



## **Government Course Syllabus**

*This syllabus can change to meet the fluid needs of students and the professor. Please be advised students should check the HCC On-Line website for any changes throughout the semester.*

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# **TEXAS POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT GOVT2306 CRN 12614, 12615, and 12616**

***Summer, 2017***

***HCC ONLINE VIA CANVAS***

***Second Five-Week Term***

***July 10, 2017 to August 13, 2017***

Three Semester Credit Hours

48 Contact Hours

*Five-Week Session*

*HCC ONLINE (formerly called "Distance Education")*

### **Instructor's Name**

*Jaye Ramsey Sutter, M.A., J.D.*

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### **Office Hours**

Office Location: Southwest Stafford Campus

Learning Hub Bldg.

Office Availability: Tuesday, 2-5 p.m. and by appointment

Communications on HCC Email (from HCC Student Email accounts only) Chat room conferences available by request

### **Course Description**

2306 Texas-- 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.

### **Five-Week Term**

This is a five-week class. We will cover during these five weeks ALL the material that is covered in the regular 16-week term class. That means that in this class you have only one-third the time to do the work that is allowed for your colleagues who take this class during a regular term semester.

Accordingly, you must NOT fall behind and you MUST work diligently preparing for your four exams and paper each and every day. Essentially, you have to work five times harder each day in comparison to someone in the 16-week regular term. You can do it but you must make the commitment to be organized and disciplined in work in your preparation and study.

### **Instructional Materials**

Lyle C. Brown, Joyce A. Langenegger, Sonia R. Garcia, Ted A. Lewis, Robert E. Biles, Ryan Rynbrandt, Veronica Reyna, **Practicing Texas Politics, 16th Edition (2015-2016 Edition)**, Cengage Learning (publisher). This is the **required textbook**. It is from where your reading assignments and your exams originate. I use this book (along with additional posted lectures notes found under each unit) to prepare your exams.

I recommend you purchase a used copy of the textbook as this is the last semester HCC will be using this edition of the Brown Texas government textbook. You may purchase or rent the book from any source you wish—the HCC Bookstore or any online resource that would sell it to you cheaper. Because it is the last semester we are using this edition, the resale value will not be great. And do NOT purchase the “Mind-Tap” software from any vendor as I do NOT use “Mind-Tap” software (that is often sold—at extra cost to you—in a package deal).

Texas Legislative Reference Library  
<http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/index.cfm>

Any other reading materials assigned or posted.

### **Assignments & Exams**

Your reading, writing and exams are your assignments. “Mindtap” software is not used by this instructor for any graded activities. Purchase of “MindTap” is NOT required for the class and is NOT used in the class. Along with your textbook, the material I provide you on Canvas is more than sufficient to be successful in the course. If you decide, however, to purchase Mindtap against

my recommendation, you will need a code to access it. I do NOT have the code since Mindtap is not used in the course. You will need to contact the publisher's customer service desk for assistance. Please do not ask me for a code as, again, I do not have a Mindtap code for this course.

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## **Reading Assignments and Exam Dates**

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

**EXAM ONE, AVAILABLE DATES: JULY 18-19, Tuesday-Wednesday**

Textbook Reading Assignment:

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: JULY 25-26, Tuesday-Wednesday**

Textbook Reading Assignment:

Chapter 4: Political Parties  
Chapter 5: Campaigns and Elections Chapter 6: The  
Media and Politics  
Chapter 7: The Politics of Interest Groups

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

**EXAM THREE, AVAILABLE DATES: AUGUST 1-2, Tuesday-Wednesday**

Textbook Reading Assignment:

Chapter 8: The Legislative Branch  
Chapter 9: The Executive Branch  
Chapter 10: Public Policy and Administration Chapter  
13: Finance and Fiscal Policy

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

**EXAM FOUR, AVAILABLE DATES: AUGUST 9-10, Wednesday-Thursday**

Textbook Reading Assignment:

Chapter 11: The Judicial Branch  
Chapter 12: The Criminal Justice System

**Section 5: MANDATORY WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

**DUE DATE: AUGUST 7, MONDAY by 11:59 p.m.**

Topic and assignment instructions to be announced after completion of Exam Two

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**OTHER IMPORTANT CLASS DATES:**

- July 10: Classes begin (Monday)  
July 13: **Official Date of Record (Students who have not logged into Canvas and participated in class before or by this date will be DROPPED from the class by the HCC registrar for non-attendance!)**  
July 31: Last Day to Withdraw from Class (Monday)  
August 13: Semester Ends (Sunday)
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**Instructional Methods**

As this is a college course, your assignments consist of reading your textbook, taking notes on the material presented, taking examinations under rigorous testing conditions and writing an assignment. Mindtap is not used, graded, or required. There is no busy work.

