



**Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Government Department**

<https://www.hccs.edu/programs/areas-of-study/social--behavioral-sciences/government/>

GOVT 2306: Texas Government | Lecture | 160058

Fall 2019 | 12 Weeks Sep 23 - Dec 15, 2019

Online

Angela Morales Building

3 Credit Hours | 48 hours per semester

Instructor Contact Information

Instructor: John M. Osterman Jr.	Office Phone: 713-202-4114
Office: A. Morales @ SE College	Office Hours: T/Th 6:30-7:00 pm or M/W 7:30-8:00 am and by Appt.
HCC Email: john.osterman@hccs.edu	Office Location: A. Morales, classroom

Please feel free to contact me concerning any problems that you are experiencing in this course. Your performance in my class is very important to me. I am available to hear the concerns and just to discuss course topics.

Instructor's Preferred Method of Contact

You can contact me through either my HCC email (preferred method of contact) or Canvas. Emails sent from non-HCC accounts (i.e. gmail, yahoo, etc) will not receive a response.

I will respond to emails within 24 hours Monday through Friday; expect a reply to emails sent over the weekend by Monday morning.

What's Exciting About This Course

Students who finish GOVT 2306 will have completed one of the most important classes taken during their college career. In these classes, it should be made clear that government and politics are in EVERYTHING that we, as citizens do and interact with, particularly when it comes to ensuring our liberty and our security. These roles, while equally important, also are in conflict with each other. Laws that promote liberty may compromise security and vice versa. Which state and/or local institutions come up with these practices and enforce them? How do they come up with these practices? What role do we, as Texas residents, play in promoting (or even inhibiting) liberty and/or security and, more generally, influence the actions of state/local governments? This will be a large theme in my course.

My Personal Welcome

On behalf of the Government Department faculty, I welcome you to the study of Federal Government at Houston Community College. This is a FULLY online course. You will not need to report to a campus to satisfy any of the course requirements. This course is designed for students who find it difficult to complete the required work in a traditional in-person format.

While the amount of material covered in online courses should not be significantly different (let alone more difficult) than material covered in traditional in-class courses, online courses require a certain level of self-motivation not typically called upon in traditional courses. As such, online students will need to be much more disciplined in dedicated in their studies to excel in computer based classes such as this one.

To meet the expectations placed in this course, students are required to do several things.

- First, students should complete assigned chapter readings in the textbook, which are provided in the course schedule found at the end of the syllabus.
- Second, students should also take advantage of the Eagle Online modules that correspond with the assigned readings. In addition, ancillary material (i.e. practice questions, textbook-based activities, etc.)
- Third, I also will make class announcements, which will often address questions some of you might have about your status in the class or the general progress of the overall course. These announcements also serve as reminders of upcoming deadlines of assignments, exams, etc. While students should not be actively anticipating an announcement by a certain day and time of the week, expect there to be at least one announcement per week.

Prerequisites and/or Co-Requisites

GOVT 2306 requires college-level reading and writing skills. The minimum requirement for enrollment in GOVT 2306 includes 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](#).

Canvas Learning Management System

This section of GOVT 2306 will use [Canvas \(https://eagleonline.hccs.edu\)](https://eagleonline.hccs.edu) extensively for making instructional material available and for communication with students.

HCCS Open Lab locations may be used to access the Internet and Canvas. **USE [FIREFOX](#) OR [CHROME](#) AS THE INTERNET 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/>

Scoring Rubrics, Sample Assignments, etc.

Look in Canvas for the scoring rubrics for assignments, samples of class assignments, and other information to assist you in the course. <https://eagleonline.hccs.edu/login/ldap>

Instructional Materials

Textbook Information

Texas Government panOpen Courseware:

This class will use an interactive version of the Texas Government courseware which has been newly developed which includes "Check Your Understanding" activities having unlimited attempts and end of chapter quizzes have 2 attempts.

