



American Government

**GOVT 2306 - Texas Government
Summer 2017 - CRN 11891
Distance Education**

**3 Semester Credit Hours
48 Contact Hours
5 Week – SII Course**

Instructor

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Note: If you have a problem with your Government course, please contact your instructor before contacting me.

Office Hours

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 or just to discuss course topics by appointment. **My HCC e-mail is the only way to reach me, I check this mailbox Monday-Thursday. I will not respond to other e-mail accounts.**

Course Description

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.

Prerequisite, Co-requisite

Must have passed or co-enrolled in English 1301 (Composition I) as a co-requisite.

Academic Program Learning Outcomes

1. Identify the structure, functions and nature of the institutions of government in Texas.
2. Understand and describe the development, purpose and attributes of the Texas Constitution.

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4. Identify the policy making process and comprehend the outcomes of state and local policy in Texas.
5. Understand how political values and ideas are developed and expressed and the means through which one may engage in the political system.
6. Comprehend how interest groups, parties and the structure of the political system influence political participation.

Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

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

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 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.

CALENDAR

MODULE ONE

Introduction

Discussion

MODULE TWO

Chapter 1: The Environment of Texas Politics
Chapter 2: Federalism and the Texas Constitution
Discussion

MODULE THREE

Chapter 3: Local Governments
Discussion

MODULE FOUR

Exam 1 Due Monday, July 24, 2017 at 11:55 p.m.

MODULE FIVE

Chapter 4: Political Parties
Discussion

MODULE SIX

Chapter 5: Campaigns and Elections
Discussion

MODULE SEVEN

Chapter 6: The Media and Politics
Chapter 7: The Politics of Interest Groups
Discussion

MODULE EIGHT

Exam 2 Due Monday, August 7, 2017 at 11:55 p.m.

Instructional Methods

This internet government course will cover the same materials as the traditional in-class course. The major difference is that this course is entirely online. This course assumes that you have basic computer skills, or a basic level of computer literacy. By the end of the course, you will be comfortable navigating a "virtual classroom," participating in online discussions, surfing the web for supplementary information about government and politics - this supplementary information will be both written and visual. Your grades will be available on Canvas.

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, assessments and discussions in a high quality manner. It is your responsibility to log in regularly, participate in discussions, 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.

Student Assignments

Assignments have been developed that will enhance your learning. To better understand a topic, you will be given assignments on key information that you will need to become successful in this course. Students will be required to successfully complete the following:

Discussions

Each discussion grade will depend on the quality of the thought that goes into each response. Students are expected to provide college-level responses and at least a paragraph that explains their position on the discussion topic. Discussions are designed to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the course materials in written form. All discussions must be posted to the corresponding module in Canvas. **Students will have until the time that the exam closes to complete the corresponding discussions. Discussions posted after the deadline will not count towards a student's grade.**

Exams

The exams will be taken online on specific dates. You will be allowed to use your textbooks and notes for the exams, but you must read and make notes before the exam - there will not be enough time to look up each answer if you are not already very familiar with the material. Each exam will have 55 multiple-choice questions and you will have 75 minutes for each exam. Students will only be able to access an exam one time. **All students are encouraged to use a secure internet connection when completing all online assignments.**

Quizzes

It is up to the discretion of the instructor to assign quizzes if class participation is lacking or if it is apparent that reading assignments are not being completed. Quizzes could be announced or unannounced and consist of short answer questions regarding the reading assignments.

Lectures

The lectures are available on the class site. The materials in the lectures will be covered on your exams.

Extra Credit

Participating in thoughtful exchanges with classmates about the discussion topics is informative and valuable. If you make a valuable comment on another student's post, if you ask a classmate a question to follow-up on her/his post, or if you respond to a query from another classmate about your post, you can earn one bonus point per discussion. Bonus points can only be earned during the time frame of each discussion exercise. Of course, you are encouraged to carry the conversation on beyond the bonus point opportunity to take advantage of this exchange of information with your classmates.

