

Syllabus

Government 2301

American Government: National, State and Local II

Fall 2012

Pinemont Campus

Tuesday and Thursday 7:00pm-8:30pm

3 hour lecture course/48 hours per semester/16 week

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Office Hours: While I do not hold official office hours at Pinemont. I am available from 6:30pm-7:00pm on Tuesday/Thursday for meeting with students. If you need me, please locate me at the faculty table in the front of the building. If you would like to set up a specific appointment time, please email me at the address listed above.

Required Text: O'Connor, Keith and L. Sabato. *American Government : Roots and Reform*. 2011 Texas Edition. Person Longman Publishers.

Course Description: Government 2301 is the first of two courses designed to give students a general overview of government in the United States. Both federal and state (Texas) government will be studied in this course. Both Govt 2301 and Govt 2302 are fully transferable to other colleges and universities in Texas.

Course Dates: Tuesday, August 28, 2012 through Thursday, December 6, 2012.

Course Goals:

This course is designed to help students secure an understanding of the foundations and origins of governmental institutions in the United States at all levels within the system. As such, the course will focus on particular topics that will all students to do the following:

- 1) To become aware of US government and how it functions
- 2) To develop an understanding of both the federal and state constitutions
- 3) To become acquainted with the main aspects of the political system
- 4) To develop awareness of the roots of American politics and governments
- 5) To develop an awareness of the importance issues such as voting, elections and public opinion as well as how individuals and/or groups shape the political process in American society

- 6) As a part of the HCC Core Curriculum this course will address the following competencies
- a. Comprehending college level texts
 - b. Writing and speaking in ways that effectively and persuasively explain one's viewpoints
 - i. Students will be required to write 4 different types of papers as well as to communicate with both the instructor and their peers in the classroom.
 - c. Students will work on their critical thinking skills by role-playing and/or problem solving many of the concepts discussed in this course.
 - d. Learning to hear and respect the views and opinions of others
 - e. Computer literacy

EGLS₃ -- Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System

At Houston Community College, professors believe that thoughtful student feedback is necessary to improve teaching and learning. During a designated time, you will be asked to answer a short online survey of research-based questions related to instruction. The anonymous results of the survey will be made available to your professors and division chairs for continual improvement of instruction. Look for the survey as part of the Houston Community College Student System online near the end of the term.

Course Requirements

- 1. Complete all required reading assignments prior to each class
- 2. Attend class (100 points)
- 3. Write one (1) current events paper (50 points)
- 4. Write one (1) research paper (100 points)
- 5. Presentation over final Paper (50 points)
- 6. Two (2) exams (each exam is worth 100 points)
- 7. In class participation and activities (100 points)

Note: Extra Credit is given at the discretion of the instructor. It is not mandatory and not doing extra credit assignments will not negatively affect your grade. It can only enhance it.

Grading

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Attendance | 100 points |
| Exams | 200 points |
| Current Events Paper | 50 points |
| Class Participation/Activities | 100 points |
| <u>Paper/Presentation</u> | <u>150 points</u> |
| Total | 600 points |

The final letter grade for the course will be calculated using the HCCS grading scale. 90-100= A, 80-89= B, 70-79=C, 60-69=D and below 60=F.

Writing Assignments

Current Event Paper

This class is about American government. As such you should strive to stay abreast of the events that are going on in American society today. We will have two days in which we discuss different political events that are occurring in the nation. You will be responsible for writing one paper over a current event of your choice. These papers should be 2-4 pages (typed) in length. I will need a copy of the article(s) that you utilized for your research. Plagiarism on this assignment will result in a grade of zero (0) on the assignment. These are due at the beginning of class on their due date. (September 25th)

Final Paper Assignments/Presentations (No Plagiarism, No Extensions, and No Make-ups)

Each student is to write, then present in class, one writing assignment. In essence, students will write a research paper that explores one of two topics given by the instructor in the course. These two topics will both address some area of government either at the state or federal level. An electronic version of the paper and presentation is to be emailed to me on or before 5:00pm **December 1st, 2012 (Saturday)**. Your power point presentation is due by 5pm on **December 1st, 2012 (Saturday)**. You will have the option to turn in your paper one week earlier to the instructor so that it may be read and suggestions given back to you before your final paper is turned in.