The digital, interactive, eBook contains the textbook material for the course.

Access Instructions

To access the courseware simply click the panOpen Courseware link in the class module and click the "Access Code" button. It will not prompt you to enter any code. After this simply click that link to log into the digital textbook.

Other Instructional Resources

The following link will take you to a recommended resource:

American & Texas Government Essentials

Author(s): John Osterman Edition: 6 Copyright: 2018

<https://he.kendallhunt.com/product/american-texas-government-essentials-0>

Publisher's Digital Workbook

See the section on textbook information.

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 2306 is one of two courses designed to introduce students to the study of 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. This particular survey of the Texas state system of government includes the fundamental principles of political science, the study of the Texas state constitution, the state legislative, executive and judicial branches, local governments, methods of participation, and analysis of contemporary policies. 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 completion of this course, the student will be able to:

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 2306 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
- Attending class in person and/or 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
- Be aware of and comply with academic honesty policies in the [HCCS Student Handbook](#)

Assignments, Exams, and Activities

Written Assignment

You will answer 25 questions from American and Texas Government Essentials. The questions will be chosen by me at various points throughout the semester. Announcements will be made indicating which questions you are to answer. Each question is worth four points. All questions assigned must be answered. Any question not answered will result in a grade of zero. This exercise will occur during the semester and will be unannounced. The aggregate of the assignments constitute one test grade or a maximum of 100 points which will be averaged with your other assignments. I may ask you to type your assignments in which case you must use 12 point font size, Times New Roman font, and normal style. The paragraphs must be double spaced. Use MLA style guidelines for all other aspects of the paper. You will be graded in part on your ability to convey your understanding of the material. No late assignments will be accepted. You will receive a zero for an assignment if you do not turn it in during class. This collective assignment is worth 25 percent of your grade.

Exams

There will be four (4) semester exams. Each semester exam will consist of (50) multiple choice questions worth a total of 100 points per exam. The exam questions will be drawn from the class lectures, class discussions, group projects, reading assignments (textbook and additional readings), written assignments and computer assignments.

You are responsible for all the material on the tentative schedule. Do not ask me to tell you what is on the test or whether something is important. An important part of being a successful student is acquiring a large amount of information, ascertaining the significance of that information and assimilating that information in a way that is useful and productive.

Missing Exams: Any missed exam can be made up on the last day of class with a written essay exam covering the same material that you missed. Each exam is worth 15 percent of your grade.

Additional guidelines pertaining to the exam are as follows:

1. *Students are expected to arrive on time at the beginning of class on the day of the exam with their own no. 2 pencil and Scantron Form 882.*
2. *Students will have the entire allotted time (50 minutes) to complete each exam. To take full advantage of the time allotted, be sure to arrive about 5 minutes BEFORE the official class time to find a seat and make yourself as comfortable as you can appropriately be in a classroom setting. Students who are late to an exam will have only the remaining time left after arriving.*
3. *Students will NOT be permitted to take any breaks at any point during an exam; make sure that all bodily needs have been met and all life distractions are taken care of PRIOR to taking the exam or can be taken care of AFTER turning in that exam. Any and all "emergencies" a student absolutely has to be addressed during the exam WILL be considered a submission of that exam.*
4. *Students should also power off all mobile devices in their possession and keep them off throughout the duration of the exam. Mobile devices that go off during the exam may also be seen as a submission.*
5. *Important Note: Exams should not be difficult with adequate preparation in advance (i.e. attend every class, take thorough notes, and keep up with the assigned readings, etc.).*

Students SHOULD NOT take any breaks during the middle of the exam; doing so will count against the minutes remaining to complete the exam as the clock will continue to tick. As such, before starting the exam, make sure that all bodily needs have been met and that you are in a distraction-limited environment to insure exam completion within the allotted time.

