Houston Community College
Government
GOVT 2306 – State and Local Government

Fall 2016 (8 weeks) - CRN# 11136
August 22, 2016 to October 16, 2016
(Final Exam due: October 13 by 6PM)
This course is conducted in CANVAS!
3 Credit Hours/48 Electronic Hours (Online)

You must be logged in to the course and participating by August 25 or you will be marked as Never Attended!

Government Department Chair Information:
Evelyn Ballard
Chair - Government Department
evelyn.ballard@hccs.edu
713-718-2490
Note: If you have a problem with your Government course, please contact your instructor before contacting Ms. Ballard.

This is a Distance Education online course. Your individual effort determines your grade in this course. It is YOUR responsibility to complete the materials in this course, meet all deadlines, and contact the instructor if you have any questions during the semester.

Instructor: Mary M. Louis

Office Hours: By appointment (North Forest Campus, 6010 Little York, Houston, TX 77016). My email address is mary.louis@hccs.edu. I can also be reached by leaving a message at (713) 718-6103. The recommended method of contact is for students to leave a message for me in our online classroom in CANVAS. Emails sent during the weekend will receive a response on Monday morning.

STOP

Read the statement below first!
Please feel free to contact me concerning any problems that you are experiencing in this course. You do not need to wait until you have received a poor grade before asking for my assistance. Your performance in my class is very important to me. I am available to hear your concerns and to discuss course topics. It may seem overwhelming, but you can do it!

GO

Now, let us get started.
**Course Description**
GOVT 2306 is an introductory course in State and Local Government. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to write college level essays, analyze various written works and have a basic understanding of: Texas political environment (including culture, political economy, and ideologies), Texas constitutions (states in a federal context), state and local government, political participation, interest groups, political parties and elections, Texas Legislature, Texas Executive Branch (Governor and bureaucracy), and Texas Courts.

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

**Course Goal:** The goal of this course is to have students successfully complete the course with the ability to think critically about government theories, history, and policies that would generate interest to continue future learning.

**Student Learning Outcomes** 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.

**SCANS or Core Curriculum Statement and Other Standards**

*Credit: 3*
This is a core curriculum course. GOVT 2306 (state and local government) is one of two courses required by the state of Texas designed to introduce students to the politics of national, state, and local government. GOVT 2305 and GOVT 2306 are fully transferable to other public colleges and universities in Texas.

**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.

Government Program Student Learning Outcomes
1. Identify and describe the institutions of American national government. GOVT 2302/2305
2. Identify and describe the institutions of the State of Texas government. GOVT 2302/2306
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

Course Outline: The following course assignments fulfill the Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility and Social Responsibility components required by the core objectives.

Week 1 August 22 – August 28
Welcome Discussion
START HERE Quiz

(Learning Module 1 Information)
Chap.1 Environment of Texas Politics

Week 2 August 29 – September 4
Chap. 2 Federalism and the Texas Constitution

Texas Constitutional Assignment (closes on August 31 at 6PM)

Chap. 3 Local Governments

Week 3 September 5 (Labor Day) – September 11

Exam #1 (closes on September 6 at 8PM)

(Learning Module 2 Information)
Chap. 6 The Media and Politics in Texas
Chap. 7 Politics of Interest Groups

Graded Discussion #1 (Due: September 9 by 8PM)

Week 4 September 12 – September 18
Chap. 4 Political Parties
Chap. 5 Campaigns and Elections
Exam #2 (closes on September 15 at 8PM)

Week 5 September 19 – September 25
(Learning Module 3 Information)
Chap. 8 The Legislature

Legislative Assignment (closes September 22 at 6PM)

Week 6 September 26 – October 2

Graded Discussion #2 (Due: September 28 by 8 PM)

Chap. 9 The Executive
Chap. 10 Public Policy and Administration

Week 7 October 3 – October 9

Exam #3 (closes on October 4 at 8PM)

(New information for comprehensive final exam - Learning Module 4)
Chap. 11 The Court System

Week 8 October 10 – October 16
Chap. 12 Criminal Justice

The Final Exam for this course is due by: Thursday, October 13 by 6:00 PM!

In the event of unforeseen circumstances, the information on this syllabus is subject to change. I will notify you if any changes occur.

Instructional Methods
The format of this course is conducted solely in an online environment. Students are required to participate in class discussions online and turn in assignments and exams when scheduled. Students are expected to be aware of current global, national and local events in order to participate in class discussions. You MUST complete assignments when scheduled. This course requires attention to deadlines!

