



## **Texas Government Course Syllabus**

### **GOVT2306 – HYBRID**



### **TEXAS GOVERNMENT**

### **GOVT 2306, CRN 16209**

Second Start Term, 12-Weeks, Spring 2019

February 11, 2019 to May 12, 2010

HYBRID: OnSite and Online via Canvas

Onsite on Tuesday 10:00 to 11:50 A.M. Stafford, Rm 228,  
Learning Hub *and* online at HCC Online via Canvas

(<https://eagleonline.hccs.edu>)

3 Semester Credit Hours

48 Contact Hours

Regular Term, 16-Weeks

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#### **Instructor's Name**

Professor Jaye Ramsey Sutter, J.D.

[jayeramsey.sutter@hccs.edu](mailto:jayeramsey.sutter@hccs.edu)

### **Government Department Chair**

Cammy Shay, Ph.D.

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

713-718-7141

Note: if you have a problem with your Government course, please contact your instructor before contacting Dr. Shay.

### **Office and Phone**

Stafford Learning Hub

303/FWS 3.13

713.718.5561 (please mail me rather than call)

### **Office Hours**

2:30 to 5:30 p.m. Monday

### **GOVT 2306 Course Description**

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.

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## **Course Calendar**

### **Reading Assignments from and Exam Dates**

Dates for your exams and your mandatory writing assignment will be posted on the course syllabus on the first day of class. Transfer those dates to your personal calendar (online or paper) with reminders. Forgetting about a test date or paper submission deadline is not an excuse that will allow a make-up exam or late submission. Reading assignments are from *The State of Texas: Government, Politics, and Policy*, Third Edition, by Mora and Ruger.

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

#### **UNIT 1 EXAM AVAILABLE: March 5-7, Tuesday-Thursday**

*Exam 1 Textbook Reading Assignment:*

- ✚ Chapter 1: Introduction to Texas History and Politics
- ✚ Chapter 2: The Texas State Constitution & American Federal System
- ✚ Chapter 6: Local Governments in Texas

## **Unit 2: Political Participation in Texas**

**UNIT 2 EXAM AVAILABLE: March 26-28, Tuesday-Thursday**

*Exam 2 Textbook Reading Assignment:*

- ✦ Chapter 7: Voting and Political Participation in Texas
- ✦ Chapter 8: Campaigns & Elections in Texas
- ✦ Chapter 9: Political Parties in Texas
- ✦ Chapter 10: Interest Groups & Lobbying in Texas
- ✦ Chapter 14: Public Opinion and the Media in Texas

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

**UNIT 3 EXAM AVAILABLE: April 16-18, Tuesday-Thursday**

*Exam 3 Textbook Reading Assignment:*

- ✦ Chapter 3: The Texas Legislature
- ✦ Chapter 8: The Executive Department & Office of Governor of Texas
- ✦ Chapter 11: Public Policy in Texas
- ✦ Chapter 13: Financing State Government

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

**UNIT 4 EXAM AVAILABLE: May 7-9, Tuesday-Thursday**

*Exam 4 Textbook Reading Assignment:*

- ✦ Chapter 5: The Court System in Texas
- ✦ Chapter 12: The Criminal Justice System in Texas

## **MANDATORY WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

**DUE DATE: APRIL 30, TUESDAY** Submitted Online **BEFORE 11:59 P.M.—NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED!**

- Topic and instructions to be announced following completion of Unit 2 exam (Assignment is 25% of final course grade)

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### **Additional Important Dates**

February 11—Classes Begin

February 20—Official Day of Record\*

March 11-17—Spring Break

April 9—Last Day to Withdraw

April 9—Spring Holiday

May 5—Last Day of Instruction

May 12—Semester Ends

*\*Any student who has not logged-into the class and participated in the class by completing a required assignment **BEFORE 12:00 a.m. Wednesday,***

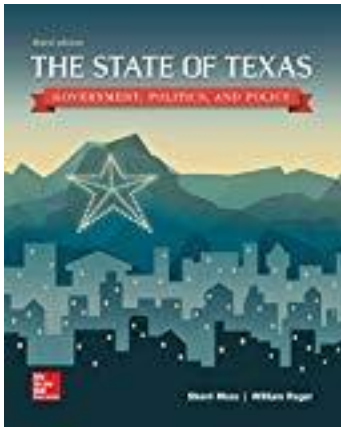
**February 20** (the Official Day of Record when attendance AND participation is reported to registrar) may be **dropped** from the class for non-attendance by the college.

