

Texas Government-GOVT 2306- 0099
Houston Community College- Northline
9:30-11:00am
Room 230
Spring 2015 CRN 50928

Professor: Jennifer “Danielle” Bachan, MPA

Phone: 713-718-8056

Email: Jennifer.bachan@hccs.edu (include your name and course section in all emails)

Office Hours: Monday- Thursday: 11:30-12:30

** Email for additional hours if needed**

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.

Required Text: Brown, Lyle, Joyce, Langenegger, Practicing Texas Politics (2013-2014 Edition). Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2014.

This text can be found in the HCC bookstore and online.

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:

1. Identify and describe the institutions of American national government. GOVT 2305
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

Assignment and grade breakdown:

Exams: There will be 4 exams that includes the final (consisting of 50 multiple choice questions)

Exam 1: Feb 11 worth 15%

Exam 2: March 11 worth 15%

Exam 3: April 15 worth 15%

Exam 4: May 13 worth 15%

Paper: Topic due March 23

Paper due April 15

worth 25%

Attendance/participation: 15%

Extra Credit: See below regarding extra credit

Total: 100%

Grading Scale:

A- 90-100

B- 80-89

C- 70-79

D- 60-69

F- <60

FX- not attending

Extra Credit: If you choose to speak up and talk about your current event topic you found, at the start of the class meeting, I will reward you with extra credit points that go on to the next exam grade. I.e: If you have an 87 at the end of the course, doing 3 of these will bump you up to an A on that exam.

Final Paper: You will learn of multiple ways you can personally engage yourself in Texas politics. We each have a topic that is of interest to us, from current events, new legislation, topics from the book... the possibilities to link ourselves to Texas government is endless!

Your paper will be due Wednesday April 22nd. Once you find a course topic or current event that you have a strong interest in (that pertains to Texas Government or Texas political current events), you will write a proposal to me and once approved you will write your paper. Topics are due at the latest, March 23rd. This paper makes up 25% of your final grade. The additional handout regarding your final paper and proposals will be handed out in class, and found on the learning web. ***There will be a 10% deduction from your final paper grade each day that your proposal is late. ***

Participation: I will begin each class with a topic of current events. These will pertain to local and state political and governmental events, happenings, or news. You will be expected to journal about one or two of these events that occurred since our last class. I have created a document regarding where you may look to find these news topics. Your journal will be typed, and printed out, handed in and given to me on the class meeting before the final exam (May 11th) this is also the day we will review for the final. This participation portion is combined with attendance and makes up 15% of your final grade.

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.

- 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.

- 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)

You are allowed FOUR absences with no questions asked throughout the 16-week semester. This is NOT recommended. Students who miss class, statistically speaking do not earn good grades.

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.

Communication: I will communicate with you via 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 in my office hours (Monday thru Thursday 11:30-12:30) and 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 and journal entries. 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 Statement: Any student with a documented disability who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the Ability Services Office at the beginning of the semester. Faculty is authorized to provide only the accommodations requested at the Ability Services Office. (Northeast contact: 713.718.8322 Tamara Petty)

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 papers/assignments!!

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.

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: 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

Students enrolled in GOVT 2305 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.

Class Schedule:

*** The professor reserves the right to alter this schedule/syllabus at any time***

Mon 1/19: **Martin Luther King Day – No class**

Wed 1/21: Introduction/ Syllabus review

Mon 1/26: Chapter 1 Environment of Texas Politics

Wed 1/28: Chapter 1 Environment of Texas Politics

Mon 2/2: Chapter 2 Federalism

Wed 2/4: Chapter 2 Texas Constitution

Mon 2/9: GUEST SPEAKER and Exam review

Wed 2/11: **EXAM #1**

Mon 2/16: **NO CLASS- PRESIDENTS DAY**

Wed 2/18: Chapter 3 Local Governments

Mon 2/23: Chapter 4 Political Parties

Wed 2/25: Chapter 4 Political Parties

Mon 3/2: Chapter 5 Campaigns

Wed 3/4 : Chapter 5 Elections

Mon 3/9 GUEST SPEAKER and Exam Review

Wed 3/11: **Exam #2**

SPRING BREAK

Mon 3/23: Chapter 7 Legislature and **PAPER TOPICS DUE!**

****3/24: Final drop date****

Wed 3/25: Chapter 7 Legislature

Mon 3/30: Chapter 8 Executive

Wed 4/1: Chapter 8 Executive

Mon 4/6: Chapter 10 Laws and Courts

Wed 4/8: Chapter 10 Courts and Justices

Mon 4/13: GUEST SPEAKER and Test review

Wed 4/15: **Exam #3**

Mon 4/20: Chapter 9 Public Policy

Wed 4/22: Chapter 9 Public Administration and **PAPER IS DUE!**

Mon 4/27: Chapter 6 Interest Groups

Wed 4/29: Chapter 6 Interest Groups

Mon 5/4: Chapter 11 Fiscal Policy

Wed 5/6: Chapter 11 Fiscal Policy and Paper Grades Returned

Mon 5/11: Final Exam Review and **Current events Journal DUE!**

Wed 5/13: FINAL EXAM