Make-Up Policy

Students may be allowed to make up missed assignments if they experience an emergency that prevents them from submitting an assignment by the due date and can provide a documented excuse. Acceptable documented excuses include: medical emergencies, the death of an immediate family member, military deployment or service, family emergencies and legal situations on a case by case basis. If you or an immediate family member encounters any of the aforementioned situations, please contact your professor immediately to determine if your documentation is in line with the make-up policy. All documentation submitted must include dates, the name(s) of the individuals involved and demonstrate that the student was unable to complete the assignment based on the time frame of the event. Feel free to contact your professor with any questions.

Grading Scale

90-100% = A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

Less than 60% = F

Instructor Grading Criteria

Your instructor will conduct quizzes, exams, and assessments that you can use to determine how successful you are at achieving the course learning outcomes (mastery of course content and skills) outlined in the syllabus. If you find you are not mastering the material and skills, you are encouraged to reflect on how you study and prepare for each class. Your instructor welcomes a dialogue on what you discover and may be able to assist you in finding resources that will improve your performance. **All grades will be posted within 1 week of the exam closing. Student discussions posted after the designated timeframe, will not be added to their grade.**

Grading Scale

The following grading scale will be used:

155-170 Points = A

139-154 Points = B

123-138 Points = C

107-122 Points = D

Less than 106 Points = F

All exams will be taken online. Each of the exams will be available on specific dates - these are listed in this syllabus.

Points Per Assignment

6 Discussions (10 pts. per discussion)	60 points
2 Exams (55 points per exam)	110 points
Total	170 points

Incomplete ("I")

You will receive an "I" (incomplete) only in the event of a documented emergency that prevents you from completing the final exam. You must speak with your instructor as soon as possible in the event of such an emergency to arrange a course completion schedule. If you receive an "I," you must arrange with the instructor to complete the course work before the end of the next long semester. All "I" designations must be changed to grades prior to graduation.

Instructional Materials

Practicing Texas Politics, 2015-2016 Edition by L. C. Brown, A. A. Langenegger, S. R. Garcia, T. A. Lewis, R. E. Biles, R. Rynbrandt and V. Reyna. 2016. ISBN 978-1-285-85310-9. Cengage Learning.

HCC Policies

ADA Policy

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 documental disability (physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the ADA counselor at the beginning of each semester. There is a Disability Support Services Office at each campus. To find the name of the ADA counselor at your campus, visit www.hccs.edu, then click future students, scroll down the page and click on the words Disability Information. Faculty members are authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office.

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 are 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.

Scholastic Dishonesty

HCCS students are responsible for conducting themselves with honor and integrity in fulfilling course requirements. Penalties and/or disciplinary proceedings may be initiated by HCC System officials against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty.

"Scholastic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating on a test includes but is not limited to: Copying from another student's test paper; using unauthorized materials during a test, unauthorized collaboration with another student during a test; knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of a test; and bribing another person to obtain a copy of a test. Plagiarism includes the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work. Collusion includes the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work.

Class Attendance

As stated in the HCC Student Handbook, all students are expected to attend classes regularly. Students are also responsible for materials covered during their absences. It is the student's responsibility to consult with their instructor for make-up assignments. Class attendance is monitored daily. It is the students' responsibility to drop a course for nonattendance. **I will not drop a student. It is the student's responsibility to process the paperwork before the due date.** Failure to withdraw officially can result in a grade of "F" in the course.

Students in DE courses must log into their Canvas class or they will be counted as absent. DE students who do not login and “actively participate” **before** the Official Day of Record will be AUTOMATICALLY dropped for non-attendance. Completing the DE online orientation does not count towards attendance. **The Official Day of Record for this course is Thursday, July 13, 2017.** Although it is the responsibility of the student to withdraw officially from a course, the professor also has the authority to block a student from accessing Canvas, and/or to withdraw a student for excessive absences or failure to participate regularly.

If you are having technical difficulties and cannot login, you must immediately contact your instructor and the Canvas Help desk or you will be counted as absent.

Withdrawals

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

The drop/withdrawal date this semester is Monday, July 31, 2017.

Repeating Courses

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

HCC Student Handbook

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

Distance Education

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/media/houston-community->

[college/distance-education/student-services/pdf/2015-HCC-DE-Student-Handbook-%28Revised-5%2015%29_will.pdf](#)

This syllabus is meant as a guide and is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. If there are any changes made, the student will be notified in a timely manner.