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## Instructional Materials

The required textbook for your GOVT2306 Texas government class is **THE STATE OF TEXAS; GOVERNMENT, POLITICS, AND POLICY, by Sherri Mora and William Ruger**, McGraw-Hill (publisher)—ISBN 978-1-259-54821-5 (paperback).

This is the required textbook. It is from this textbook that your reading assignments and exams are derived. I use this book (along with additional lecture and review notes I have written) to write your exams. You are NOT required to purchase the “Connect” software with the textbook. We do not use “Connect” in this class.



You are also provided lecture notes, handouts, and other materials in each unit corresponding to the subject matter in the textbook readings for that unit. You are responsible for all the information on the additional material under each unit for that unit exam. You will also have for each unit a **“Worksheet of Terms and Concepts”** that you must use to make notes from all your reading and lecture materials. This completed document will serve as your principal study guide and can be used while taking your exam online. It is strongly urged that you transfer the Worksheet of Terms and Concepts to your word processor and type out the answers for each of the terms so that during the exam you can use your computer’s search function to help you find answers in your completed Worksheet. The completion of the “Worksheet of Terms and Concepts” will be *your primary homework assignment for each of the four units* in preparation for the exam. It will take a commitment of time and effort to complete successfully but the resultant value of the document in your study for the exam will be evident in

your success on the exam if you do the requisite work on the preparing your "Worksheet." I do not grade your completed worksheets, however, your success on the exams will reflect whether or not you did a thorough and complete job on your worksheets for all the unit exams.

### **All Exams Are Online**

All exams are administered on Canvas 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. Then and only then can an exam be reopened if indeed HCC tech support reporters that the problem is the college system. No exams will be reopened because of computer or Internet service provider problems.

### **Assignments & Exams**

Your reading, writing and exams are your assignments. You are provided with study materials for each unit exam which are sufficient, if used properly, to enable you to succeed in the class.

All exams are objective: Multiple choice and a few true/false questions. The exams are strictly timed and offered over a three-day period as scheduled on the course reading assignment and testing calendar. Each exam will have from 50 to 100 questions.

### **Grading Scale**

90-100% = A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

less than 60% = F

*There are four exams (one exam for each of the four units), the lowest of the four test grades is dropped. There is one graded mandatory writing assignment. After the lowest test grade is dropped, the three remaining test grades are added to the writing assignment grade, and the average of those four grades is your **final course grade**.* Hence, the three remaining test grades (after the lowest test grade is dropped) along with the writing assignment grade each constitutes 25% of your final course grade. Any final grade average which reflects a .5 will be rounded to the next whole number. An 89.5, therefore, would be a 90 and an "A." an 89.4, however, would still be a grade of 89 and, thus, a "B." You must take all four exams.

### **Worksheet of Terms and Concepts for Each Unit Examination**

A "work sheet of terms and concepts" will be posted on our Eagle Online Canvas course-site for each of the unit examinations. You can prepare your review for the exam using your textbook and with materials I provide you on the course-site, providing definitions, explanations, analysis of the terms on the work sheet. I will take your questions via email about the material up until the night before the exam period. Writing (typing) out the terms and studying your completed work sheet of terms is crucial to your success in the class. You do not submit your completed worksheet of terms to me for a grade. Your test grade on the exam is your grade and completion of and study of your completed worksheet of terms will enhance your test grade. Read your assignments from the textbook carefully. Read and study any addition lecture notes or similar material that I post for you. You will be responsible for that posted material as well as the textbook material.

