

**Spring 2014 DRAFT Class Syllabus HCC Northeast College, Distance Education:  
Government 2305, Federal US Constitution, Institutions of American Government,  
& Related Topics **Calendar: 1/13/2014- 5/12/2014****

*Instructor retains the option to alter this syllabus and schedule as needed.  
Use it as a DRAFT calendar throughout the semester.*



Week of:		Regular Term, Spring '14	
Week 1	1/13		3/10 - 3/16
Week 2	1/20	MLK Day 20th, SotU 21st	Week 9 3/17
Week 3	1/27	date of record	Week 10 3/24
Week 4	2/3	TEST 1, end of week	Week 11 3/31
Week 5	2/10		Week 12 4/7
Week 6	2/17	President's Day	Week 13 4/14
Week 7	2/24		Week 14 4/21
Week 8	3/3	3/4 Texas Primary Election; TEST 2 end of week	Week 15 4/28
			Week 16 5/5

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**SPECIAL NOTE ON THIS COURSE CURRICULUM:** The state of Texas has forced HCC to change its government curriculum this fall. Instead of offering GOVT 2301 and 2302, we are substituting **GOVT 2305 (American government) and 2306 (Texas government)**. The material is the same, but it is organized differently.

The **Instructor's Welcome/Orientation statement** and **HCC Distance Education Student Handbook** <http://de.hccs.edu/de/de-student-handbook> contain 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.

It is mandatory that you fill out the **Robo Form** as part of the Orientation because it contains outside email and phone contact info. The instructor must have alternative contact info beside what is listed within Eagle. You should also adjust your email preference in your People Soft records so that message contact from within Eagle can be directed to your preferred Yahoo, Gmail, or whatever. Without this change, email is sent by default to HCC email, and many students are not aware and do not check this account. If the instructor cannot contact the student for whatever reason, the consequences can be dire.

**Course Description.** **Government 2305**, is one of two courses (with 2306) designed to give students a required, general overview of government, agencies, policy making procedures, and the people who lead them in both the US and Texas. The course is 3 credit hours and fully transferable to other colleges and universities in Texas.

**Course Objectives.** This course is designed to help students secure an understanding of the foundations and origins of governmental institutions in the US and Texas through the study of the executive (president), legislative (US Congress), and judicial branches (US Supreme Court SCOTUS, federal courts and judges); economic and regulatory policy; social policy; civil liberties and civil rights policy; economic, foreign, and military policy. Additionally, the course covers the election process, Political Parties, Interest Groups, Campaigns, Voting, Public Opinion/Polling, and the News Media

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 scientists study politics scientifically. This course is fully transferable to all Texas State colleges and universities.

These topics are studied and synchronized within the calendar of actual current events, so students can connect to them in a real world environment, rather than mere abstract concepts from the book without contemporary context. This class is very focused on current events and local affairs, so any effort that you use to plug into the news will help you succeed in this class. This course is focused on real-world examples and practical applications of government as they are occurring. Part of your grade (16%) is based on class participation to watch the news and summarize it.

## Preparation and Study Tips:

- a) You must have a reliable computer and Internet connection (ISP) throughout the course, especially while taking tests. **Technical difficulties, computer crashes, malfunctions, holidays, or even the weather are not an acceptable excuse for not participating or meeting deadlines** (see the DE Handbook). There are computers in the Learning Labs and libraries of all 33 HCC facilities, so do not wait until the last minute to do your work.
- b) The course utilizes the software application **Eagle Online** 1.9 (aka Moodle), which is best viewed using the **Firefox browser**. **IE or Chrome browsers have demonstrated less desirable results, and HCC Tech Support does not support them.**
- c) Bookmark the web address and password of the DE site on your computer.
- d) Create a subdirectory on your harddrive to download and store the course materials and your notes.
- e) Complete the **data form** on the Orientation page with email and phone contact information. It is very important that I have [emergency] contact info for you!!
- f) **Plan a regular, weekly study time when you Login for this course.** You must schedule a regular time and pattern for weekly studies to insure that you complete the work, just the same as a 'face' class. There are many distractions that will arise over the 16-week semester and **without a patterned, weekly routine for study, your success will be compromised.**
- g) This course will follow the standard **Carnegie Unit of college credit**. This means that **for each hour spent online for classroom work, you will likely spend another two hours for homework.** For a three-hour course, this translates into an average of about six hours a week for class readings, studying, videos, and other assignments. Failure to meet the minimum attendance standards makes you subject to drop without notice. Regular 'face' classes meet 3 hours /week, and you expected to be online at least this amount **PLUS** and equivalent time for homework.
- h) **There are absolutely no make-ups for missed tests or assignments!**



