--Interest Groups; Political Parties  
Week 10:  March 25-29--Exam 2  
Drop Date:  April 1  
Week 11:  April 1-5--Texas Taxing and Spending

Week 12: April 8-12--Texas Education Policy  
Weeks 13-14: April 15-26--Texas Criminal Justice Policy  
Week 15: April 30--Exam 3  
Week 16: May 7--Makeup exam for those missing an exam

Syllabus Modifications

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus at any time during the semester and will promptly notify students in writing, typically by e-mail, of any such changes.

Instructor’s Practices and Procedures

Missed Assignments

Make-up Policy

Students should take exams when they are scheduled. Nevertheless, I recognize that illness or personal emergencies may sometimes prevent even the most conscientious student from
taking an exam. **Students are allowed to makeup only one exam during a semester. Please note that NO EXAM GRADES WILL BE DROPPED.** Makeup exams will be taken during final exam week since you do not have a comprehensive final in this course. The makeup will take place on the date of the traditional final--either Monday or Wednesday, May 6 or May 8. The date will be consistent with HCC's exam schedule for that course. All makeup exams are all essay, but you will have a choice of essays. *Expect the makeup exam to be at least subtly different from the original exam, but not necessarily more difficult. However, students do not typically score as well on the makeup.*

**Academic Integrity**

Houston Community College is committed to a high standard of academic integrity in the academic community. In becoming a part of the academic community, students are responsible for honesty and independent effort. Examples of these violations include, but are not limited to, the following: Plagiarizing written work or projects, cheating on exams or assignments, collusion on an exam or project, and misrepresentation of credentials or prerequisites when registering for a course.

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.

Simply put, violations of academic integrity will NOT be tolerated. At a minimum, a grade of “0” will be recorded on the assignment or exam in question. Additional sanctions may include but are not necessarily limited to the following: Being assigned a grade of "F" for the course, being withdrawn from the course, or being expelled from the College.

With instructor permission, tape recorders and laptops may be used during lectures only for the purpose of helping students take notes. The use of such devices for any other purpose may result in loss of device use for remainder of semester, system charges of academic dishonesty, and administrative drop from the course.

**THE POSSESSION OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES DURING EXAMS WILL BE CONSIDERED PROOF OF CHEATING.** Such devices must be left in purses/backpacks at the front of the room during exams. Possible punishments for academic dishonesty may include a grade of 0 or F on the particular assignment, failure in the course, and/or recommendation for probation or dismissal from the HCC System. **ANY STUDENT WHO ENGAGES IN ANY FORM OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY ON AN EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENT WILL LOSE ALL PREVIOUS EXTRA CREDIT POINTS AND WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO EARN ANY FUTURE EXTRA CREDIT POINTS.**

**Attendance Procedures**

It has been my experience that students with poor attendance records and those who are consistently tardy perform very poorly in this course. I hope that everyone succeeds in this course, and I will do my best to help you learn, but I cannot be of much help if you do not come to class. If there are circumstances which cause you to miss class regularly, please discuss them with me before your absences/tardiness becomes a problem.
Should you decide that it is necessary to drop/withdraw from the course, this semester’s drop date is April 1, 2019.

**Student Conduct**

Students will be required to participate in discussion activities and interact with fellow classmates. Any and all communication among class participants must remain civil and respectful. Any instances of these disruptions may result in an administrative withdrawal without refund.

Students who enter class late should not, under any circumstances, walk in front of the instructor to find a seat.

**Electronic Devices**

Cell phones or other electronic devices must be turned to silent/vibrate during class time.
**HCC Policies**

Here’s the link to the HCC Student Handbook [http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/student-handbook/](http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/student-handbook/)  In it you will find information about the following:

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**EGLS³**

The EGLS³ (Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System) will be available for most courses near the end of the term until finals start. This brief survey will give invaluable information to your faculty about their teaching. Results are anonymous and will be available to faculty and division chairs after the end of the term. EGLS³ surveys are only available for the Fall and Spring semesters. -EGLS3 surveys are not offered during the Summer semester due to logistical constraints. [http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/egls3-evaluate-your-professors/](http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/egls3-evaluate-your-professors/)

**Campus Carry Link**

Here’s the link to the HCC information about Campus Carry: [http://www.hccs.edu/departments/police/campus-carry/](http://www.hccs.edu/departments/police/campus-carry/)

**HCC Email Policy**

When communicating via email, HCC requires students to communicate only through the HCC email system to protect your privacy. If you have not activated your HCC student email account, you can go to [HCC Eagle ID](http://www.hccs.edu/) and activate it now. You may also use Canvas Inbox to communicate.

**Housing and Food Assistance for Students**

Any student who faces challenges securing their foods or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students at their college for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable HCC to provide any resources that HCC may possess.

**Government Program Information**

The Houston Community College Government department supports students in a number of different ways. These include:

- GOVT Majors – Students can earn an Associate of Arts Degree in Government, which will prepare them for majoring in Political Science or Government when they transfer
to a university. Majors and Minors—those students who are interested in Political Science or Government—are supported by a faculty committee who will connect them to events, news, and opportunities.

- Careers in GOVT – The study of government or political science prepares students for work in the public and private sectors by emphasizing critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills.
- GOVT Student Organizations – The HCC Political Science Club holds discussions and sponsors events to connect students to politics in the real world.
- GOVT Scholarships – The Government Department will work with students to locate scholarship support, when possible.

Office of Institutional Equity

Use the link below to access the HCC Office of Institutional Equity, Inclusion, and Engagement (http://www.hccs.edu/departments/institutional-equity/)

disAbility Services
HCC strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please meet with a campus Abilities Counselor as soon as possible in order to establish reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and Ability Services. It is the policy and practice of HCC to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. For more information, please go to http://www.hccs.edu/support-services/disability-services/

Title IX
Houston Community College is committed to cultivating an environment free from inappropriate conduct of a sexual or gender-based nature including sex discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Sex discrimination includes all forms of sexual and gender-based misconduct and violates an individual’s fundamental rights and personal dignity. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex—including pregnancy and parental status in educational programs and activities. If you require an accommodation due to pregnancy please contact an Abilities Services Counselor. The Director of EEO/Compliance is designated as the Title IX Coordinator and Section 504 Coordinator. All inquiries concerning HCC policies, compliance with applicable laws, statutes, and regulations (such as Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504), and complaints may be directed to:

David Cross
Director EEO/Compliance
Office of Institutional Equity & Diversity
3100 Main
(713) 718-8271
Houston, TX 77266-7517 or Institutional.Equity@hccs.edu
http://www.hccs.edu/departments/institutional-equity/title-ix-know-your-rights/

Department Chair Contact Information
Department Chair: Dr. Cammy Shay
Email Address: cammy.shay@hccs.edu
Office Number: 713-718-7141
Per the HCC Student Handbook, if you have a problem with your Government course, please contact your instructor before contacting the department chair.