



**Government 2306
Spring 2021**

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

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

Introduction to Texas Government- CRN#16770

Instructor Contact Information: 3 hour lecture course



PHONE: (713) 718-5842 (Voice Mail)

E Mail gary.leblanc@hccs.edu

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.

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 should log on for scheduled class meetings held each week. Flex Campus classes are classes are held 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. Understand that until at least October 5, 2020, classes designated as Flex campus will be taught using the Online on a Schedule modality due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Your success is important to me. As part of your success. I hope you will contact me concerning any problems that you are experiencing in this course. You can contact me through either Canvas or my HCC email. I will respond to emails as quickly as possible. I will log in daily and encourage you to do the same. We will also use or Canvas Conference or Webex as a method of communication. Although the course is self-paced, I will invite you to participate in review sessions, virtual office hours and perhaps periodic class activities. You have the right to request individual review or tutorial sessions as well.



Welcome! Your participation and involvement in the learning process and class activities is highly encouraged. Not only is this part of the required curriculum competencies, but this will be an essential ingredient in your enjoyment and success in this class. This course is designed to go far beyond the mere presentation, memorization and testing of data. It will promote each student's involvement in the learning process. I will encourage you to take an active role by reading, completing assignments and the independent learning exercises, as well as participation in activities. I am looking forward to a positive and mutually beneficial learning experience! Please communicate

and ask for assistance if necessary. **Relax and enjoy!**



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](#).

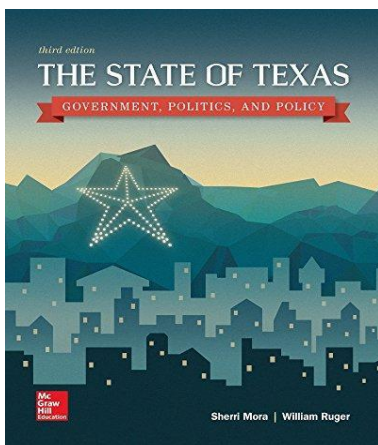
Eagle Online Canvas Learning Management System

This section of GOVT 2306 will use [Eagle Online Canvas https://eagleonline.hccs.edu](https://eagleonline.hccs.edu)

Instructional

Materials TEXTBOOK:

Sherri Mora and William Ruger. **The State of Texas Government, Ppolitics and Policy** (Third Edition) New York: McGraw-Hill, 2017.



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 DESCRIPTION: Government 2306 is one of two courses designed to introduce students to the politics of government at the national, state and local levels. This course is fully transferable to other colleges and universities. The course curriculum will include the following areas: Origin and development of the Texas Constitution, the structure and powers of state and local government, intergovernmental relations, political participation, the campaign/election process, public policy and the political culture of Texas. The course will basically be divided into three modules each resulting in an assessment to evaluate learning outcomes. We will certainly address high profile current events, particularly the impact of COVID 19 on the political and policy-making process, as well on the economy. Current events should demonstrate the importance of the states, particularly Texas. This is a self-paced on-line course, but I encourage each of you to log in every day just to stay informed and up to date.

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 makeup
- 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 [>>>](#)

EXAMS: The three major exams will comprise **53%** percent of your final grade. Each test will consist of narrative essay/short answer questions or some version of an in-class exercise or simulation. They will **not** be traditional exams. There will be no objective - multiple choice or True/False questions. This method is more conducive to this on-line method of delivery that does not include a lecture component. Some effort will be devoted to review test expectations before the first exam. This method also proved to be very effective during the previous semester. The applicable questions will come from posted PowerPoint slides, independent reading assignments, discussions, simulations and other activities. This means that you will have to take individual responsibility for preparation of some portion of the test materials. I would suggest that you maintain your class preparation activities on a systematic and consistent basis in order to be more successful on the test. Most evidence indicates that "cramming" usually does **not** result in a successful grade or the retention of relevant information. I will **not** drop the lowest test scores and will work with each student to address make-up exams.

ASSIGNMENTS: You will be given an assignment related to each exam that will count **30-35 points** each. These will self- paced assignments and you will have more than ample time to complete them. They will be given to you at the beginning of each section of test materials and you will turn them in on the applicable date posted on the Syllabus. They will be based on activities identified above. **Fifteen points** will be deducted for each class session the assignments are turned in late. I will **not** accept assignments after each exam since they are specifically designed for test preparation.

DISCUSSIONS: There will be a series of grades discussions based on a variety of high-profile topics, You tube clips, and a number of current events. They will be posted on your Canvas Modules.

PROJECT: You will have three options for your class project. See Attachment #1-3 for additional details.



There will also be 10 point "**scavenger hunt**" Syllabus quiz to document your understanding of the policies and procedures of HCCS, as well as those that are specific to this class.

COURSE SUBMISSIONS submission date

Syllabus quiz	January 29-February 1
Assignment 1	February 6-9
Exam 1	February 13-15
Assignment 2	March 6-8
Exam 2	March 9-14
Spring Break	March 15-21
Drop/withdrawal date	April 6
Project	April 9-13
Assignment 3	April 30-May 4
Exam 3	May 7-10

These submissions dates are subject to change and appropriate notice will be provided.

Note: Discussions will be scheduled and posted on your canvas Modules.

