



## Government 2306- Texas Government

CRN: 78199

Pinemont Campus Rm 165

F2F: 16 weeks (48 total contact hours)

Fall 2015

### Instructor Contact Information:

Name: Dr. Nichole C. Boutte-Heiniluoma (Dr. B)

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Phone: 713-718-2412

Office Location: Northline Campus Rm 310 or Pinemont campus.

Office Hours: **Tuesdays** 8:30am-9:30am (Northline) 5:30pm-6:45pm (Pinemont Campus),  
**Thursdays** 1:00pm-2:00pm (Northline Campus), **Fridays** 9:00am-10am (Pinemont Campus).  
Please email if these times do not work for you so that we can set up an appointment.

Please Note: The BEST way to reach me is by sending an email to [n.boutteheiniluoma@hccs.edu](mailto:n.boutteheiniluoma@hccs.edu). You MUST include your name and your course information in the subject line (ex. Nichole Boutte-Heiniluoma-Govt 2306) or your email may not get immediate attention. I do my best to respond to all emails addressed correctly within 24-48 if emailed during the week.

Emails mailed after 4pm on Fridays will NOT be responded to until after 12:30pm on Monday afternoons.

**Required Text:** Brown, Lyle; Langenegger, Garcia, Lewis and Biles, Rynbrandt, Reyna  
*Practicing Texas Politics* 2015-2016 Edition

### Course Description:

Government 2306 is a course designed to introduce students to the politics of state, and local government. This course is fully transferable to other colleges and universities. The course provides an overview of the major institutions of Texas government—The Environment of Texas Politics, The Texas Constitution, Local Governments, Political Parties, Campaigns, the

Executive Branch, Public Policy, the Texas Judiciary, Finance and Fiscal Policy. The course will encourage both critical and analytical thinking about state government and the major challenges facing contemporary Texas. The course will analyze Texas politics, institutions, population, current issues and culture that define Texas life today.

**Core Curriculum Statement:** 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 Curriculum Objectives:** Given the rapid evolution of necessary knowledge and skills and the need to take into account global, national, state, and local cultures, 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 this core curriculum course will complete several assignments designed to cultivate 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
- **Empirical and Quantitative Skills** - to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
- **Social Responsibility** - to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

These objectives will be assessed as follows:

**Critical Thinking:** Nearly all the work in this course will require critical thinking about the social problems that we address. Your critical thinking skills will be assessed through the written work that you submit and your understanding of the readings and videos during the required discussions.

**Communication:** Nearly all the work in this course will also require that you be able to communicate well in writing. Your communication skills will be assessed both in the written work you submit as well as in your interactions with your peers in the required discussions. The weekly discussions over the readings and videos are mandatory.

**Empirical and Quantitative:** You will be required to answer a series of questions from the readings that assess your empirical and quantitative skills.

**Social Responsibility:** This entire course is largely focused on social responsibility as the curriculum is focused on understanding the world around us, being able to look at this world through the lens of the sociological imagination and to begin to think critically about some issues that impact the world in which we live.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

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.

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

**Course Dates:** Monday, August 24, 2015- Saturday, December 5, 2015.

**Meeting Days:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 7:00pm-8:30pm

### **Course Requirements/Grading Criteria**

1. Complete all required reading assignments prior to each week's start
2. Attendance (100 points)
3. Three exams (each exam is worth 100 points)
4. Class Activities (200 points total)
5. One Movie Reaction Paper (25 points total)
6. Current Events Assignment (25 points)
7. Political Candidate/ Party Paper Assignment (50 points)
8. Complete one major paper writing assignment (100 points)
9. Complete one presentation over final paper assignment (100 points)

This tallies up to a total of 900 possible points during our 16-week course.

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.

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.

A = 100 – 90;	4 points per semester hour
B = 89 – 80:	3 points per semester hour
C = 79 – 70:	2 points per semester hour
D = 69 – 60:	1 point per semester hour
59 and below = F	0 points per semester hour
IP (In Progress)	0 points per semester hour
W(Withdrawn)	0 points per semester hour
I (Incomplete)	0 points per semester hour
AUD (Audit)	0 points per semester hour

IP (In Progress) is given only in certain developmental courses. The student must re-enroll to receive credit. COM (Completed) is given in non-credit and continuing education courses. To compute grade point average (GPA), divide the total grade points by the total number of semester hours attempted. The grades “IP,” “COM” and “I” do not affect GPA.