The course material is administered in four (4) Learning Modules. A Learning Module will appear only for the time period scheduled in the syllabus. It is suggested that students print a copy of the module notes and activities to prepare for the comprehensive final exam. It is important to fully complete the learning modules. This means read the chapters assigned in the syllabus, carefully read the notes provided, answer all questions on the notes, watch the videos, participate in discussions/assignments and take the quizzes provided in the learning modules of the course.

This class offers you an opportunity to engage in learning using different instructional techniques and approaches. You are in charge of your own learning. A variety of resources are made available to you. Learning objectives have been provided to guide you through the many resources at your disposal.
in the online course. It is important to finish readings and explorations of resource materials in a timely manner. **Students are expected to actively participate in this online learning environment.**

**Instructor/Student Responsibilities**

As an instructor, my goal is for students to successfully complete the course and retain and utilize the information taught. While it my responsibility to provide you with the information in a manner that utilizes strategies that engage the student in an active learning environment, it is your responsibility to complete the required assignments, assessment and discussions in a high quality manner.

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 class activities, discussions, and lectures
- Description of any discussions, exams or assignments
- Inform students of policies such as attendance, withdrawal, and make up
- Provide the course outline and class calendar which will include a description of any discussions, exams or assignments
- Arrange to meet with individual students during office hours (or by appointment) as required

**It is your responsibility to attend class regularly online, participate in discussions, answer questions on class lecture notes, complete assignments before deadlines, and utilize the different teaching methods used in this course to improve your ability to complete exams with a high degree of success. Students must read all information carefully!**

To be successful in this class, it is the student’s responsibility to:

- Attend class online regularly and participate in class discussions and activities
- Read and comprehend the textbook, learning modules, and activities
- Complete the required discussions, 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
- Pay attention to all deadlines
- **READ all information carefully!**
- **If the deadline is 8PM, students must submit the required material prior to this time since the system will close AT 8PM.**

**Student Assignments (2):** Students are required to complete the assignments provided online prior to the deadlines. The assignments are listed in the syllabus and located in the various learning modules. Students must follow the guidelines listed for each assignment. Please follow the grading rubric that accompanies each assignment. **There are NO make-ups or late submissions for any reason!**

**Non-Graded Discussions:** Students should participate in class discussions. There may be various discussions posted online, which students must submit a response. The response needs to be at least one paragraph (**at least 5 complete, informative sentences**), which addresses the topic.

**Writing Component/Graded Discussions (2):** Students are required to submit 2 graded discussions during the semester. The graded discussions are worth 30% of the final grade in the course (15%
Each review should be at least 600 typed-written words in length and follow the guidelines listed for each discussion. All submission posts must be written with consideration for grammatical rules. Spelling and grammar are part of your writing component grade. Do not use contractions!

Failure to follow the guidelines listed on each discussion will result in a grade of zero. Use the rubric to help improve your responses prior to submission. If you have any questions, please contact me before the due date.

The writing component topics are located in the online course under Writing Component/Graded Discussions, but the criteria to complete the reviews are as follows:

Goal: The free writing graded discussions are meant to provide students with the opportunity to engage with the course topics and provide a clearly focused, contemplative response to the guided questions in the discussion.

Criteria:

- Each graded discussion submission must contain at least 600 words. **You MUST document all information used or you will receive a 0!**
- Students must fully answer the questions for each discussion. While this is a free-writing exercise, students should think carefully about the topic, and write a clearly focused, detailed report. Additionally, students must respond to the discussion in their own words. **Do not use quotes, and do NOT copy information directly from any sources.** Your grade is based on your understanding of the topic.
- All submissions must be submitted prior to the scheduled deadline in the designated area. No attachments are allowed for discussions.
- Grades will be posted after the deadline for the discussion has expired. **Any evidence of plagiarism in your discussion submission will result in a grade of zero (0). Please consult the Scholastic Dishonesty section of this syllabus.**

***Very Important Notice! (Technical Compliance)***

*This class is a distance-education class using Eagle Online for notes, lectures and assessments. Each student must maintain Internet access throughout this course. Additionally, students are expected to maintain a state of technical compliance, including (but not limited to): up-to-date software as required by the instructor; a stable Internet connection; and use of the Firefox or Google Chrome browsers when using Eagle Online.*

The instructor is not required to give consideration for lost/missing/unclearable work stemming from technical non-compliance and/or end-user technical issues. **Failure to maintain Internet access shall not constitute a valid excuse for missed work.** Any student who cannot keep up with the coursework owing to a lack of computer or Internet must drop the course. Any student found to have quit logging in (5 days) and whom the Professor is unable to contact is subject to being dropped without further warning, resulting in either a "W" or a "FX" grade, depending upon the time of the term at which the behavior is noted.

