



American Government Course Syllabus

GOVT 2305

CRN 18188

Spring 2017 Regular Term

January 17-May 14, 2017

GOVT 2305

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Spring 2017 Semester, CRN 18188

Eagle Online via Canvas

<https://eagleonline.hccs.edu>

3 Semester Credit Hours

48 Contact Hours

Regular Term, 16 Weeks

Internet Distance Education

Instructor's Name

Professor John Ben Sutter, J.D.

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Government Department Chair

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713-718-2490

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

Office and Phone

Fraga Campus
Faculty Office Suite
713.718.7112

Office Hours

Monday, 1:30-6:30 p.m.

GOVT 2305 Course Description

U.S.--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.

Course Calendar

READING AND TEST SCHEDULE

(All tests are online on Canvas):

Unit 1: American Democracy, Constitutionalism, and Federalism

UNIT 1 EXAM AVAILABLE FEBRUARY 7-8, TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY

Textbook Readings:

Chapter 1: Gateways to American Democracy

Chapter 2: The Constitution

The Constitution of the United States (p. 582)

Chapter 3: Federalism

Unit 2: Political Participation

UNIT 2 EXAM AVAILABLE MARCH 20-21, MONDAY-TUESDAY

Textbook Readings:

Chapter 6: Public Opinion

Chapter 7: The News and Social Media

Chapter 8: Interest Groups

Chapter 7: Political Parties

Chapter 8: Elections and Campaigns

Chapter 11: Voting and Participation

Unit 3: The Legislative and Executive Branches of the Federal Government

UNIT 3 EXAM AVAILABLE APRIL 16-17, MONDAY-TUESDAY

Textbook Readings:

Chapter 12: Congress

Chapter 13: The Presidency

Chapter 14: The Bureaucracy

Chapter 16: Economic, Domestic, and Foreign Policy

Unit Three Exam Nov 9-11, Wednesday-Friday

Unit 4: The Judicial Branch of the Federal Government, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

UNIT 4 EXAM FOUR AVAILABLE MAY 8-9, MONDAY-TUESDAY

Textbook Readings:

Chapter 15: The Judiciary

Chapter 4: Civil Liberties

Chapter 5: Civil Rights

Mandatory Writing Assignment: Due MAY 1, Tuesday

Topic and instructions will be posted mid-way through the semester

Other Important Dates

- Classes Begin: January 17
- Official Day of Record (*Students who have not logged into the course site at Eagle Online by the close of business this date will be DROPPED from the class by the HCC registrar*): February 1
- Presidents' Day: February 20
- Spring Break: March 13-19
- Last day for administrative/student course withdrawal: April 3
- Semester Ends: May 14

Instructional Materials

Your required textbook for your American government, Govt2305, class is **Gateways to Democracy: An Introduction to American Government** by Geer, Schiller, Herrera, and Segal (usually referred to simple as “Geer” for convenience), the **Third Edition**. This book has **16 chapters**. Make sure when you buy the Geer textbook that it has 16 chapters. That is the edition from which your reading assignments and exams will originate. Any other reading materials will be provided by your professor online. (Do **NOT** purchase **Gateways to Democracy: Essentials**...that is NOT your required textbook!)

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

All Exams Are Online

All exams are administered on Canvas anywhere a student has access to the Internet. If an internet service provider kicks a student off, there is nothing the Instructor can do to reopen the exam. If a computer “freezes” the instructor will not open an exam. If a student has technical problems while taking an exam, they must contact HCC Tech Support and provide the instructor with the documentation or ticket. Then and only then can an exam be reopened if indeed HCC tech support reporters that the problem is the college system. No exams will be reopened over computer or ISP problems.

Grading Scale

90-100%= A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

less than 60% = F

[Worksheet of Terms and Concepts for Each Unit Examination](#)

A “work sheet of terms and concepts” will be posted on our Eagle Online Canvas course-site well prior to each of the unit examinations. You can prepare your review for the exam using your textbook and with materials I provide you on the course-site, providing definitions, explanations, analysis of the terms on the work sheet. I will take your questions via email about the material up until the night before the exam period. Writing (typing) out the terms and studying your completed work sheet of terms is crucial to your success in the class. Read your assignments from the textbook carefully. Read and study any addition lecture notes or similar material that I post for you. You will be responsible for that posted material as well as the textbook material.

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

Carefully complete your work sheet of terms, study what is now your review sheet, and then use it sparingly when taking your test. Do all this and you’ll do well in this class.

Fully and comprehensively working up your work sheet of terms for each unit is the major portion of your work in the course. You have four tests and a writing assignment. Those are the only graded assignments in the course. To effectively prepare for those exams you need to focus heavily on preparing the work sheet of terms completely and carefully. It will take a lot of time and effort. This is why I don’t give you a bunch of “make-work” little assignments like you had in high school. Focus on your reading, making your notes, and studying those completed notes.