**Instructional Method:** This is a face-to-face class that also has an EO2 component (web enhanced). That means that we will meet twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30am-11:00am) and occasionally we will utilize the Learning Management System-**Eagle Online (EO2)**. I recommend that you check daily your **EO** e-mail so that you can keep up with any new information from me. **Your User Name is your Student ID, your “W” number; the default Password is “distance.”**

Many of the handouts, videos, and other resources will be available on Eagle Online. Many of your written assignments will be submitted on Eagle Online. Please check the online calendar for due dates. Eagle Online will also include links to in-class videos, writing resources, and library links. Sign in often for new information.

**Helpful Hints:** Do not complete any assignments in the text box provided by Eagle Online. Instead, work on your assignments in a word processing program (such as Microsoft Word, Notepad, or Open Office) so that you can save them regularly as you work. Once the assignment is complete, you can save it a final time and then cut and paste it into the text box provided.

### Important Information

Students should check their course schedule in the syllabus for keeping up with the reading assignments in the text. A course calendar with reading, tests, and assignments has been provided on Eagle Online and in class.

In compliance with the HCC system requirements, the course is designed to fulfill six S.C.A.N.S student competencies. Successful completion of the course work

relies very much on the cooperation of both the instructor and the student. Students should complete all reading and written assignment by the stated deadlines (Reading). Reading assignments are given at the end of this syllabus. The nature of the discipline of sociology is such that sensitive and controversial topics will occasionally surface in your reading material. Please bear in mind that the ideas presented in this course do not necessarily reflect the views of your instructor or the institution.

**Attendance:** This is an upper level class and as such all students are expected to attend all classes. They are also expected to be punctual. I do understand that life happens and sometimes that it is not possible to attend, but this should be the exception rather than the rule. Students are requested to turn off cell phones before coming to class. If you have an urgent call, leave to classroom to answer that call.

**Weekly Activities/Discussions:** This class will have at least one to two assignments each week to determine your knowledge of topic matter at hand. It is vitally important that you stay on top of the readings so that you will be able to complete each assignment. Some of these assignments will be simple quizzes while others may be a short writing over a special topic from that week. Each assignment is worth 10-20 points apiece.

Most weeks, we will have a peer discussion where I post a video and/or a question related to that week's readings. It will be your responsibility to post your initial posting as well as to meaningfully respond to at least 2 of your peers in order to receive access to the maximum points possible for each discussion. Sometimes our discussion will be facilitated in class, so it is important that you watch the videos prior to class so that you can be an active part of that discussion.

Assignments and discussion prompts will be posted on Sunday evenings and the corresponding due dates will be noted on the assignment in Eagle Online. Please be mindful of those as assignments in the same week can (and usually will) have different due dates. We will talk about these assignments the week prior in class so that you completely understand what is expected of you in the coming weeks.

***\*\*\*Please note-if you are not completing the weekly assignments you can be dropped from the course. You must complete the first week's course assignments (course contract and welcome assignment) if you want to stay enrolled in the class. You must complete the first two exams on time if you do not want to be dropped from the course. Failure to complete these assignments will result in you being dropped from the class. \*\*\****

### **Paper Assignments/Presentations (No Plagiarism, No Extensions, and No Makeups)**

Each student is to write major one writing assignment. Each student will also complete a presentation over that writing assignment. The choices for this assignment will be posted in Eagle Online and will be discussed in detail in class.

This assignment is due on **November 30th, 2015**. Class Presentations will be conducted on **December 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>**.

**Exams:** You will be required to complete four exams during your tenure in this course. Each exam will cover your assigned readings/videos and discussions from that learning unit. Exams will be given in Eagle Online (EO2) and do not require you going to any campus to have the exam proctored.

### **Expectations**

Additionally, it is your responsibility to actively engage in the process of learning and thinking. Learning is not a passive process whereby experts impart knowledge upon you; rather, learning is an active process that requires extensive effort and involvement from both the teacher and the student. **I expect you to focus on truly learning and understanding the material, not simply committing it to memory.** Please note that your education is not simply a means to an end (such as a better career or higher income), but is also an end in and of itself – try to slow down and enjoy the learning process!

Understand that I truly care about your performance in this class. I will always be available to speak with you about your progress in the course as well as how to move forward successfully in this class. However, you will need to be proactive and reach out to me when you believe that there is an issue/concern you would like to address. Please do not wait until the end of the course to address grade concerns etc. as usually that is too late to do anything about it.

