**Texas Government-GOVT 2306-018**Houston Community College- West Loop Campus
Room C244
M & W 2-3:20pm
Fall 2016 CRN: 15956 **------------------------------------------------------------------------------------**

**Professor**: Jennifer “Danielle” Bachan, MPA
**Email:** Jennifer.bachan@hccs.edu (include your name and course section in all emails)
**Office Hours:** Office hours are by appointment \*\* Email for additional hours\*\* My office is located at Alief Hayes Campus room A415
**Course Length:** 16 weeks
**Course Type:** In person (face to face)

**Government Department Chair**

Evelyn Ballard **Evelyn.ballard@hccs.edu**  713-718-2490

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

**Course Description:** This course is designed to introduce students to the origin and development of the Texas constitution, structures and powers of the local and state government, election processes, policy, and political culture within Texas. This course is fully transferable to ALL Texas state colleges and universities.

**Enrollment Requirements**: Must have passed ENGL 1301 (Composition I) or co-enrolled in ENGL 1301 as a co-requisite (Exception: Dual credit students only need to be placed into college level reading and writing).

**Required Text:** Practicing Texas Politics (2015-2016 edition) Brown. This text can be found in the HCC bookstore. The MindTap access pack is optional. In addition to the text; students will engage in topics of current events and additional articles that will be emailed or handed out in class.

**Government Program Student Learning Outcomes:**

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.

**Assignment and grade breakdown:**
**Grading Scale:**
A- 90-100
B- 80-89
C- 70-79
D- 60-69
F- <60
FX- not attending

**Exams:** There will be 3 exams (consisting of 50 multiple choice questions).

**Exam 1: 15% September 15th
Exam 2: 15% October 5th
Exam 3: 15% November 2nd
Journal: 25% November 16th
Final Presentation: 20% December 5th and 7th
Attendance/participation: 10%
Extra Credit: See below regarding extra credit Total: 100%

\*\*instructor reserves the right to alter this syllabus as needed\*\*

Extra Credit:** If you choose to participate in extra credit throughout the class, you will have numerous opportunities throughout the course to submit extra credit assignments, , these are optional. They are due the NEXT class after assigned, and no late extra credit assignments will be accepted.

**Journal Articles:** Each day we meet in class Monday & Wednesday you will be required to submit a one page summary of a news article. Each article will have the link from where you obtained the story, and the date. These must be typed, stapled or bound and will be turned in on NOVEMBER 16th Each of the news stories must have actual relation to Texas Government, pop news and movie star news is not acceptable. Ie: anything from TMZ, facebook, or regarding a Kardashian would be rejected. A list of news sources you may want to refer to is posted on the learning web

\*\*\*There will be a letter grade deduction from your journal grade each day that your paper is late. Ie: One day late, grading starts at a B, two days late grading starts at a C, three days late grading starts at a D\*\*\*

**Participation:** I will begin each class with a topic of current events. Your date of presenting your news story will be handed out on the first day of class, and posted on the learning web. You will be REQUIRED to present a short summary of a Texas news story relating to our course. If you miss your day to present, you will receive a zero. These will pertain to local and state political and governmental events, happenings, or news. These should be printed out and brought to class with you, and you should have a summary prepared to present to the class. Besides having current events/news stories in class, participating in discussions is another way to earn a higher grade on participation. This participation portion is combined with attendance and makes up 10% of your final grade. (that could be a letter grade difference!)

**Contacting Students:** We will set up a remind anonymous texting program AND I ask you to follow me on Twitter, this is the ONLY way I communicate with my students for important reminders and sending classwide information. As always please feel free to email me, or for a quick response you may also tweet me, and tag my handle in your tweet.
Twitter Handle: @mrsjdnorcross or search “THEGOVTPROFESSOR”  **Attendance and Behavior:** You are expected to attend class and participate in the class discussions. As well as arrive on-time, and stay throughout the class.

\*\*\*Attendance will be taken every single class\*\*\* It is your responsibility to sign in every day
 - I will not tolerate disruptions in the class. This is not limited to: cell phone use, talking and
 sleeping. You will be asked to leave and marked absent.
 - Once again, NO CELL PHONES IN CLASS
 - When we have classroom discussions RESPECT one another or you will be asked to leave. We
 all have different opinions, and we all have different reasons for having them. Please remain
 respectful. (This includes and is not limited to: foul language, rude comments and raising your
 voice)
Students who miss class, statistically speaking do not earn good grades. Attendance and participation is 10% of your final grade, if you do not attend you cannot participate.

**Computers and Phones:** I allow computers and tablets for note taking purposes, but once this privilege is abused, I reserve the right to no longer allow computers in class. Cell phones and texting will not be tolerated in class under any conditions.  \*\*\*Use of recording devices, including camera phones and tape recorders is prohibited in classrooms, laboratories, faculty offices, and other locations where instruction, tutoring, or testing occurs. \*\*\*

**Guest Speakers:** We will have guest speakers come into our classroom to speak about their experiences linked to our course topics. When these speakers are in our classroom remember to be: RESPECTFUL. Listen to what they are saying; they are real life examples of our coursework. Many will be political leaders in our state and local areas, we will discuss before they visit details about the topics and how they are connected. Just remember to BE RESPECTFUL. You are representing yourself, your class and HCC as a whole.