## VIRTUAL DE CLASSROOM CONDUCT

As with on-campus classes, all students in HCC Distance Education courses are required to follow all HCC Policies & Procedures, the Student Code of Conduct, the Student Handbook, and relevant sections of the Texas Education Code when interacting and communicating in a virtual classroom with faculty and fellow students. Students who violate these policies and guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action that could include denial of access to course-related email, discussion groups, and chat rooms or being removed from the class.

## Eagle Online software, Moodle version 1.9

Access to your online course is found at: <https://hccs1.mrooms3.net/login/index.php>  
Follow the login direction using your W-number and password. If you have difficulties, contact directly the support personnel listed below. Tech support is there to help you, so use them. If you have software problems with a test, call ME immediately so it can be resolved. There are no test make-ups, so this must be resolved within the time of the test window.

Contact DE support via [de.hccs.edu](http://de.hccs.edu) or the online request form [AskDECounseling](#) or by calling:

General information	713-718-5275 option1
DE course <a href="#">log in information</a>	713/718-2000 options 4 or 2,
Technical assistance or for <a href="#">24/7 help</a> .	713/718-2000 options 4, 2, 3.
For counseling and student services	713-718-5275 option 4 or for faster service, please

complete the **Ask DE Counseling Form** at <http://de-counseling.hccs.edu>

## **Additional Student Services**

### **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

International Students are restricted to ONLY ONE online/distance education class per semester. Please contact the International Student Office at 713-718-8520 if you have additional questions about your visa status.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA)**

The Houston Community College System is committed to compliance with the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the appropriate HCC Disability Support Service (DSS) Counselor at the beginning of each semester. Faculty is authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office. No special testing accommodations are expected for this class, but any other services must first contact the appropriate (most convenient) DSS office for assistance. After student accommodation letters have been approved by the DSS office and submitted to DE Counseling for processing, students will receive an email confirmation informing them of the Instructional Support Specialist assigned to their professor.

#### **Disability Support Services Offices:**

System: 713.718.5165

Northwest: 713.718.5422

Central: 713.718.6164 – also for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services or students outside HCC District

Southwest: 713.718.7910

**Northeast: 713.718.8322 Tamara Petty**

Southeast: 713.718.7218

**SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY:** If you are caught committing scholastic dishonesty in any way, you will receive an F for the course; I do not negotiate “second chances.” Please seek me out for help if you are having problems, rather than resort to something that will tarnish your record. **Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion.** Cheating on a test includes copying from another student's test paper; using, during a test, materials 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 unadministered test; or bribing another person to obtain a test that is to be administered. **“Plagiarism” means the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work for credit, especially copying from the internet without appropriate citations. The college uses professional software (Turn It In.com) specifically designed to determine plagiarized work.** “Collusion” means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit. In simplified terms, cheating is:

- (1) taking unchanged passages (or slightly edited) from another person's writing and portraying them as one's own, **INCLUDING copying passages from the Internet. This also includes not listing SOURCES or references as research is undertaken ;**
- (2) submitting a paper that includes paraphrases of another person's writing without giving credit;
- (3) having someone else write your paper for you;
- (4) copying or using another person's work during in-class writing or testing;
- (5) the unauthorized use of electronic devices during in-class writing or testing. Keep in mind also that whether you are cheating or not, not following testing or writing rules properly, such as communicating with your neighbor or using a cell phone during a test will be construed as cheating.

### **HCC Course Withdrawal Policy**

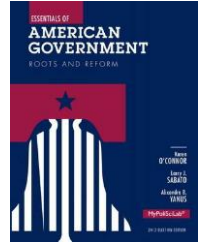
The State of Texas has begun to impose penalties on students who drop courses excessively. That is, if you repeat the same course more than twice, you have to pay extra tuition. In addition, as of Fall 2007, **students are limited to no more than SIX total course withdrawals** throughout their educational career at a Texas public college or university.