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

Academic Integrity

Houston Community College is committed to a high standard of academic integrity in the academic community. In becoming 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. Simply put, violations of academic integrity will NOT be tolerated.

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/>

Attendance

Students who do not log in and actively participate in class will be marked as “never attended” on the official census roster, triggering an administrative withdrawal from the course. Students who do not engage and/or who are not current with the required coursework will receive an Early Alert email from their professor and from an HCC adviser. The Early Alert system is designed to help students who may be facing challenges that impact their ability to succeed in class.

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/>

Campus Carry Link

Here's the link to the HCC information about Campus Carry:

<http://www.hccs.edu/departments/police/campus-carry/>

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 including:

- 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 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/>

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:

Dr. Cammy Shay-

[cammy.shay@](mailto:cammy.shay@hccs.edu)

hccs.edu

Office Number:

713-718-7141

Withdrawal Policy

HCCS policy allows an instructor to drop or withdraw a student in they miss more than six hours of classroom instruction. It is your responsibility to understand your status in class and make this decision for yourself. I will work with you if you are making an effort and maintain appropriate communication. The lack of communication and maintenance of effort will make that difficult.

The scheduled drop/withdrawal date is April 6, 2021.

Thanks and have a great semester!

Gary LeBlanc

Choose one of the following three options... 100 points

April 13, 2021

Government 2306- CLASS PROJECT 100 POINTS Attachment #1

This written project involves an analysis/evaluation of a number components included in the 2306 course curriculum. The project will allow you to create a hypothetical political campaign providing you an opportunity to facilitate a context for an analysis, gathering evidence to justify your position, as well as coming to your conclusions.

In this scenario, you will act as a recent graduate and successful entrepreneur has decided to run for a seat in the Texas Legislature. This project is designed to create a structure for your campaign consisting of a five to six page double- spaced typed paper addressing the following components A-D. Select an additional component from options E-G :

- A. Select an **existing member** of the Texas House or Texas Senate as your opponent. You can assume that are or the chosen nominee who won your open primary facing the opponent of the opposition party **or** you can assume that you or going to challenge an incumbent member in his/her open primary. Write a profile of your opponent.

senate.texas.gov/ OR house.texas.gov/

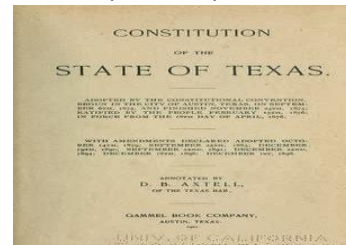
- B. Select a **Special Interest Group** that you would solicit support from and identify/describe how would use their support.



- C. Select and describe a minimum of one structural changes you would fight for in the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government and explain why they are necessary. **Describe how you would seek to accomplish this by law or by constitutional remedies. You may propose new strategies addressing previous failed attempts at changing/amending the 1876 Constitution.** If you believe the current constitutional system works, explain why and what

you would do to maintain this system as it currently exist.

Essentially, you can argue it has and continues to work!



- D. Select a specific social **or** economic issue /law that you will target **issue** and fight for once elected. Explain your position, as well as your rationale for your chosen position.



- E. Identify a state agency you will identify for additional legislative oversight justifying why more

scrutiny is warranted.



- F. Since you built a successful academic and business career entrepreneur in Houston, describe one change would you propose to influence or impact the current city charter to address your

concerns about the political system in *Houston*.



- G. Select and describe a campaign slogan and campaign song and explain how/why they are significant to your political success. **Address the use of social media and how will be used in your campaign.**



The assignment will include the following **four value components**:

- *Evidence
- *Context
- *Student's Position
- * Conclusions and Outcomes

The written component should have a minimum of three sources using the MLA or APA format in documenting citations.. I will also include a rubric as a guide to this written assignment.

All three options will lose 30 points if the project is submitted late and will not be accepted more than one day after the original due date.

ATTACHMENT #2

Due date: April 13, 2021

This option is to become a noted Statentologist...

STATENTOLOGY the new science of evaluating state governments and their corresponding public policies. Involves the act of grading or assessing.

Create an evaluation (Report Card) for Texas. Create an evaluation of the political or policy- making process in Texas. You may choose to assign **Texas** a Grade or implement an alternative assessment system. This will be dependent on the grading system/criterion you have created. Your report cards should justify and document your assessment. Be willing to offer praise, as well as criticism....

There should be a 2-3 page supplement explaining your assessment. How and why did Texas receive their score?

Just a few reminders...



All three options will lose 30 points if the project is submitted late and will not be accepted more than one day after the original due date.

ATTACHMENT #3

Due date: April 13, 2021

Option #3



AARP and the National Rifle Association are two of the largest Special Interest Groups but there may be a need for others.....**particularly in Texas.** This is where your project comes in.....

Create your own interest group Brochure. Create a name, logo purpose, strategy that your group to influence the electoral or policy-making system **in Texas.** For this option, you will need to supplement the brochure with a justifying the ‘NEED’ for the creation of your group. You should include written supplement that justifies the need for this hypothetical group. **This supplement should include a 2-3 page analysis.** This analysis should provide the appropriate data/ statistics etc...to justify the need for your group as part of your project. Remember- you will need money, members and credibility.

All three options will lose 30 points if the project is submitted late and will not be accepted more than one day after the original due date.