All tests are intended to be closed-note exams. Before starting an exam, be sure to put away all notes, your textbook and other study material that you may have used in preparation for the exam. Strong students who have kept up with all of the course specifics should realize that any use of open material during the exam will be unnecessary if you have the appropriate preparation beforehand.

Students should not expect to know their grade on any exam until sometime AFTER the exam period closes. No exam will EVER be available for public viewing to preserve the exam's integrity. Students who wish to review the exam questions may only do so through two ways:

- 1) By setting up an appointment to meet with me in person on-site at an HCC Campus during a mutually convenient time.
- 2) By setting up a phone appointment through the office number I have provided above (Leave a message).

Final Exam

The final exam will be taken during the final exam period and will consist of one-hundred (100) questions from the material covered during the semester. Again, the questions will be drawn from the class lectures, class discussions, group projects, reading assignments (textbook and additional readings), written assignments and computer exercises.

The final exam is worth one-hundred (100) points. The final exam is worth 15 percent of your grad. The final exam is **mandatory** and may not be dropped.

Grading Formula

Your grade will be determined by adding all of your semester exam grades, the writing assignments plus the grade from the comprehensive final exam and dividing by six.

For example:

EXAM I	$90 \times .15 = 13.5$
EXAM II	$80 \times .15 = 12$
EXAM III	$90 \times .15 = 13.5$
EXAM IV	$90 \times .15 = 13.5$
Writing Assignment	$75 \times .25 = 18.75$
<u>FINAL EXAM</u>	$90 \times .15 = 13.5$
TOTAL	$= 84.75$

Directions for Exams and essays:

- Arrive on time and turn in your assignments at the beginning of class.
- Clear everything off your desk, except for a pencil.
- No talking while the exam is underway; keep eyes on own paper.
- Do not wrinkle your scantron.
- Erase completely; no smudges on the scantron.

Grading Scale

90-100% = A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C
60-69% = D
less than 60% = F

Instructor Grading Criteria

Each exam is worth 15 percent of your grade. For example, if you score 100 on an exam and multiply it by 0.15 you earned 15 points toward your total grade. Your total paper/written assignment grade is worth 25 percent of your grade. For example, if you earned 100 points on your written assignment, your grade is calculated by multiplying 0.25 times 100 to get 25 points toward your grade.

Incomplete Policy:

In order to receive a grade of Incomplete ("I"), a student must have a legitimate non-academic reason backed with appropriate documentation and have completed at least 85% of the required work in the course. In all cases, the instructor reserves the right to decline a student's request to receive a grade of Incomplete.

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 85% 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.

HCC Grading Scale can be found on this site under Academic Information:
<http://www.hccs.edu/resources-for/current-students/student-handbook/>

Course Calendar

CLASS DATE	READING ASSIGNMENT	Reference Chapter
9/23	Syllabus and Course Expectations	
	The origin and development of constitutional democracy in the Texas.	1, 2
9/30	Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.	2
10/7	Exam 1 and Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.	
10/14	Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.	2
10/14	Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the Texas government.	3, 4, 5
10/21	Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the Texas government.	
10/28	Exam 2 and Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.	14, 9, 10
11/01	Last Day to Withdraw	
11/4	Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.	14, 9, 10
11/11	Analyze the state and local election process.	7, 8
11/18	Exam 3	
11/25	Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens	2, 12
12/2	Analyze issues and policies in Texas politics.	11, 13
WED 12/4	Exam 4 and Make up exams	
12/11	Final Exam	8:00 am

Other important dates:

Last day to withdraw with a "W" 11/01/19

Thanksgiving Holiday: 11/28/19

Syllabus Modifications

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus at any time during the semester and will promptly notify students in writing, typically by e-mail, of any such changes.

Instructor's Practices and Procedures

Missed Assignments

Concerning tests, I STRONGLY recommend that you make yourself available for the exam date. However, if you have to miss either the first, second, or third exam for any reason, you may take a makeup exam scheduled towards the end of the semester (typically on the last day of class when you take Exam 4). However, keep in mind that I do reserve the right to allow making up a missed exam well before the end of the semester with prior my knowledge of a scheduling conflict and with legitimate documentation of such conflict.