**Student Assignments and grading criteria**

There are *four exams*; the lowest is dropped. There is *one graded writing assignment*. By departmental requirements, the writing assignment grade cannot be dropped. Four grades determine the final course grade: the average of the three highest exam grades and the writing assignment grade. Each of those four grades are worth twenty-five percent of the total grade for the course. The four grades are added together and divided by four. A grade total that contains .5 will be rounded to the next numeric grade.

The government department requires that 25% of a student's grade must be based on written work.

There is absolutely **no extra credit**. Do not ask. There is nothing students can do

to improve their grade except do passing to exemplary work on their exams. The time to worry about grades is not at the end of the semester, but beginning the semester by establishing good study habits. Students who earn failing grades will fail the course.

### **Make-up Policy**

There are no make-up exams. You must take the exams when they are available as scheduled or announced by the professor. No student is given an exam early or late. Work, vacations, and other personal business are not excuses for retakes or make-ups. If a student misses an exam, the grade is a zero and is dropped. The only exception where a make-up exam might be given would be in the case of a *verifiable* (i.e. can be proven by documentation) emergency situation such as a death in the immediate family or emergency surgery. For consideration of a make-up being considered by the professor, the student must supply documentation such as a funeral contract or medical discharge papers in order to take a make-up exam.

### **Grading Scale**

90-100%= A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

less than 60% = F

### **Online Examinations**

All exams are administered on Eagle Online anywhere a student has access to the Internet. If an internet service provider kicks a student off, there is nothing the Instructor can do to reopen the exam. If a computer “freezes” the instructor will **not** open an exam. If a student has technical problems while taking an exam, they must contact HCC Tech Support and provide the instructor with the documentation or ticket. An exam be reopened IF AND ONLY IF HCC tech support reports that the problem is due to a failure in the college system. No exams will be reopened over a student’s computer or ISP problems. You have a **TWO-DAY** period during which you may take your test and ***your exam is strictly timed and must be completed within the allotted time limit.***

### **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, and then go to the button at the top right that says **Login** and enter your student number.

If a student is sexually assaulted on or off campus, students are encouraged to call an ambulance and go to the hospital. Seek emergency help immediately. It is strictly the students' decision to pursue legal action or prosecution after the student has had an opportunity to first attend to their medical needs.

Students should report any criminal activity to campus and other law enforcement officials immediately.

Students and instructors have a right to work and study in a safe environment free from intimidation and bullying. Any such activity will not be tolerated. Any threatening email or confrontational encounters directed at the instructor will be reported to the police.

**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.

Any suspected cheating will be reported to the Academic Dean for a full investigation. If students work on line on their exams as coconspirators, both students will receive a zero and it will not be dropped. Computer software will detect students working from the same ISP at the same time and unusually short log in durations during exams will be suspect and students will be interviewed as to why it took them such a short time to complete a complex exam. They will be reported to the Academic Dean.

Papers will be closely examined for plagiarism. Any plagiarism is cheating and

students will be reported to the academic dean. Plagiarized papers will be given a zero and that zero is not dropped. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

**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. Texas law limits new students (as of Fall 2007) to no more than six withdrawals throughout their academic career in obtaining a baccalaureate degree. The instructor does not drop students. If a student wishes to drop the course, he or she must so do following the procedures in your HCC Student Handbook. It is solely the student's responsibility to attend to the procedures to drop the course if they choose to withdraw from the class. The drop/withdrawal date this semester is July 31, 2017.

**Repeating Courses:** As a result of 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/>

**HCC ONLINE (Distance Education):** The HCC On-Line/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](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)

**Course Prerequisite, Co-requisite:**

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

**Academic Program Learning Outcomes:**

Government 2306, Texas Government:

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.

**Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)**

1. Identify and describe the institutions of American national government. GOVT2305
2. Identify and describe the institutions of the State of Texas government. GOVT 2306
3. Identify and evaluate information sources for political news, data, and opinion. GOVT 2306
4. Analyze the effects of the historical, social, political, economic, and cultural forces on politics and government. GOVT 2306
5. 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. GOVT 2305

**Core Objectives**

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) (The State of Texas) 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.

This syllabus and its contents, dates, and requirements is subject to change at the discretion of the professor anytime during the semester.

Please report any errors, contradictory information or other problems found in this syllabus to your professor.