If you do not complete at least 60% of the course, you will receive a grade of FX!

You must contact the distance education technicians when you have technology problems by going to http://d2.parature.com/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=8513.
Student Assessment

There will be 3 exams given during the semester, as well as the final exam. The exams will be available only in CANVAS. The exams will consist of about 25 multiple choice, True/False, and/or short answer questions and last 25 minutes. Students will have 2 attempts at each exam, and the higher of the 2 scores will be recorded. All exams will be available from the beginning of the semester. However, each exam must be completed by the date listed on the syllabus. Students will need to complete the materials in order to move on to the next module. The final exam is a comprehensive exam and will consist of questions from the last section and a few questions from previous exams (25 questions in 25 minutes). In addition, there will be 2 Graded Discussions and 2 Assignments.

Grading Scale:

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graded Discussions (2)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graded Assignments (2)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>15</td>
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If you do not complete at least 60% of the course, you will receive a grade of FX!

Please READ this carefully!

There are NO make-up exams for any reason. Students who have missed an exam will not be allowed to retake the exam. YOU MUST CAREFULLY READ ALL ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS! Assignments not turned in on the due date will NOT be graded for any reason! Failure to turn in the graded discussions prior to the deadline will result in a grade of zero (0).

Instructional Materials (Textbook):
ISBN-10: 1285853105

ADA Statement and Other Information: 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 documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the Disability Services Office at the respective college at the beginning of each semester. Faculty is authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office for each campus. To visit the ADA Website, please visit [www.hccs.edu](http://www.hccs.edu) then click Future Students, scroll down the page and click on the words Disability Information.

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 is 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.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class regularly online. Although it is the responsibility of the student to officially withdraw from the course, a student may be dropped from the course for reasons stated in the Policy Regarding W, F and I section in the student handbook. Additionally, students may be dropped from the course for excessive absences (no online course activity for 5 days). The last day for administrative and student withdrawals is September 26, 2016. Failure of a student to withdraw officially will result in the student receiving a grade of “F” or “FX” in the course depending upon circumstances.

Expectations of Civil Conduct
Students are expected to conduct themselves professionally in their communication with the instructor, their classmates, and college staff and administration. Behavior inappropriate to the collegiate setting (including but not limited to abusive/derogatory/threatening/harassing language directed at the instructor or towards other students, staff or administrators) will not be tolerated, and may result in removal from the course if severe and/or repeated.

NOTICE OF STUDENTS’ RESPONSIBILITY TO READ THE HCC STUDENT HANDBOOK:
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/de/de-student-handbook

Scholastic Dishonesty: (as per Faculty Handbook located on the HCCS website) Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion.

1. Cheating on a test includes:
   • Copying from another student's test paper;
   • Using materials during a test not authorized by the person giving the test;
   • 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;
   • Bribing another person to obtain a test that is to be administered.

2. Plagiarism means the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work for credit.
3. Collusion means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit. In essence, there will be no sharing of answers on exams and the written assignment.

In addition, students must present their original work on all assignments and document all outside sources. Plagiarism is not allowed. Cheating will result in a grade of “F” in the course, as well as disciplinary actions.

Withdrawals:
Students who take a course for the 3rd time or more must now pay significant tuition/fee increases at HCCS and other Texas public colleges and universities. At HCCS, 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 passed a law (as of 2007) limiting students to no more than 6 withdrawals throughout their academic career in obtaining a baccalaureate degree.

Repeating Courses:
As a result of Texas legislative changes, please be advised that HCCS charges additional tuition for students who enroll in the same class three or more times at HCCS. While it is the hope of HCCS 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 in order to improve your overall academic performance. If a student repeats a course in which a grade (A-F) has been received, the highest grade received at HCCS 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 HCCS.

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

HCC Student Course Grade Appeal Procedure
Any student who takes issue with the course or how it is taught should first express his or her specific concerns to the instructor. Any challenges to the final course grade are governed by the HCC Student Course Grade Appeal Procedure. The following statements are excerpts from the Procedure: (http://www.hccs.edu/hccs/currentstudents/student-rights-policies-procedures)

- “A student has a right to appeal a grade that the student believes was contrary to procedures as specified in the course syllabus or was based on bias, caprice, or computational or clerical error.”

- “Faculty members have a right to have the grades they assign upheld unless it is clearly demonstrated that a grade was contrary to procedures as specified in the course syllabus or was based on bias, caprice, or computational or clerical error.”

- “The student has the burden of proof. The student must present clear evidence that a grade was contrary to procedures as specified in the course syllabus or was based on bias, caprice, or computational or clerical error.”