

Syllabus

Introduction to Sociology

Government 2306

Spring 2015

Monday/Wednesday 7:00pm-8:30pm

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

Email: n.boutteheiniluoma@hccs.edu or if absolutely necessary nikkybh@gmail.com

Office Location: Northline Rm 310. M/W 2:30pm-4:30pm. Please contact me via email if these times do not work for you so that we can set up an appt. time for us to meet.

CRN: 49973

Required Text: Lyle C. Brown, Joyce A. Langenegger, Sonia R. Garcia, Ted A. Lewis, Robert E. Biles. 2014. *Practicing Texas Politics, 15th Edition*. Wadsworth Cengage Learning. Loose Leaf Edition (HCC Bookstore)

Course Description: Government 2306 is one of two courses designed to introduce students to the study of the origin and development of the Texas constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and inter-governmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas. This course is included in the core curriculum of HCCS.

Course Dates: Monday, January 19, 2015 - Sunday, May 10, 2015

Meeting Days: Monday/Wednesday 7:00pm-8:30pm

Course Goals:

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.
- 9) To further develop competencies such as

- a. Comprehending college level texts
- b. Writing in ways that effectively and persuasively explain one's viewpoints
- c. Critical thinking
- d. Learning to hear and respect the views and opinions of others
- e. Computer literacy

Departmental Student Learning Objectives

- Identify and describe the institutions of the government of the State of Texas.
- Identify and evaluate information sources for political news, data, and opinion.
- Analyze the effects of the historical, social, political, economic, and cultural forces on politics and government.

Course Requirements

1. Complete all required reading assignments prior to each class
2. Attend class (100 points)
3. Three exams (each exam is worth 100 points)
4. Class Activities (200)
5. Complete one major paper writing assignment (100 points)
6. Complete one presentation over final paper assignment (100 points)
7. Abstract (15 points)
8. Annotated Bibliography (35 points)
9. Rough Draft (50 points)
10. Two Current Events assignments (50 points apiece)

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
Class Activities	200 points
Exams	300 points
Two CE Papers	100 points
Abstract	15 points
Annotated Bibliography	35 points
Rough Draft	50 points
<u>Paper/Presentation</u>	<u>200 points</u>
Total	1000 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.

Weekly Activities: This class will have in class and/or homework 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. Each assignment is worth 10-20 points apiece. All assignments will be given the week before they are due and you will be expected to have them completed for class/classes the following week.

Current Event Papers: Throughout the semester we will be discussing current events at both the state and national level. For these two papers, you will need to pick a relevant political event in Texas and write a 1.5 to 2 page paper over them. 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.

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

Each student is to write major one writing assignment. This commentary paper will be a 5-7 page paper on a topic of a specific (preapproved) governmental policy, an agency or a relevant issue in the state of Texas. The purpose of this paper is for you to expand your current knowledge base and to do research on the subject that you selected. This paper is a fact based paper (not just opinion) but you are also allowed to include your own ideas and thoughts on the topic as long as those ideas are grounded in the research. We will talk more about this paper in the class.

This assignment is due on **April 26th, 2015**.

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 your paper should be **between six to eight pages in length**. Please remember to cite sources for statements of fact or any statement not attributable to you, wherever necessary. APA is the only accepted citation and formatting method.

Each student will present their papers in class on **April 29th or May 4th**. Your presentation should be in powerpoint or prezi format and 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 'hard copy' of your presentation (power point or prezi) is due **on April 27th** (regardless of the day you present on). 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.

Expectations

For the course of this class, 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!

Absences

You are allowed five absences from the class before you will be dropped from the class by the instructor. I know that extenuating circumstances arise and if this occurs, please let me know so that we can see what can be worked out.

Dropping the Course

It is your (the student's) responsibility to drop the course prior to the drop date if you are failing the course. I will advise you of your grades throughout the course of the semester so you can always know where you stand. However, should you so choose to drop this course, please be aware that you only have 6 drops throughout your collegiate career, so make sure to use them wisely.

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 notify me when problems arise to see **if** accommodations are possible.

Spring 2015

Govt 2306

Course Calendar

Week 1: January 21st

Getting to Know You

Course Introduction

Week 2: January 26th/28th

Reading Assignments:

Chapter 1 (The Environment of Texas Politics)

Homework Assignments:

Changing Demographics-1965-2015 (January 26)

Know Your City (History of Houston) (January 28)

Week 3: February 2nd/4th

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 2 (Federalism and the Texas Constitution)

Homework Assignment:

The Pros and Cons of Dual Language in Texas (Due February 2)

Study the News (Due February 4)

Week 4: February 9th/11th

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 3 (Local Governments)

Homework Assignments

Be Active (Due February 9)

Democracy v. Capitalism v. Socialism (Which is Best?) (Due February 11)

Week 5: February 16th/February 18th

NO CLASS ON FEBRUARY 16th

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 4 (Political Parties)

Homework Assignments

The Perfect Candidate (Due February 18th)

*****Exam One*** Opened on February 16 and due on February 23**

Week 6: February 23rd/25th

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 5 (Campaigns and Elections)

Homework Assignments

The Importance of Voting/Right to Vote (February 25th)

*****Paper Topics Due on February 23 *****

Week 7: March 2nd/4th

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 6 (The Politics of Interest Groups)

Homework Assignments

Money, Money, Money (Due March 2nd)

****Current Events Paper One is Due on March 4th****

Week 8: March 9th/11th

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 7 (The Legislature)

In Class Movie

Homework Assignments

Who Represents You? (Due March 9th)

Abstract Due (March 11th)

Week 9: SPRING BREAK

Week 10: March 23rd/25th

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 8 (The Executive)

Homework Assignments

The Tops in Texas (Due March 23)

*****Exam II open on March 25th and due on March 30th*****

Week 11: March 30/April 1st

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 9 (Public Policy and Administration)

Homework Assignment

Public Education in Texas (Due March 30)

APS and CPS (April 1)

****Annotated Bibliography (Due April 1st)****

Week 12: April 6th/April 8th

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 10 (Laws, Courts, and Justice)

Homework Assignments

The Prison Industrial Complex (Due April 6)

Is Justice Fair? (Due April 8)

****Current Event Paper Two Due By April 8th****

Week 13: April 13th/15th

Reading Assignment:

In Class Movie

Homework Assignments:

Movie Summary (Due April 15th)

*****Rough Draft Due by April 17th*****

Week 14: April 20th/22nd

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 11 (Finance and Fiscal Policy)

Homework Assignments

Where Does Your Money Go? (Due April 20)

How to Affect Policy? (Due April 22)

*****Exam Three Opened on April 22nd and Due on April 27th*****

Week 15: April 27th/29th

In Class Wrap Up

Course Presentations

Homework Assignments

Final Paper (Due April 26)

Final Presentation (Due April 27)

Week 16: May 4th/May 6th

Course Presentations

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!!!

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 2015 Final Withdrawal deadlines:

- **March 24, 2015 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.

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