**HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**

**WEST LOOP CAMPUS** **SPRING 2016**

**GOVERNMENT 2306: TEXAS GOVERNMENT**

**Course**: Texas Government **Section**: CRN 92451/92449

**Instructor**: Kwame Acheampong **Room**: Rm. C242

**Time**: Mon/Wed: 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM**/**11 AM – 12:30 PM

**e-mail**: kwame.acheampong@hccs.edu

**Office Hours:** Before and after class or by appointment

**Depart. Information: Evelyn Ballard  
Chair – Government Department**

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**713-718-2490**

**Course Description.** Government 2306 is designed to introduce students to the politics of Texas government in the context of federal structure of American government. This course studies the origin and development of the Texas Constitution. It describes state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.

It further discusses separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas. Students would acquire knowledge about the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government. They would learn the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas. Finally, students would learn and analyze the state and local election process, identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens as relate to issues, policies and political culture of Texas. It is important to note that this course is fully transferable to all Texas State colleges and universities.

**Course Pre-requisites:** Must have passed or co-enrolled in English 1301 (Composition I) as a co-requisite.

**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.

**Course Learning Outcomes**: Upon successful completion of this course, each student will be able to:

1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the State of Texas.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of Texas Government in the context of US federal character of government.

3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.

4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government thus, citizens’ legislature, plural executive and elected judicial branch.

5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.

6. Analyze the election process.

7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens

8. Analyze finance and fiscal policy of Texas government.

**Course Requirements:**

Four Exams: 60% of course grade equivalent of 400 points 100 points each

First Examination 15% of the course grade

Second First Examination 15% of the course grade

Third First Examination 15% of the course grade

Final Examination 15% of the course grade

Final exams will be comprehensive but the detail of the exam will be discussed in class.

One Essay (in class/take home) 15% of the course grade

*Students will be required to select one essay topic from four assigned topics* (100 points)

Reading assignments & 15% of the course grade (100 points)

Text Summary Presentation

*Students will be required to read and analyze the chapter assigned in not more than two pages typed-written for presentation. Enough copies must be prepared for each student in the class.*

Five quizzes (20 questions for each quiz) 10% of the course grade (100 points)

**Make-up Policy**. The general make-up for work missed is the following:

Exams: Make-up is possible only with written legitimate excuse. The written excuse, with appropriate document, must be submitted within one week of the missed exam day. Failure to do so mean you have forfeited your opportunity to take the make-up exam.

Quizzes & assigned

chapter presentation: No make-up is possible. Students are encouraged to attend class to participate.

Make it a habit to read daily newspapers, notable periodicals/magazines. In addition, students must take some time to watch and listen to major TV Networks news for information and events for enrichment and understanding of government and politics.

**Grading Scale**. All grades will be scored 0 - 100. The final percentage value resulting from the sum of the above components will be converted into letter grades according to the following scale:

A = 90 - 100% B = 80 - 89% C = 70 - 79% D = 60 - 69% F = Below 59% and below.

FX = a failing grade with less than 70% of the work submitted.

**Electronic Devices in the Classroom.** Please note that the use of cell phones and other electronic communication devices are not permitted. The use of computers (laptops, tablets, etc) is allowed only for the purpose of expediting your taking of notes during the class.

**EGLS3 –** Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System. At HCC, thoughtful feedback from student helps improve teaching and learning. Hence students are required to answer a short online survey of research-based questions related to instruction by their professors. At a designated time during the end of the semester, students are required to take the survey. The anonymous results of the survey will bemade available to your professors and division chairs for continual improvement of instruction**.**

**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.edurisksoluations.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.

**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.

**Attendance Policy**: You should attend class regularly. It is my experience that students with good attendance records usually do well in the course. The college provides that students MAY be dropped after missing more than six hours of class time. I do not wish to drop anyone who is making a good faith effort to succeed in the course. If it appears to me, however, that you have stopped attending, I will drop you because the alternative is to give you an F. Please keep me informed if you are having problems that are affecting your attendance and I will do my best to work with you. If you decide you must drop the course, please fill out the appropriate form in the college office on campus. Instructors are not allowed to withdraw students with a grade of “W” on the final grade sheet. You must also drop the course by the specified withdrawal deadline.

**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 **Tuesday, April 5, 2016**.

**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/

**Course Textbook(s) and Readings.**

The text for the course is:

Brown, **Lyle C., Langenegger, Joyce A., Garcia, Sonia R., Biles, Robert E.:** *Practicing Texas Politics, 2015 – 2016 Edition,* with Mindtap Access Code that comes with the textbook or bought online. To register for this course use **MTPN-414P-GSBV**

An e-book version of the textbook can be purchased online for significantly less than the bookstore price. Visit http//www.cengagebrain.com.

Readings and relevant topics from recommended daily newspapers and notable periodicals will be announced in class to enrich students’ understanding of American Government**.**

**Course Topics and Class Schedule**

Date Topics and Readings (if any)

**Class Schedule**

1. **Foundation of Texas Politics**

January 20 Course Overview and discussion on Chapter 1:The Environment of Texas Politics. This chapter will also discuss the political culture of Texas *vis-à-vis* Prof. Daniel Elazar.

January 25- 27 Chapter 2: Federalism and the Texas Constitution

February 1-3 Chapter 3: Local Governments

February 8 FIRST EXAMINATION

1. **Political Behavior**

February 15-17 Chapter 4: Texas Political Parties

February 29-March 2 Chapter 5: Campaign and Elections

March 7 Chapter 7: The Politics of Interest Groups

March 9 SECOND EXAMINATION

***March 14 – 18 Spring Break***

1. **Political Institutions**

March 21-23 Chapter 8: The Legislative Branch (Citizens’ Legislature)

March 28-30 Chapter 9: The Executive Branch (Plural Executive)

April 4- 6 Chapter 10: Public Policy and Administration (The State Bureaucracy)

April 11-18 Chapter 11: Judicial Branch (Texas Court System)

April 20-25 Chapter 13: Finance and Fiscal Policy

April 27 THIRD EXAMINATION

May 9 FINAL EXAMINATION

9:00 AM Class 92451

11:00 AM Class 92449

Review Quiz Instructions. MindTap is required for all quizzes.

1. At the end of every chapter, a quiz of 25 questions are assigned from the MindTap.
2. The five quizzes that count for grade will be delivered in hard copies at given date prior to each Examination. Students are required to be in class to participate in each quiz. Students must expect twenty questions in the format of each examination and the quiz will be either in class or take home.
3. Extra Credit (optional).
4. Volunteering in a Political Campaign and with a short report attested by the Campaign Manager.
5. A visit to a city council in session. An appropriate information (e.g. agenda of session) from Council Secretary, and you must submit a brief written report of council deliberation. This will count for **20 points** to replace the lowest grade on the quiz.