



**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 | Lecture | #18166**  
Spring 2021 | Second Start-12 Weeks (Feb 16-May 16, 2021)  
Online Anytime, 3 Credit Hours | 48 hours per semester

**Instructor's Preferred Method of Contact**

Instructor: Jaye Ramsey Sutter, MA, JD.  
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Office Phone: 713.718.5561 Please do not call.  
Office Hours: On-Line HCC  
Office Location: Online (Campuses closed)

Please feel free to email me at [jaye.ramseysutter@hccs.edu](mailto:jaye.ramseysutter@hccs.edu) from your HCC Student Email or Canvas mail concerning any problems that you are experiencing in this course. I am available to hear your concerns and to discuss course topics. You can contact me through either Canvas or my HCC email. Keep in mind, I will not have access to my phone during the fall due to the quarantine so if you call my office line, I will not be able to return the call. I will respond to emails within 24 hours, Monday through Friday.

**What's Exciting about This Course**

Since 1953, Texas law required Texas college graduates complete six hours of instruction in both federal and Texas government. The law was passed during the McCarthy era of anti-communism as a way of promoting basic ideas of democracy. Today the basic ideas of democracy are equality no matter race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin, under the law. Democracies have fair and open government, including elections, law making, execution of those laws, interpreting those laws in the court system, and protection of civil rights and not just those rights and liberties with which we agree. Democracies make public policy that recognizes these values. Students who enroll in a survey 2306 Texas Government course are exposed the philosophies underlying the Texas Constitution, the structure of the Texas Constitution, the reasoning underlying the Texas Constitution, the concept of federalism which is part of the reason the Coronavirus-19 response has been so complex, the major public policies executed by the state government, and civil rights and liberties protected from the state government. Political participation and media are also examined. It is interesting to take a state government course in a federal

election year. Learning about democracy in such a challenging time is of paramount importance. The country is grieving the loss of life, the loss of jobs, the loss of normalcy. These are complex and chaotic times. Students who finish GOVT 2306 will have completed one of the most relevant classes during their college career. In this class, it will be made clear that government and politics are in everything that we, as citizens interact with each other, with our government leaders, and the policies our government leaders enact. This is especially the case now in Fall 2020 given how so many events either are currently ongoing or will take place this year, ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic, the protests that have stemmed from centuries of systemic racism, and the upcoming US presidential election, among others. In this survey course, we will be scratching the surface on the ins and outs of our state government. As chaotic as these major events have been and may continue to be, this is the best time to be enrolled in an introductory government class.

### **My Personal Welcome**

On behalf of the Government Department faculty, I welcome you to the study of American 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. FlexCampus 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.

**This section of GOVT 2306 is taught as an Online on a Schedule class.**

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**Jaye Ramsey Sutter, MA, JD** is celebrating thirty-one years of teaching college and university political science. Jaye began teaching professionally in 1989 as an adjunct professor at Austin Community College. Jaye has been with Houston Community College since 1992. Besides teaching federal and Texas government, Jaye also serves students as a pre-law advisor. Jaye has been teaching political science, state and federal government since 1985 as a graduate student at Baylor University. Jaye holds a Bachelor's of Arts in foreign service from Baylor University with a special focus on

American-Russian relations. She was educated in the Soviet Union in 1983 during her junior year at Baylor University. She holds a Master's of Arts in political science from Baylor University. Her Master's thesis is *Arrogance of Intervention: The United States Invasion of the Soviet Union, 1918-1920*. Jaye worked for Texas Attorney General Jim Mattox in 1988 as his legislative analyst and in the Texas Legislature with State Representative Betty Denton of Waco. She also worked on Mattox's 1990 gubernatorial campaign. Jaye then secured a Texas secondary teaching certificate in government at Southwest Texas State University, now Texas State University, in San Marcos in 1990. She moved to Borger, Texas to teach U.S History and Texas Government at Frank Phillips Junior College in 1991. While teaching, Jaye took graduate history courses at West Texas State University, now West Texas A&M University at Canyon, Texas. Jaye and her husband, John Ben Sutter, MA, JD, who have been together thirty-five years, who is a noted political operative, moved to Houston when John Ben was admitted to South Texas College of Law. John Ben has been a member of the HCCS government department since 2000. He taught for five years at Wharton County Junior College while earning his law degree. John Ben graduated from South Texas College of Law in 1995. Jaye soon followed John Ben into South Texas College of Law and earned her Doctorate of Jurisprudence in 2004. Jaye taught full time while attending law school part-time. She clerked for People for the American Way and Houston Volunteer Lawyers. Upon graduation, she worked at John O'Quinn's law firm while teaching full time for Houston Community College. Jaye has taught pre-law classes at the University of Houston in 2011-2017 in judicial behavior, women in the law, criminal justice, Supreme Court cases, political theory and the law, and the history of American jurisprudence. Jaye is a noted political commentator, television panelist, and public lecturer. Since 2016 she has been active in public political education and awareness and feminist issues in local grassroots political and social organizations. She has lectured on and written about the John F. Kennedy assassination and Lee Harvey Oswald's Russian correspondence. Jaye and her husband divide their time between two homes, one in Sugar Land, Texas and a seventy-three-year-old farmhouse in Rayville, Louisiana where she raises 114 acres of hardwood trees. [A]ny political science teaching worthy of the name must examine controversial political matters and must present unpopular views concerning those subjects. The more teaching about politics is done by teachers who feel themselves to be in highly vulnerable positions, wary of offending taxpayers, governmental officials, or corporate donors, the more likely it is that political science teaching will be done in ways that simply canvass conventional perspectives, rather than promoting wide-ranging critical reflection and deeper public understanding of important political concerns. (Roger Smith, past president of ASPA, Social Science Research Council, *Transformations of the Public Sphere*, 8, emphasis added.)

