



**Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Government Department**

<https://www.hccs.edu/programs/areas-of-study/social--behavioral-sciences/government/>

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**GOVT 2306: Texas Government | Online Anytime | #14477**

Summer 2021 | 5 Weeks (6.7.2021-7.11.2021)

Online on a Schedule, 3 Credit Hours | 48 hours per semester

**Instructor's Preferred Method of Contact**

Instructor: Erika O'Neal, MLA, MEd.

Office: Northwest

HCC Email: [Erika.oneal@hccs.edu](mailto:Erika.oneal@hccs.edu)

Office Phone: 713-718-0000

Office Hours: Appointment Only

Office Location: Northwest

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. You can contact me through either Canvas or my HCC email. I will respond to emails within 24 hours, Monday through Friday.

\*\*\* Please not if you contact me during non-business hours (after 9am-5pm) I will respond the next day. In addition, if you contact me on the weekend, I may not respond until Monday.

**What's Exciting about This Course**

Most of the public policy that impacts our lives happen at the state and local level. This may surprise many considering most of all the national media tends to focus on federal and not state government. But, many of the new policies regarding mask wearing, business regulations, restaurant capacity actually come from the state and local level and not the federal. In addition, we live in one of the more unique states in the union. In this class we will discuss what is unique about Texas and her government. What if I were to tell you Texas has one of the largest economies in the world, yet has some of the more limiting institutions in the United States. What if I also told you, despite all of Texas's resources, a sizeable portion of her citizenry live in the worst possible circumstances. How is this possible? In this class we will discuss topics such as these, and many others challenges Texans face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## My Personal Welcome

On behalf of the Government Department faculty, I welcome you to the study of Texas Government at Houston Community College. During the Fall 2020 semester, all courses at HCC will be taught in either one of three different instructional modalities: *Online Anytime*, *Online on a Schedule*, and *Flex Campus*. Note that regardless of modality, ALL student coursework is expected to be completed online in Canvas (see blurb about Canvas on the next page).

*Online Anytime* classes are traditional online classes where there are no meetings at specific times. *Online on a Schedule* classes are online courses with scheduled meeting times. Students are expected to log on for scheduled class meetings held each week. *Flex Campus* courses are classes scheduled in traditional classrooms in accordance with COVID-19 safety measures. Students have the option to be either in physical attendance during class or attend classes as scheduled online

Regardless of the course' designated modality, ALL coursework is required to be completed online in Canvas. Additionally, expect the amount of material covered to not be significantly different (or more difficult) than material covered in any other instructional modality.

**This particular section of GOVT 2305 is taught using the *Online on a Schedule* modality.**

I would like to personally welcome every student taking my class. No matter what your background in government may be, I try to challenge every student where they are in their education, and not where I think they should be. We all come from different backgrounds and have different experiences. I sincerely hope that all my students succeed. But, grades in my class are not given, they are earned. My pledge to you is that I will always bring my best to every lecture, tutoring session, or whatever I do, and I genuinely hope you make the same commitment in return.

### ***Prerequisites and/or Co-Requisites***

*GOVT 2306 requires college-level reading and writing skills. The minimum requirements 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***

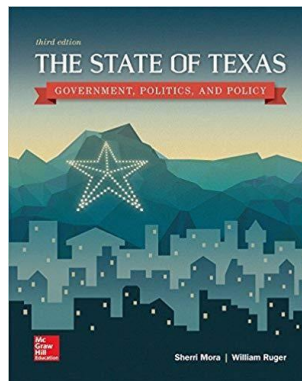
*This section of GOVT 2305 will use [Eagle Online Canvas](https://eagleonline.hccs.edu) (<https://eagleonline.hccs.edu>). All students ARE able to access their class in canvas using their HCC login credentials (i.e. HCC email and Password)*

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/>

## **Instructional Material Textbook Information**



Sherri Mora & William Ruger, *The State of Texas*, 3rd Edition. (ISBN: 9781260664188.) Students who do not have the textbook can get 14 days free access to the textbook by creating an account through McGraw-Hill for Connect. Students can find registration instructions here:

<https://www.mheducation.com/highered/support/connect/first-day-of-class/standalone.html>

To register and get access the 14 day free trial go here:

<https://connect.mheducation.com/class/b-martin-summer-2020-1>

Just know, the other features within Connect are not required or will be used in this course. If you want to continue using the ebook within Connect after your 14 day free trial, you'll need to purchase access.

Other options are purchasing the textbook through the HCC bookstore.