In order to withdraw from your class, you may drop yourself or contact your professor and this must be done PRIOR to the withdrawal deadline to receive a “W” on your transcript. If you do not withdraw before the deadline, you will receive the grade that you have earned by the end of the semester. Zeros averaged in for required assignments/tests not submitted will lower your semester average significantly, most likely resulting in a failing grade (“F”).

**There are no make-ups for missed tests, the term Project, or assignments!**

**The final withdrawal deadline for Spring 2014 classes is Monday March 31, 4:30pm.**

**Student Evaluation of Instructor (SEOI) is now EGLS<sub>3</sub>** – At HCC, professors believe that thoughtful student feedback is necessary to improve teaching and learning. During a designated time at the end of semester, students will be asked to answer a short online survey of researched-based questions related to instruction. The anonymous results will be made available to your professors and division chairs for continual improvement of instruction.



**Most of the course materials will be provided with the course, so the textbook is not required. All study materials and tests will be provided. Sources:**

- 1) ***Essentials of American Government: Roots and Reform*, 2012 election paperback edition**, O'Connor & Sabato,
- 2) On reserve in the Library

**Course Grading: 90-100=A; 80-89 =B; 70-79 =C; 60-69 =D; <60 =F, or FX, which is failure to attend or not participating by failing to log in on a regular basis.**

4 tests (16% each) covering the reading, news clippings, Power Points/PDFs, & videos	= 66%
Class participation, homework, and <u>weekly news summaries</u>	= 16%
1 of the following items: Paper/Campaign Project/Political Cartoon Journal	= 16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>=100%</b>

Class participation is mandatory. Failure to log in weekly with active participation (submission of weekly news summaries) is grounds for drop without notice.

### **FINAL GRADE OF FX?**

Students who stop attending class and do not withdraw themselves prior to the withdrawal deadline may either be dropped by their professor for excessive absences or be assigned the final grade of “FX” at the end of the semester. Students who stop attending classes will receive a grade of “FX”, compared to an earned grade of “F” which is due to poor performance. NOT logging into a DE course and without active participation is seen as non-attending.

Please note that HCC will not disperse financial aid funding for students who have never attended class. Students who receive financial aid, but fail to attend class will be reported to the US Department of Education and may have to pay back their aid. A grade of “FX” is treated exactly the same as a grade of “F” in terms of GPA, probation, suspension, and satisfactory academic progress.

F1 Visa students have to show that they are attending their classes. A similar requirement is in place for some of our Veteran awards. . This process was set up to deter **Pell runners** - students who stay in class until they receive their financial aid and then they quit participating. This is only fair to other students who work hard and pay their own tuition PLUS the taxpayers who provide the funding for federal financial aid programs. The Republican controlled House of the US Congress is dominated by Tea Party Conservatives who absolutely want to cut spending, so federal aid programs for college tuition is one of their main targets.

The course will be organized into a series of 4 modules, each with 4 weeks work covering the major topics of the course. Each module will close out at the end of a test, and a new module will open. **There are no make-up tests under any circumstances.** There is no access to previous coursework after a module closes, so you must keep up with the schedule. The tests are not comprehensive over previous module’s material and the midterm and final are not comprehensive.

## Term Project: Choice of 1 of the following:

You must complete the Paper or Project to pass the class, no matter what your test grades are.

It is anticipated that any of the Project choices will take 8-10 hours to complete, which is why it is called a 'Term Project.' Do not wait until the last minute.