### **Instructor Requirements**

As your Instructor, it is **the professor's** 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
- Describe and direct any special projects or assignments
- Inform students of policies such as attendance, withdrawal, tardiness and policies on make-up work.
- Provide the course outline and class calendar. There will also be separate handouts and occasional verbal instructions for assignments not included in the course calendar.  
Be available at mutually convenient times of professor and student to meet either before or after class as needed, or at another scheduled time a

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

- Attend class and participate in class discussions and activities, both inside and outside of class
- Read and comprehend the textbook
- Take good written notes
- Constantly look for ways to apply the course concepts to specific experiences in your own life. Make connections between what you read or hear in class and your life outside of class.

- Talk about the course material. Weave it into discussions outside of class. Teach some of the concepts and theories to your friends and family. It will give you something new and interesting to talk about! (Much more interesting than the weather!)
- Complete the required assignments and exams:
- Meet all course requirements and assignments
- Ask for help when there is a question or problem
- Keep copies of all paperwork, including this syllabus, handouts and all assignments
- Make a commitment to do your very best work in the class. Be consistent. Follow instructions very carefully.

### **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.

### **Make-up Policy.**

Makeups are done at the discretion of the instructor. Please email me as soon as you see an issue/concern about a deadline and we can see what (if anything) can be worked out. Good time management skills are a must in an online class. Again, if an issue arises, please notify me sooner rather than later. Each case will be evaluated on its merit. **Do not wait until the end of the semester to notify the instructor. As soon as an issue arises is best.\***

### **Course Calendar**

*\*\*Please note that the instructor reserves the right to modify the course calendar and/or syllabus at any point during the course. It is your responsibility to stay up to date on changes within the syllabus. Note: This is where reading the announcements will become essential. \*\**

We will both discuss each week's assignments in class. I will also post each assignment (with complete instructions) If you have questions about the assignments, please talk to me as soon as you are having issues-do not wait until the night before (or the day) the assignment is due. Unless specifically stated by the instructor-each week will have at least one assignment.

### **Week 1: Week of August 24- August 28**

Getting to Know You

Course Contract Assignment

News in Texas Discussion

Political Orientation Quiz

**Week 2: Week of August 31- September 4**

Chapter 1 (Environment of Texas Politics)

Texas Trivia (In Class Activity)

**Week 3: Week of September 7- September 11**

Chapter 2 (Federalism and the Texas Constitution)

Library Visit

**Week 4: Week of September 14- September 18**

Chapter 3 (Local Governments)

In Class Discussion

**\*\*\*Exam One\*\*\* Opens on September 17th and due on September 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Week 5: Week of September 21- September 25**

Chapter 4 (Political Parties)

Chapter 5 (Campaigns and Elections)

**Week 6: Week of September 28- October 2**

Chapter 6 (Media and Politics)

Political Candidate/Party Paper Due -September 30

**Week 7: Week of October 5- October 9**

In Class Movie and Discussion

**Week 8: Week of October 12- October 16**

Chapter 7 (Politics and Interest Groups)

**\*\*\*Exam II open on October 15<sup>th</sup> and due on October 18<sup>th</sup>\*\*\***



**Week 9: Week of October 19- October 23**

Chapter 8 (Legislative Branch)

**Week 10: Week of October 26- October 30**

Chapter 9 (Executive Branch)

**Week 11: Week of November 2- November 6**

Chapter 11 (Judicial Branch)

In Class Movie and Discussion

**Week 12: Week of November 9- November 13**

Chapter 10 (Public Policy and Administration)

Chapter 13 (Finance and Fiscal Policy)

**Week 13: Week of November 16- November 20**

Chapter 12 (Criminal Justice System)

In Class Movie

**\*\*Exam III Opens on Nov 20<sup>th</sup> and closes on November 22nd\*\***

**Week 14: Week of November 23- November 27**

In Class Movie Discussion

Movie Paper Due (November 24<sup>th</sup>)

**Week 15: Week of November 30- December 4**

**\*\*Final Paper Due by November 30<sup>th</sup>\*\***

**\*\*Final Presentations Due by November 30<sup>th</sup>\*\***

**Presentations will be done in class on Dec 1<sup>st</sup> and Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>**

## **Week 16: Week of December 7- December 11**

### **FINAL EXAM WEEK**

**EGLS3:** The EGLS3 (Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System) is available for most courses near the end of the term before finals start. (Not all courses are available for this survey.) This brief survey will give invaluable information to your faculty about their teaching. Results are anonymous and will be available to faculty and division chairs a month after the end of the term. Website: <http://www.hccs.edu/district/students/egls3/>