Participation

You should check your Eagle Online Canvas site at least every other day for postings and other new material. You should check your HCC Student Email Inbox every day for messages and announcements about this class, other classes, and from HCC.

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

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

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

Preparation

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

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

Preparation is important. Read your assignments in a timely fashion. Follow the news each day. I recommend you check www.nytimes.com (The *New York Times*), www.washingtonpost.com (The *Washington Post*) and www.chron.com (The *Houston Chronicle*) on a daily basis. I will on occasion test on current events on the exams.

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

HCC Policies

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, 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.

Student Rights and Responsibilities: It is important that every student understands and conforms to respectful behavior while at HCC. Sexual misconduct is not condoned and will be addressed promptly. Know your rights and how to avoid these difficult situations. Log in to www.edurisksolutions.org Sign in using your HCC student e-mail account, then go to the button at the top right that says **Login** and enter your student number.

If a student is sexually assaulted on or off campus, students are encouraged to call an ambulance and go to the hospital. Seek emergency help immediately. It is strictly the students' decision to pursue legal action or prosecution after the student has had an opportunity to first attend to their medical needs. Students should report any criminal activity to campus and other law enforcement officials immediately.

Students and instructors have a right to work and study in a safe environment free from intimidation and bullying. Any such activity will not be tolerated. Any threatening email or confrontational encounters directed at the instructor will be reported to the police.

Scholastic Dishonesty: HCCS students are responsible for conducting themselves with honor and integrity in fulfilling course requirements. Penalties and/or disciplinary proceedings may be initiated by HCC System officials against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty.

"Scholastic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating on a test includes but is not limited to: Copying from another student's test paper; using unauthorized materials during a test, unauthorized collaboration with another student during a test; knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of a test; and bribing another person to obtain a copy of a test. Plagiarism includes the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work. Collusion includes the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work.

Any suspected cheating will be reported to the Academic Dean for a full investigation. If students work on line on their exams as co-conspirators, both students will receive a zero and it will not be dropped. Computer software will detect students working from the same ISP at the same time and unusually short log in durations during exams will be suspect and students will be interviewed as to why it took them such a short time to complete a complex exam. They will be reported to the Academic Dean. All written work will be submitted to the HCC <http://hccs.askonline.net> before it is submitted for a grade. Student should submit their written work to the Writing Center for help. Papers will be submitted to turnitin.com to check for plagiarism. Any plagiarism is cheating and students will be reported to the academic dean. Plagiarized papers will be given a zero and that zero is not dropped. Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Withdrawals: Students who take a course for the third time or more must now pay significant tuition/fee increases at HCC and other Texas public colleges and universities. At HCC, it is an additional \$50 per credit hour. If you are considering course withdrawal because you are not earning passing grades, confer with your instructor/ counselor as early as possible about your study habits, reading and writing homework, test-taking skills, attendance, course participation, and opportunities for tutoring or other assistance that might be available. Also, the state of Texas has passed a new law limiting new students (as of Fall 2007) to no more than six withdrawals throughout their academic career in obtaining a baccalaureate degree.
The drop/withdrawal date this semester is April 3.

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.

HCC Student Handbook: _Please note that it is each student's responsibility to read and be familiar with the HCC Student Handbook. Please see:
<http://central.hccs.edu/students/student-handbook/>

Distance Education (Eagle Online): The Distance Education Student Handbook contains policies and procedures unique to the DE student. Students should have reviewed the handbook as part of the mandatory orientation. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the handbook's contents. The handbook contains valuable information, answers, and resources, such as DE contacts, policies and procedures (how to drop, attendance requirements, etc.), student services (ADA, financial aid, degree planning, etc.), course information, testing procedures, technical support, and academic calendars. Refer to the DE Student Handbook by visiting this link:

[http://de.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/distance-education/student-services/pdf/2015-HCC-DE-Student-Handbook-%28Revised-5 28 15%29 will.pdf](http://de.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/distance-education/student-services/pdf/2015-HCC-DE-Student-Handbook-%28Revised-5%2015%29-will.pdf)

Additional Course Information

Prerequisite, Co-requisite for GOVT 2305: Must have passed or co-enrolled in English 1301 (Composition I) as a co-requisite.

Academic Program Learning Outcomes for GOVT 2305:

- Identify the structure, functions and nature of the institutions of the American national government.
- Understand and describe the development, purpose and attributes of the US Constitution
- Identify the policy making process and comprehend the outcomes of foreign and domestic policy in the United States.
- Understand how political values and ideas are developed and expressed and the means through which one may engage in the political system.
- Comprehend how media, interest groups, parties and the structure of the political system influence political participation.
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Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) for GOVT 2305:

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

Core Objectives: The Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) mandates that the core curriculum must ensure that students will develop the essential knowledge and

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

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

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

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

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

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

<p>This syllabus and its contents, dates, and requirements is subject to change at the discretion of the professor anytime during the semester.</p>