### ***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 Materials**

### **Textbook Information**

This class will be using an online textbook that is free for students. I will provide the link to the site when the semester begins on February 16, 2021, in your syllabus on CANVAS, your online coursesite. Your online textbook will be supplemented by lecture notes and review material for each of the four units that the class will be divided into. You will not need to purchase any study materials for this class. All will be provided. You may be required, per my instruction, to research some information online and you may wish to keep up with the news about Texas politics. The online Texas newspaper, *The Texas Tribune*, is free and provides substantive information about our state and politics in Texas. Go to [www.texastribune.org](http://www.texastribune.org) several times during the week each week in the semester

## **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 2305** is one of two courses designed to introduce students to the study of the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution, structure and powers of the national government, including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public policy, civil liberties and civil rights. The course goals are to develop an understanding of the institutions and political processes of the American political system; encourage critical thinking about political events; and introduce students to the discipline of Political Science and how political scientists study politics scientifically. 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 and supplemental material
- Attending class 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
- Attain a raw score of at least 50% on the departmental final exam

- 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 covering the material in the online textbook.

### **Unit 1—Test Available MARCH 5-7 (FRIDAY-SUNDAY)**

Covering:

Introduction to Texas History and Politics Chapter  
The Texas State Constitution and the American Federal System  
Local Government in Texas

### **Unit 2—Test Available MARCH 31-APRIL 2 (WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY)**

Covering:

Public Opinion  
Voting and Political Participation in Texas  
Campaign and Elections in Texas  
Political Parties in Texas Chapter  
Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas

### **Unit 3—Test Available APRIL 22-24 (THURSDAY-SATURDAY)**

The Texas Legislature  
The Executive Branch and the Office of the Governor  
Public Policy in Texas  
Financing State Government

### **Unit 4—Test Available MAY 10-12 (MONDAY-WEDNESDAY)**

The Court System in Texas  
The Criminal Justice System in Texas

## **Final Exam**

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

## **Assessment breakdown**

Your course grade will be based on four unit exams and a research paper. The lowest of the four exam grades will be dropped and the average of the three remaining test grades along with the research paper grade will determine the student's final course grade in the class.

## Additional Important Dates

- February 16—Classes Begin
- February 25—Official Day of Record



- March 15-21—Spring Break
- April 2—Spring Holiday
- April 15—Last Day to Withdraw
- May 9—Last Day of Instruction
- May 16—Semester Ends

## **Assessment breakdown**

Student grades will be based on four tests and a research paper. The lowest of the four test grade will be dropped. The paper is mandatory in accordance with department policy that 25% of a student's final grade is based on a written essay assignment. The course grade is determined by the average of the three test grades (after the lowest grade of the four tests administered is dropped) and the research paper.

## **Make-up Exams**

There are no make up exams. Students have three days to take an exam and three attempts allowed for each exam. The exam a student misses is the lowest grade and will be dropped.

## **Extra Credit**

There is no extra credit. Students use their notes on exams and have three opportunities to take exams. There is no need for extra credit with these opportunities for success.

## **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.



## **Time Commitment**

If you never taken a 12 week course before, just know they fly by with lightning speed. 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**

Your grade is based on simply averaging your grades. There are four grades—three exams and one research essay. You take four exams and we drop the lowest grade, total the remaining three exam grades and the research essay grade and divide by four. You must take all four exams, however, before the “drop the lowest grade” is effective. Grades will not be rounded up unless the average grade is .5 and above. For example an 89.5 is an A. But an 88.5 is an 89 and is a B. The instructor will not magically give a student two points to move a grade up to the next letter grade. A=90-100 B=89-80 C=79-70 D=69-60 F=59 and below  
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 80% 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](#)) 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.