**GOVERNMENT 2306**

**HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**

**Southwest College** **Spring 2015**

Course: **State Government** Section: **CRN 46939 (Regular Semester)**

Professor: **Kwame Acheampong** Room: **West Loop Campus**

**Room C242**

Time: **M/W** **9:30 AM – 11:00 AM**

E-mail: **Kwame.acheampong@hccs.edu**

**Purpose of the Course:**

Government 2306 is designed to introduce students to the politics of government in America at the national level. This course studies the 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. The course goals are to develop an understanding of the institutions and political processes of the American political System; encourage critical thinking about political events; and introduce students to the discipline of political science and how political scientist study politics scientifically. This course is fully transferable to all Texas State colleges and universities.

**The Government Department of Houston Community College requires one textbook for Government 2306**

 Brown, **Lyle C., Langenegger, Joyce A., Garcia, Sonia R., Biles, Robert E.:** *Practicing Texas Politics, 2013 – 2014 Edition.*

This book can be purchased online and from local college bookstores.

Students are encouraged to read daily newspapers, notable periodicals/magazines and major TV Network news for information and current events for enrichment and understanding of government and politics.

**GRADE COMPUTATION:**

**[600 points – 100%]**

**READING ASSESSMENTS** (20% of Final Grade, equivalent of 100 points): Periodic reading quizzes, group exercises, video presentations, and other techniques assist the student to monitor their learning and success in meeting the course objectives. The lowest assessment grade will be dropped from the student’s average.

**RESEARCH PROJECT** (20% of Final Grade, equivalent of 100 points): Each student is encouraged to produce a coherent research paper adapted to the purpose and objectives to this course. This assignment assesses the student’s mastery of the writing process: how to identify a topic; how to develop and organized it; and how to phrase it effectively for the audience. This research paper project is to be completed by the student.

**TOPIC:** In attemptto select a suitable topic for the Research Paper, students would be guided to write essays relative to the course content that covers the following:

1. Foundations of Texas Government
2. The Institutions of Texas Government
3. The Political Behavior and Processes relative to Texas Government.

**Note: Four-page double space with annotated bibliography and cited works.**

Please note that the topic and ideas for the Research Papers must be developed and approved by the instructor early in the sesmester. This means well in advance of the date.

**Due date: Wednesday, April 29, 2015. All papers and/or other projects should be typed.**

**FOUR EXAMS** (60% OF Final Grade equivalent of 400 points, 100 points each)

**Exam I – Wednesday, February 18, 2015**

**Exam II – Monday, March 30, 2015**

**Exam III – Wednesday, April 22, 2015**

**Exam IV – To be announced.**

This course includes three (3) major examinations, which are non-comprehensive in nature. The three exams consist of fifty (50) objective (multiple choice) components, or questions. The final examination may be comprehensive but the detail of the exams would be discussed in class.

**Please take all exams at the scheduled time. Makeup exams will be given only in emergency situations**.

**BONUS CREDITS:** The Instructor is authorized to offer bonus points, up to eighteen (18), thus 6 points each for Exam I, II and III respectively as follows:

* 6 points - for community service – neighborhood public places of interest, political campaign,
* 6 points - for a visit to any of the following courts while in session and must show evidence with a page report for participation:

Municipal court, County civil/criminal court, State District civil/criminal court and State Appellate Court; Federal District Court. Students are required to write about the process of jury selection and further observe each court’s adjudication process.

* 6 points – attending and observing in session a meeting of either council members at a city hall or county commissioners’ court.

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 60%

**ADA STATEMENT:**

HCC is compliant with the ADA and Sec. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. “Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the Disability Service Office at the respective college at the beginning of each semester. Faculty are authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Services Office.” The Disability Services Office number for Southwest College is 713-718-7909.

**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.

**THREE-PEATER STATEMENT:**

Students who take a course for the third time or more may face significant tuition/fee increases at HCC and other Texas public colleges and universities. 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.

**HONESTY POLICY**:

Ethical conduct is part of being a competent student. Academic dishonesty (cheating) will result in a zero for the assignment and/or failure of the course, depending on the severity of the offense.

**CLASS PREPARATION**

Each student must purchase all books necessary for this course and be prepared to discuss the reading assignments in advance of each class meeting.

**STUDENT CONFERENCES**

Students are encouraged to see me to discuss any course-related problems with me. However, I must emphasize that this should be arranged at the appropriate time during the semester. Conferences will be scheduled by appointment only.

**I am confident that students would find this course engaging and stimulating indeed!**

**Class Schedule**

**MODULE ONE**

**The Environment of Texas Politics**

Read: Chapter 1.

**QUIZ 1**

**2. Federalism and the Texas Constitution**

Read: Chapter 2.

**QUIZ 2**

**3. Local Governments**

Read: Chapter 3.

**Quiz 3**

**First Exam - see above for calendar date**

**MODULE TWO**

**Texas Political Parties**

Read: Chapter 4

**QUIZ 4**

**Campaign and Elections**

Read: Chapter 5

**QUIZ 5**

**Participation and Interest Groups**

Read: Chapter 6

**QUIZ 6**

**Second Exam - see above for calendar date**

**MODULE THREE**

**Texas Legislature**

Chapter 7.

**QUIZ 7**

**State Bureaucracy: The Plural Executive**

Chapter 8

**QUIZ 8**

**The Texas Court System**

Chapter 10.

**QUIZ 9**

**Policy Analysis – State Revenues and Expenditures**

Chapter 11

**Quiz 10**

**Third Exam**