<https://hccs.bncollege.com/shop/hccs-central/home>

## ***Other Instructional Resources***

### **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 library 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)**

This course satisfies the Government/Political Science requirement in the HCCS core curriculum. The HCCS Government Discipline Committee has specified that the course address 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
- **Empirical/Quantitative Skills**—to include manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
- **Teamwork**—to include ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
- **Personal Responsibility**—to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making
- **Social Responsibility**—to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

### **Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)**

Can be found at: <https://www.hccs.edu/programs/areas-of-study/social--behavioral-sciences/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 at GOVT 2305 can be found [here](#).

## Student Success

Expect to spend at least twice as many hours per week outside of class as you do in class studying the course content. 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 a 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 making up assignments
- Provide the course outline and class calendar that 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

The course is organized into 4 modules matching the 14 chapters of the textbook. The modules, assigned readings, and test coverage are as follows:

### Module 1: June 7- June 11

- **Chapter 1: Introduction to Texas History and Politics**
- **Chapter 2: The Texas State Constitution and the American Federal System**
- **Chapter 14: Public Opinion and the Media in Texas**

**Test 1 Covers Module 1 Test June 11-13, 2021**

### Module 2: June 14- June 18, 2021

- **Chapter 7: Voting and Political Participation in Texas**
- **Chapter 8: Campaign and Elections in Texas**
- **Chapter 9: Political Parties in Texas**
- **Chapter 10: Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas**

**Test 2 Covers Module 2 Test June 18-20, 2021**

### Module 3: June 21- June 25, 2021

- **Chapter 3: The Texas Legislature**
- **Chapter 4: The Executive Department and the Office of the Governor**
- **Chapter 5: The Court System in Texas**
- **Chapter 12: The Criminal Justice System in Texas**

**Test 3 covers Module 3 June 25-27,2021**

### Module 4: June 28- July 2, 2021

- **Chapter 6: Local Government in Texas**
- **Chapter 11: Public Policy in Texas**
- **Chapter 13: Financing State Government**

**Test 4 covers Module 4 Final Exam**

- **Final Exam will be taken Thursday July 8, 2021 at 7:30 pm (No exceptions)**

### Module Activity

Each module the book's power point slides and other additional resources you may find helpful. The best way to approach each module is by reading the chapter first, and then using the book's power point slides to help organize your studying and note taking. There are also practice quizzes at the end of each Chapter so you can assess how well you're understanding the material. Each practice quiz can be taken up to three times.

## Exams and Discussion Boards

We will have four 100-point multiple-choice **exams** covering the assigned chapters of the textbook. Because all testing will be done online, you will not be required to come to campus. You may take each test once and I will not allow re-takes. Because the computer randomly selects questions from a large database, no two tests are identical. Students should prepare for exams before they take a test.

Students will also have to engage in four different **discussion board** topics (five if you include the introductory discussion board, but that's meant to be fun and it is 20 points). Each discussion board will require you reading outside materials (which I have linked on the board) and writing a point of view response. You will also be required to respond to at least one classmate's post as well. PLEASE be respectful when responding! Each discussion board is worth 20 total points.

## Final Exam

The final exam is simply exam number 4 and is not cumulative.

## Assessment breakdown

Student grades will be based on four tests, four discussion boards, and a class introduction discussion board. The point breakdown are as follows:

• Test 1	100 pts.
• Test 2	100 pts.
• Test 3	100 pts.
• Test 4	100 pts.
• Class Introduction	20 pts.
• Discussions (20 each)	<u>80</u> pts.
Total	500 pts.

To figure out your final grade, you simply add up all the points you've earned and then divide that number by the total points available in the class (500). This will give you your percentage. DO NOT rely on the Canvas grade book to know your score. It is often not accurate.

## Course Calendar

- The course begins on **June 7, 2020**
- The official day of record is **June 10, 2021**
- The last day to withdraw is **June 28, 2021**
- The last day to take Test 1 is **June 13, 2021**
- The last day to take Test 2 is **June 20, 2021**
- The last day to take Test 3 is **June 27, 2021**
- The last day to take Test 4 is **July 8, 2021**
- The last day to submit the personal introduction is **June 9, 2021**



- The last day to submit Discussion 1 is **June 11, 2021**
- The last day to submit Discussion 2 is **June 18, 2021**
- The last day to submit Discussion 3 is **June 25, 2021**
- The last day to submit Discussion 4 is **July 2, 2021**
- The course ends on **July 7, 2021**

## Make-up Exams

The make-up exam period is **July 6, 2021**. This is only for students who miss the exam and have a legitimate excuse and is not a "re-take". Students who miss an exam due to a legitimate excuse can take advantage of the make-up exam by submitting proper documentation. I will reopen each exam and allow students to take their exam make-up exam. Doing poorly on an exam is not sufficient reason to take a make-up. Only one make-up per student!

## Extra Credit

I do not see giving extra credit in this course.

## Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited by college policy and the rules of this class. Plagiarism involves using the ideas or words of another person (either in whole or in part) without crediting the source. It is inappropriate to look up answers to research project questions online and then paste them into your research project or the discussion board. Cheating involves fraud and deception for the purpose of violating exam rules. Students who improperly assist other students are just as guilty as students who receive the assistance. If two or more students submit work that is identical or nearly identical, in whole or in part, they are equally guilty of violating the academic dishonesty policy. A student guilty of a first offense will receive a grade of F on the assignment involved. For a second offense, the student will receive a grade of F for the course.

What does this mean?

- It's OK to study together, but it is not OK to take an exam together.
- Don't take an exam for another student or allow someone else to take an exam for you.
- Don't complete your discussion post or your research project by copying and pasting text from an online site.
- *All faculty at HCC are required to document these violations in Maxient, a system used to report any student behavior that constitutes a violation of academic integrity, triggering involvement from other appropriate departments.*
- Here's the link to the HCC information about academic integrity (Scholastic Dishonesty and Violation of Academic Scholastic Dishonesty and Grievance):
- <http://www.hccs.edu/about-hcc/procedures/student-rights-policies--procedures/student-procedures/>

## Time Commitment

If you never taken a summer session course before, just know they fly by with lightning speed. In addition, they can also be overwhelming at times because this is a 16-week regular course compacted into a 4 ½ week session. The work amount is the same, but the time you have to get through it is not.

Online classes are more convenient than traditional classes, but they are not less work. You should expect to spend more time on this class than you would spend on a comparable on-campus class. Students who have been successful in similar online courses have said they devote around 10 hours a week on this particular class. If you do not have sufficient time to spend on the course, you will not be successful.

You should plan to work regularly on the course. This is not a self-paced class. You cannot succeed in this class by working very hard for a few days and doing little or nothing for the rest of the term. The most successful students are those who sign into the website almost every day and complete their coursework on a regular basis. It is very important that you do not fall behind.

## Grading

The total number of points for the semester is 550. Your grade will be based on the standard grading scale as follows:

- 450-500 points = A
- 400-449 points = B
- 350-399 points = C
- 300-349 points = D
- Less than 300 points = F

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

## Grade of FX

Students who stop attending class and do not withdraw themselves prior to the withdrawal deadline may either be dropped by their professor for excessive absences or be assigned the final grade of "FX" at the end of the semester. Students who stop attending classes will receive a grade of "FX", compared to an earned grade of "F" which is due to poor performance. Logging into an online course without active participation is regarded as non-attending. Please note that HCC will not disperse financial aid funding for students who have never attended class. Students who receive financial aid but fail to attend class will be reported to the Department of Education and may have to pay back their aid. A grade of "FX" is treated exactly the same as a grade of "F" in terms of GPA, probation, suspension, and satisfactory academic progress.

**Incomplete Policy:**

It is safe to assume that incomplete ("I") grades will not be granted to students. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis should the student provide a legitimate non-academic reason backed with appropriate documentation. Further, at least 85% of the required work in the course should have already been completed.

Students granted an "I" will have until the end of the next long semester to finish the course. All "I's will convert to "F's" unless the student successfully complete all remaining work as determined by the instructor.

## **Government Department 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.

## **HCC Policies**

Here's the link to the HCC Student Handbook <http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/student-handbook/> In it you will find information about the following:

- Academic Information
- Academic Support
- Attendance, Repeating Courses, and Withdrawal
- Career Planning and Job Search
- Childcare
- Disability Support Services
- Electronic Devices
- Equal Educational Opportunity
- Financial Aid TV (FATV)
- General Student Complaints
- Grade of FX
- Incomplete Grades
- International Student Services
- Health Awareness
- Libraries/Bookstore
- Police Services & Campus Safety

- Student Life at HCC
- Student Rights and Responsibilities
- Student Services
- Testing
- Transfer Planning
- Veteran Services

### **EGLS<sup>3</sup>**

The EGLS<sup>3</sup> ([Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System](http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/egls3-evaluate-your-professors/)) will be available for most courses near the end of the term. This brief survey will give valuable 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. <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/>

### **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](#) 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 food 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 your professor if you are comfortable doing so.

This will enable HCC to provide resources that HCC may possess.

### **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 long and short term conditions, 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](mailto:Institutional.Equity@hccs.edu)  
<http://www.hccs.edu/departments/institutional-equity/title-ix-know-your-rights/>

### **Office of the Dean of Students**

Contact the office of the Dean of Students to seek assistance in determining the correct complaint procedure to follow or to identify the appropriate academic dean or supervisor for informal resolution of complaints.

<https://www.hccs.edu/about-hcc/procedures/student-rights-policies--procedures/student-complaints/speak-with-the-dean-of-students/>

### **Department Chair Contact Information**

Department Chair: Dr. Cammy Shay  
Email Address: [cammy.shay@hccs.edu](mailto: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.