Students who miss Exams 1, 2, and 3 will be allowed to make up only one of the three exams.

While the material covered in the makeup exam is similar to material covered in the original exams, students typically do not score as high on the makeup.

Exam 4 is also scheduled during the last week of this term. STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO MAKE UP THE Fourth EXAM at that time as the makeup exam date is scheduled EITHER during the same week Exam 4 is scheduled OR in the 1-2 weeks prior (*check schedule for exact dates*). Students who miss the Fourth exam will have VERY limited, if any opportunities to makeup Exam 4 given the test's proximity towards the end of the semester. Simply put, making up Exam 4 will be VERY inconveniencing administratively for the student.

There will be NO make-up opportunities to any missed written assignments. Expect the deadlines to submit these assignments to be hard, firm deadlines. Students are also encouraged to start early on these assignments to avoid any potential problems and/or difficulties that may surface as the respective deadlines approach

Academic Integrity

Scholastic Dishonesty will result in a referral to the Dean of Student Services.

Houston Community College is committed to a high standard of academic integrity in the academic community. In becoming part of the academic community, students are responsible for honesty and independent effort. Examples of these violations include, but are not limited to, the following: Plagiarizing written work or projects, cheating on exams or assignments, collusion on an exam or project, and misrepresentation of credentials or prerequisites when registering for a course.

Simply put, violations of academic integrity will NOT be tolerated. At a minimum, a grade of "0" will be recorded on the assignment or exam in question. Additional sanctions may include but are not necessarily limited to the following: Being assigned an "F" for the course, being withdrawn from the course, or being expelled from the College.

All faculty at HCC are required to document these violations in Maxient, a system used to report any student behavior that constitutes a violation of academic integrity, triggering involvement from other appropriate departments.

Here's the link to the HCC information about academic integrity (Scholastic Dishonesty and Violation of Academic Scholastic Dishonesty and Grievance):

<http://www.hccs.edu/about-hcc/procedures/student-rights-policies--procedures/student-procedures/>

Attendance Procedures

Attendance is required and is taken daily (or if an online class is monitored regularly). Students who do not attend and actively participate in class will be marked as "never attended" on the official census roster, triggering an administrative withdrawal from the course. Students who are absent and/or who are not current with the required coursework will receive an Early Alert email from their professor and from an HCC adviser. The Early Alert system is designed to help students who may be facing challenges that impact their ability to succeed in class.

Online students are expected to log into their courses in Eagle Online, know the rules and expectations in the course, keep up with announcements, and meet assignment deadlines. Your course grade WILL be a reflection of your level of participation in the course.

Unless stated otherwise, the deadlines for all online assignments (i.e. exams, discussions, and chapter activities) are at 11:59pm central time. My recommendation: Stay AT LEAST a day or two ahead of the deadlines in case something goes wrong (technical/computer difficulties, the death of a close relative, etc.) as deadlines for all respective assignments are hard, firm, and assignments will NOT be re-opened.

Student Conduct

Students will be required to participate in discussion activities and interact with fellow classmates in class and/or in an online setting. Any and all communication among class participants must be civil and respectful. HCC Government Department faculty are required to document any violations of student conduct by completing a Maxient report. An HCC counselor will contact the student named in the Maxient report to discuss and resolve the issue it identifies.

Instructor's Course-Specific Information

I will make an effort to ensure that all grades will be returned to students in a timely manner.

While I will be happy to discuss any questions and concerns with students especially on graded written work, please allow for AT LEAST a 24 hour "cooling" period after receiving your grade. Communication opportunities are often lost without such a period. Patience is virtue.

Electronic Devices

I don't expect you to use your electronic devices in class in any way.

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

EGLS³

The EGLS³ ([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
<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
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.