**Commentary Paper (Option 1).** Write a 4-6 page paper on a topic of governmental policy, agency, issue, or person/group that interests you (typed, 12 point font, space & half). Sample topics will be given. The purpose of any paper is for you to research and expand your current knowledge based on FACTS of the role of government in that topic (especially government agencies, departments, people, power structures) and to express your ideas and thoughts on the topic; not to copy or paraphrase the topic from research sources. **Build on what you already know, but learn something new about the topic, especially from a governmental perspective and with a local focus local or state. Specific guidelines on structure and content of the paper will be given later.**

**Campaign Project (Option 2):** Texas has elections every year, so there are many opportunities to volunteer and engage in the campaign/election process. Volunteering for a political campaign, Party, or candidate is an excellent way to gain insight into the workings of candidates and campaign operations. Such participation will involve travel to the campaign HQ, usually requiring extra time, and the clerical tasks of phone banking, block walking, or preparing campaign literature. This Project gives you the rare time to get offline, out of the library, and into the streets of your community where grassroots government occurs! Prepare a PowerPoint summary of your experiences with photos and commentary. Potential candidates and details will be provided. **Specific guidelines on structure and content will be given later.**

**Political Cartoon Project (Option 3)** Cartoons are a common and more subtle means of making political commentary by journalists. Use PowerPoint to compile a diary of cartoons digitally copied from the Chronicle or other Online newspapers or publications. **Most importantly,** provide your personal analysis of the issues and effectiveness of the cartoon and the author to communicate and persuade the public with his artistic work. **Specific guidelines on structure and method will be given later.**

# American Government 2305: Course Calendar and Topics **DRAFT**

*Unprecedented change is upon the US at all levels as local, state, and federal government grapple with the recession, chronic unemployment, and huge deficits that threaten the delivery of basic services to the people. Despite Obama's 2012 win, Republicans once again dominate most legislative bodies with significant majorities, coupled with the Tea Party extremists, so the balance of power is severely divided at all levels of government.*

*Implementation of "Obamacare" for claims by January 1 2014 have severely damaged the President's approval rating, yet he has other vital programs such as immigration reform that remain unapproached.*

*Texas Primary is scheduled for Week 8, so prior to this we will be exposed to brutal election ads from Republican candidates as they campaign to choose a winning candidate amongst themselves in preparation for the Midterm Election against state and Congressional Democrats in November 2014.*

**Week 1: Introduction to Government,** What is government and why do we have it? Changing political landscape and disagreement over the role of government. Issues confronting the country and Texas: Divided government, dominance of the Republican Party, but push back by Democrats in response to extreme policies of the 2013 Legislative session. Importance of citizen activism.

**Week 2 & 3: Current Economic Policy/Issues: Unions, Minimum Wages, & Health Care, Recession & Job Losses**

**Weeks 4: Democracy/Capitalism/ Socialism & 2013 Government Shutdown**

## **TEST 1**

**Week 4: The U.S. Constitution; Branches and Levels of Government - Chapter 2**

Most topics of this course are defined by the **US Constitution**, so we begin with how it structures the institutions that create our government,

**Week 4 & 5: Federalism** (power to the states), the Bureaucracy, and a comparison to the **Texas Constitution**

**Week 6 & 7: : Right to Vote; Political Parties, & Conventions**

- **Week 8: Campaigns, Voting, and Elections; Early Voting**
- **Electoral College, The 2008, 2012, 2014 & 2016 Presidential election**

**Midterm TEST 2  
BREAK**

**Texas Primary**

**SPRING**

**Projects due**

**Institutions of American Government:**

**Week 9: The President & Cabinet**

Presidential powers, popularity; the Cabinet and budgeting.

**Week 10: State of the Union & White House/DC**

State of the Union speech,

**Week 11 & 12: Congress**

Divided government, Congressional oversight and public safety; decline of "earmarks". Redistricting and single member districts.

Military, foreign affairs, and war/defense policy. Congressional oversight and investigation.

## **TEST 3**

**Week 13: Supreme Court, US Judiciary, and Federal Courts - Chapter 9**

Supreme Court / recent cases and appointments, including the first Hispanic woman, Sonia Sotomayor in 2009, and Elena Kagan in 2010. Current land mark cases and ensuing controversy.

**Week 14: Civil Liberties - Chapter 4**

Religious Tolerance, Free Speech & Right to Assemble (Nazis, Confederates, and White Supremists in America), Right to Bear Firearms /Gun Control, Right to Privacy/abortion, search and seizure, right to die.

**Week 15: Civil Rights - Chapter 5**

Civil Rights have largely been defined by the Supreme Court: Jim Crow / Black / Hispanics/ Women's Issues/ GLBT Rights /Persons with Disabilities

**Week 16 TEST 4, Final Test**

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