This paper should have a title page, be typed, double-spaced with normal margins and 12-point font. The paper should also have page numbers and be stapled. Papers will be graded on the following standards:

- Use of language and writing;
- Organization of paper and format of essay;
- Spelling, grammar, and punctuation;
- Consistency and use of logic;
- Use of literature;
- Originality of research.

The text portion of the papers should be exactly 5-7 pages in length. Please remember to cite sources for statements of fact or any statement not attributable to you, wherever necessary. APA is the accepted citation and formatting method.

Each student will present their papers in class on **December 4th or December 6th**. Your presentation should present the arguments posed in the paper and display evidence to support them. The presentations should be at most 4 minutes in length. You are allowed to add arguments and facts not

found in your paper to your presentation. Additionally, each student should allocate 2 minutes for taking questions and answering them. If you miss your chosen presentation date, you will receive a zero (0) for this portion of the assignment. The presentations will be graded based on the following standards for evaluation:

- Reasoning, analysis, logic;
- Innovative, effective arguments;
- Organization/Refutation of opposition arguments;
- Overall persuasiveness;
- Fluent, volume, diction, rate of delivery;
- Eye contact;
- Use of time;
- Professionalism, courtesy, and conduct;
- Assertions supported and documented.

Academic Honesty/Integrity

All students enrolled in any HCCS class are expected to be academically honest at all times. Academic dishonesty includes, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating and colluding without permission. If there are any questions, please see the instructor on record, or the HCCS student handbook section on this subject

Weekly Assignments/Expectations

Week 1: Introduction and The Constitution

August 28- Introduction

August 30 – Constitution Discussion

Week 2: Foundations of Government

September 4- Chapter 3

September 6– Chapter 4

Week 3: How we Act...

September 11- Chapter 11

September 13 – Class Activity

Week 4: Parties and Elections

September 18- Chapter 12

September 20- Chapter 13

Week 5: The Campaign Trail

September 25- Current/Political Events Discussion

Current Event Paper Due

September 27- Chapter 14

Week 6: Media and Politics

October 2– Chapter 15

October 4- Media Activity

Week 7: Exam and Movie

October 9- Exam I

October 11 - Movie

Week 8: When We Matter: Policy

October 16 – Chapter 16

October 18 – Chapter 17

Week 9: Policy Cont.

October 23—Movie Cont and Activity

October 25—Chapter 18

Week 10: Texas Government In Action

October 30- Chapter 21

November 1-Chapter 22

Week 11: Texas Government: How We are Involved

November 6- Class Activity

November 8—Chapter 26

Week 12: Politics in Action

November 13 – Movie

November 15- Movie cont.

Week 13: Activity and Holiday

November 20- Movie Discussion/Class Activity

November 22—No Class (Thanksgiving)

Week 14: Course Wrap Up

November 27- Chapter 27

November 29– Current Affairs Discussion

Week 15: End of the Semester

PAPERS and PRESENTATIONS DUE-December 1st (5pm)

December 4th and 6th-Final Presentations

Exam III (Final Exam) Date: TBA

HCC Course Withdrawal Policy

The State of Texas imposes penalties on students who drop courses excessively. Students are limited to no more than SIX total course withdrawals throughout their educational career at a Texas public college or university.

After the withdrawal deadline has passed, you will receive the grade that you would have earned. Zeros averaged in for required coursework not submitted will lower your semester average significantly, most likely resulting in a failing grade of an “F”. It is the responsibility of the student to withdraw from the class; however, your professor reserves the right to withdraw you without your request due to excessive absences. If you do not feel comfortable contacting your professor to withdraw, you may contact the department to withdraw.

Spring 2012 Final Withdrawal deadlines:

- **November 2, 2012 by 4:30pm.**

Classes of other duration (mini-term, flex-entry, 8-weeks, etc.) may have different final withdrawal deadlines. Please contact the HCC Registrar’s Office at 713.718.8500 to determine mini-term class withdrawal deadlines.

Student Services

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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.

Students who are requesting special testing accommodations must first contact the appropriate (most convenient) DSS office for assistance:

Disability Support Services Offices:

Northeast: 713.718.8420

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.