**Field Trips:** These trips are meant to add to the educational premise of this course. These trips are OPTIONAL. If you choose not to go, that is ok. These are OPTIONAL. All information regarding the mini field trip will be provided in advance so you may find transportation. You are responsible for your own transportation to the field trip, if you choose to go.

**Communication:** I will communicate with you via remind, twitter and an email that you provide me with on the first class day. If you do not provide me with your preferred email; I will use your HCC email address. This is your responsibility to give me this, and check it regularly.

**Tutoring and Extra Help**: I will offer tutoring during the week days by appointment (email me to set this up). I will also offer a tutoring session that will go further in depth before each exam, and allow you to ask any questions you may have. If you attend the open tutoring session, you will be awarded extra credit for the upcoming exam.

The tutoring center is able to help with your papers. I am also here to help. On-line tutoring is available 24/7, 365 days a year. You use your student ID W number and an email address to register for this free service. <http://hccs.askonline.net/>

**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.

**HCC Course Withdraw Policy:** The State of Texas imposes penalties on students who drop courses excessively. Students are limited to no more than SIX total course withdrawals throughout their educational career at a Texas public college or university.

**Final grade of FX:** Students who stop attending class and do not withdraw themselves prior to the withdraw 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 the grade of “FX”, which is different than an “F” which is earned by poor performance. A grade of “FX” is treated exactly the same as an “F” in terms of GPA, suspension, probation and academic progress.

**Late Assignments or Exams:** There are *\*\*NO\*\** make-ups for exams or extensions for late journals/assignments!! None. Don’t ask.

**Handguns/guns/firearms on Campus**: Until August 2017, firearms are prohibited on all HCC properties (including buildings, parking lots, and grounds) Students who violate state law and/or HCC policy will be subject to disciplinary and/or legal action (see HCC Student Code of Conduct for further information)

**Scholastic Dishonesty**:  If you are caught committing scholastic dishonesty in any way, you will receive an F for the course; I do not negotiate “second chances.”  Please seek me out for help if you are having problems, rather than resort to something that will tarnish your record. **Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion.** Cheating on a test includes copying from another student's test paper during a test, using materials not authorized, collaborating with another student during a test without authority; knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an un-administered test; or bribing another person to obtain a test that is to be administered.  **“Plagiarism” means the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work for credit, especially copying from the internet without appropriate citations or not including SOURCES with the paper. The college uses professional software (Turn It In.com) specifically designed to determine plagiarized work**. In simplified terms, cheating is:

* Taking unchanged passages (or slightly edited) from another person's writing and portraying them as one's own, ***INCLUDING copying passages from the Internet. This also includes not listing SOURCES or references as research is undertaken ;***
* Submitting a paper that includes paraphrases of another person's writing without giving credit;
* Having someone else write your paper for you;
* Copying or using another person's work during in-class writing or testing;
* The unauthorized use of electronic devices during in-class writing or testing.  Keep in mind also that whether you are cheating or not, not following testing or writing rules properly, such as communicating with your neighbor or using a cell phone during a test will be cheating.

**Government Program Student Learning Outcomes:**1. Identify and describe the institutions of American national government. GOVT 2302/2305
2. Identify and describe the institutions of the State of Texas government. GOVT 2302/2306
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

**Basic Intellectual Competencies in the HCC Core Curriculum:**

Essential to the learning process in any discipline are six basic intellectual competencies. These competencies should inform the components of the HCC Core Curriculum and should be woven into instructional practices throughout each course. Although certain courses address specific competencies, such as writing or speaking, the competencies of critical thinking or computer literacy may be included as specific objectives in many different courses.

**Reading**: Reading material at the college level means having the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials, including books, articles, and documents.

**Writing**: Writing at the college level means having the ability to produce clear, correct, and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion, and audience. In addition to knowing correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation, students should also become familiar with the writing process, including how to discover a topic, how to develop and organize it, and how to phrase it effectively for their audience. These abilities are acquired through practice and reflection.

**Speaking**: Effective speaking is the ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent, and

persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience.

**Listening**: Listening at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication.

**Critical Thinking**: Critical thinking embraces methods for applying both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies. Problem solving is one of the applications of critical thinking used to address an identified task.

**Computer Literacy Requirements**: Computer literacy at the college level means having the ability to use computer-based technology in communicating, solving problems, and acquiring information. Core-educated students should have an understanding of the limits, problems, and possibilities associated with the use of technology and should have the tools necessary to evaluate and learn new technologies as they become available

**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.

**Repeating Courses:**

As a result of recent 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.