#### **Departmental Contact Information:**

Chair: Evelyn Ballard

713-718-2490

[evelyn.ballard@hccs.edu](mailto:evelyn.ballard@hccs.edu)

### **HCCS POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

#### **HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT**

*The Houston Community College is an open admission, public institution of higher education offering associate degrees, certificates, academic preparation, workforce training, and lifelong learning opportunities that prepare individuals in our diverse communities for life and work in an increasingly international and technological society.*

#### **HCC ADA Policy**

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 are authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office. For more information, go to the HCC ADA Website or call Dr. Becky Hauri at (713) 718-7910.

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.

## **HCC Distance Education Policy Statement**

*All students are responsible for reading and understanding the DE Student Handbook, which contains policies, information about conduct, and other important information. For the DE Student Handbook click on the link below or go to the DE page on the HCC website.*

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>.

### **HCC Policy Statement: Meningitis Immunization**

Texas Senate Bill 1107 passed in May 2011, requires that new HCC students and former HCC students returning after an absence of at least one fall or spring semester who are under the age of 30 are required to present a physician-signed certificate showing they have been vaccinated against bacterial meningitis. Students must satisfy this requirement prior to enrollment. For more information and a list of exemptions please go to <http://www.hccs.edu/hccs/admissions-registration-center/new-student-general-admissions-steps/submit-meningitis-documentation>.

### **HCC Policy Statement: Attendance**

Students are expected to login to Eagle Online regularly. Students who do not login to Eagle Online by the day of record will be dropped from the course. Instructors also have the authority to drop a student for not logging in regularly and participating.

### **HCC Policy Statement: Repeating Courses**

The State of Texas encourages students to complete college without having to repeat failed classes. To increase student success, students who repeat the same course more than twice, are required to pay extra tuition. The purpose of this extra tuition fee is to encourage students to pass their courses and to graduate. Effective fall 2006, HCC will charge a higher tuition rate to students registering the third or subsequent time for a course. 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.

### **HCC Policy Statement: Withdrawal**

If you feel that you cannot complete this course, you will need to withdraw from the course prior to the final date of withdrawal. Before, you withdraw from your course; please take the time to meet with the instructor to discuss why you feel it is necessary to do so. The instructor may be able to provide you with suggestions that would enable you to complete the course. Your success is very important. Beginning in Fall 2007, the Texas Legislature passed a law limiting

first time entering freshmen to no more than SIX total course withdrawals throughout their educational career in obtaining a certificate and/or degree. If you plan on withdrawing from your class, you MUST contact a HCC counselor or your professor prior to withdrawing (dropping) the class for approval and this must be done PRIOR to the withdrawal deadline to receive a "W" on your transcript. Final withdrawal deadlines vary each semester and/or depending on class length, please visit the online registration calendars, HCC schedule of classes and catalog, any HCC Registration Office, or any HCC counselor to determine class withdrawal deadlines. Remember to allow a 24-hour response time when communicating via email and/or telephone with a professor and/or counselor. Do not submit a request to discuss withdrawal options less than a day before the deadline. If you do not withdraw before the deadline, you will receive the grade that you are making in the class as your final grade.

**Fall 2015 Final Withdrawal deadlines:**

- **October 30th, 2015**

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 Course Reinstatement Policy:**

Students have a responsibility to arrange payment for their classes when they register, either through cash, credit card, financial aid, or the installment plan. Faculty members have a responsibility to check their class rolls regularly, especially during the early weeks of a term, and reconcile the official class roll to ensure that no one is attending class whose name does not appear on it. Students who are dropped from their courses for nonpayment of tuition and fees who request reinstatement after the official date of record payment of tuition and fees who request reinstatement after the official date of record (OE Date) can be reinstated by making payment in full and paying an additional \$75 per course reinstatement fee. A student requesting reinstatement should present the registrar with a completed Enrollment Authorization Form with the signature of the instructor, department chair, or dean who should verify that the student has been regularly attending class. Students who are reinstated are responsible for all course policies and procedures, including attendance requirements. A dean may waive the reinstatement fee upon determination that the student was dropped because of a college error. The dean should note the nature of the error in a memo to the registrar with appropriate documentation.

**\*\*Instructor reserves the right to modify the course syllabus during the semester.\*\***

**Good luck in the coming weeks!!!**