**How to Prepare for the Exam:** I recommend you preview the material (read through the material quickly, looking for headings and subheadings in the chapter, notes in the margins, etc.); then read the material again, slowly and closely, making notes, looking up material whenever needed (e.g., if do you know what a word means in a sentence, you **MUST** look it up in a dictionary or you may not understanding what your reading about in the entire paragraph), and filling out your work sheet of terms; then, finally, review the material in its entirety, reading through it quickly to see if you missed anything.

*Fully and comprehensively working up your work sheet of terms for each unit is the major portion of your work in the course. You have four tests and a writing assignment. Those are the only graded assignments in the course.*

To effectively prepare for those exams you need to focus heavily on preparing the work sheet of terms completely and carefully. It will take a lot of time and effort. This is why I don't give you a bunch of "make-work" little assignments like you had in high school. Focus on your reading, making your notes, and studying those completed notes. You may, of course, consult with me via HCC Email with any questions about the textbook material, lecture notes, or worksheet terms. I am here to assist you whenever you need direction or assistance.

### **Make-up Policy**

Make-up exams are NOT allowed EXCEPT **only in the case of verifiable emergencies**. You must take the exams when they are available and they are not available whenever you want. No student is given an exam early or late under any circumstances. Work conflicts, 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. "Forgetting" you had an exam is not an excuse that provide you with a make-up exam. A "missed" or "forgotten" exam will be scored as a zero and that will be the test grade that

is dropped. Verifiable emergencies (that which can be documented and proven) such as a death in the immediate family emergency, surgery, death in immediate family, will be considered for a make-up. A written request must be submitted to professor with documents. Documentation such as a funeral contract or medical discharge papers MUST be provided by the student in order to be considered for a make-up exam.

### **No Extra Credit**

There is absolutely **no** extra credit. Please, do not ask. There is nothing a student can do to improve their grade except do passing work on their exams. The time to worry about grades is not at the end of the semester but at the beginning of the semester with good study habits. Students who earn failing grades will fail the course.

Do NOT ask your professor to "curve" your grade, to "give" you extra points at the end of the semester because you "need" an "A" in order to become an astronaut or to transfer to Harvard, or whatever. You get what you earn. If your final grade is an 89.4 you have a "B." If you have an 89.5 you have an "A" in the course. You should not ask because you will not be "given" any additional points. Your grade reflects what you have earned by the final grade calculation.

The grade you get is the grade you earn in this class. And I am more than willing to assist any student with his/her studies and preparations for class, exams and preparation so that he/she can earn the grade desired. But the essential burden rests with you.

### **Participation**

We will have lectures and discussions in the on-campus classroom. You are expected to participate during class discussions and when called upon by your professor. You are responsible for discussions and assignments and your exams online on Canvas. You should check your Eagle Online Canvas site at least every other day for postings and other new material. You should check the ANNOUNCEMENTS section on Canvas and your HCC Student Email Inbox every day for important messages and announcements about this class, and, in the case of HCC Email, other classes, and from HCC administration.

**IMPORTANT: SET YOUR CANVAS TO ALERT YOU TO DISCUSSIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DUE DATES, AND COURSE CONTENT.** To do that look at the vertical tool bar on the left side of your main course site page on Canvas. The top button is your "Account" (your picture is in a circle). Click "Account" then on the next page click "Notifications" then put a check mark () in order to "Notify Me Right Away" for DUE DATE, COURSE CONTENT, ANNOUNCEMENT, AND DISCUSSION. You want to set the notifications to go to both your email (and that email must be your HCC STUDENT EMAIL

## ACCOUNT and "Push Notification."

You may be asked to participate in class discussions based on topics I assign related to the unit we are studying at the time or related to a significant current event at the time. Participation in class discussion is an essential element of a college class and you will be able to be involved in virtual discussions via our course-site discussion page. I will take note of any student's complete lack of involvement in class discussions throughout the semester. Consistent and obvious lack of preparation as evidenced by lack of or poor participation in class virtual discussion may lead to a penalty of up to five (5) points on your final grade.

I will *not* penalize anyone for stating his or her opinions. If the professor states a political opinion in on-line discussion, it is only to spur discussion, not to proselytize or criticize. Your opinions are your own, are valuable and are not subject to grading by the professor. Your grasp and knowledge of the material presented, however, is graded (i.e., I don't care, particularly, what you think as long as you do think!). I do demand, however, proper decorum from my students. No "flaming," "name-calling" or other breaches of behavior. One can disagree but do so agreeably. Respect one another and respect yourself by recognizing a need to behave in an adult, responsible fashion.

I will check email and general discussion postings daily and respond within 24-36 hours or sooner to questions or problems. Feel free to ask questions about the material. I encourage you to post on the main discussion page topics and questions for fellow students and, if you wish, set up study chat rooms or meetings in person to review. It is your class and you may work together on your preparations. Study groups prove effective for many people. I leave it up to you to establish them if you wish.

### **Preparation**

This course is reading intensive and requires a great deal of self-discipline and pacing on the part of the student to succeed. I provide you with terms and review material to work with as you study and prepare for your examination. If you use that material and spend a significant amount of time with your textbooks in preparation, you should do well. *But it is up to you.*

This course is for college credit. It will be taught, tested and graded on a college level. A great deal of reading is required for this exam and self-discipline is a must. It is incumbent upon you to wisely monitor your time and schedule.

Preparation is important. Read your assignments in a timely fashion. Follow the news each day. I recommend you check [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) (The *New York Times*), [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com) (The *Washington Post*),



[www.texastribune.org](http://www.texastribune.org) (The Texas Tribune), and [www.chron.com](http://www.chron.com) (The Houston Chronicle).

## **HCC Policies**

**ADA Policy:** 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 the following Web site:  
<http://www.hccs.edu/district/students/disability-services/>

**Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972:** 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 Houston, TX 77266-7517 or [Institutional.Equity@hccs.edu](mailto:Institutional.Equity@hccs.edu)

**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. Collusion also refers to students taking online tests together. Any student who is involved in a group taking an online exam together is guilty of scholastic dishonesty and can be flunked from the class and possibly expelled.

Any suspected cheating will be reported to the Academic Dean for a full investigation. If students work on line on their exams as co-conspirators, 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 submitted to turnitin.com to check 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. Also, the state of Texas has passed a new law limiting new students (as of Fall 2007) to no more than six withdrawals throughout their academic career in obtaining a baccalaureate degree.

*The drop/withdrawal date this semester is April 9, 2019.*

**Repeating Courses:** As a result of recent Texas legislative changes 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 (formerly known as "Distance Education"):** The HCC Online Student Handbook contains policies and procedures unique to the online 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 HCC Online 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 HCC Online Student Handbook by visiting this link: <http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/distance-education/student-services/HCC-Online-Student-Handbook.pdf>

**Campus Carry:** At HCC the safety of our students, staff, and faculty is our first priority. As of August 1, 2017, Houston Community College was subject to the Texas Campus Carry Law (SB11 2015). For more information, visit the HCC Campus Carry web page: <http://www.hccs.edu/district/departments/police/campus-carry/>

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### **Prerequisite, Co-requisite for GOVT 2306**

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

### **Academic Program Learning Outcomes for GOVT 2306**

- Identify the structure, functions and nature of the institutions of government in Texas.
- Understand and describe the development, purpose and attributes of the Texas Constitution
- Identify the policy making process and comprehend the outcomes of state and local policy in Texas.

- Understand how political values and ideas are developed and expressed and the means through which one may engage in the political system.
- Comprehend how interest groups, parties and the structure of the political system influence political participation.

### **Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) for GOVT 2306**

1. Identify and describe the institutions of Texas state government.
2. Identify and evaluate information sources for political news, data, and opinion.
3. Analyze the effects of the historical, constitutional, social, political, economic, and cultural forces on politics and government.
4. Recognize and assume the responsibilities of citizenship by developing one's critical thinking skills, engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media.

### **Core Objectives**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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*This syllabus, along with its contents, dates, and requirements, are subject to change at the discretions of the professor anytime during the semester.*

*Please report any error, contradictory information, or other problems found in this syllabus to your professor so they can be corrected for the benefit of the class.*