



AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Course Title	GOVT 2305: American Government: Federal Constitution & Topics
Semester and Year:	Fall 2015
Class Days and Times:	Tuesday & Thursday (8:00-9:30am)
CRN Number	89766 (16 WEEKS, 48 CONTACT HOURS)
Location of Class:	ROOM# B110, ALIEF-HAYES CAMPUS
Instructor:	Steven N. Tran
Office Hours:	Monday-Wednesday 10—12pm at Alief Hayes Campus, Room C408 Also by appointment
Office Phone:	713-718-5979 (Leave a Message)
E-mail:	steven.tran@hccs.edu (Preferred form of Communication)
Department Chair Contact Information	Evelyn Ballard Chair-Government Department Evelyn.ballard@hccs.edu 713-718-2490
Course Prerequisite or Co-Requisite	Must have passed ENGL 1301 (Composition I) or co-enrolled in ENGL 1301 as a co-requisite.

Purpose of the Course:

Government 2305 is one of two courses designed to introduce students to the study of the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution, structure and powers of the national government including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public policy, civil liberties and civil rights. 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.

Required Text:

Geer, John G, Wendy J Schiller, Richard Herrera, & Jeffrey A Segal (2016) *Gateways to Democracy: An Introduction to American Government, 3rd Edition*. Cengage.

Recommended:

Study Guides are available on-line to accompany the required texts. Students are also encouraged to follow current political events by reading newspapers and following media news reports.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, each student will be able to:

1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.
6. Analyze the election process.
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens
8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

Grades

EXAMS (50 POINTS EACH; 150 POINTS TOTAL):

Three exams will be administered during the semester. Though each exam should cover primarily assigned material from the text, it certainly will be to your benefit to keep up with the assigned chapter readings. The exams should not be difficult and you should have no problems doing well on the exam provided that you attend every class, take thorough notes, and keep up with the assigned readings.

Students are expected to arrive on time at the beginning of class on the day of the exam. Once the first test-taker turns in his exam, students arriving afterwards will NOT be allowed to take that test. *Students are required to supply their own no. 2 pencil and Scantron Form 882.*

~~I STRONGLY recommend that you make yourself available for the exam date. However, should you have to miss either the first or second exam for any reason, you may take a makeup exam 3. Students who miss BOTH Exams 1 and 2 will be allowed to make up only one of the two exams. Check the schedule for the designated makeup exam date.~~

~~The makeup option does NOT apply towards Exam 3, as the makeup exam date is scheduled before Exam 3's date. Students who miss the third exam will have VERY limited, if any opportunity to makeup Exam 3 given its proximity towards the end of the semester. Expect the makeup exam to be at least subtly different from the originally scheduled exam, but not necessarily more difficult. Typically, students do not perform as well on the makeup.~~

I STRONGLY recommend that you make yourself available for the exam date. As a rule, I do not offer make-up exams to students who miss an exam. Exceptions may be made ONLY under the direst of circumstances that MUST be supported by legitimate documentation. At a very minimum, students should consult with me about their missing the Exam. Expect the makeup exam to be at least subtly different from the originally scheduled exam, but not necessarily more difficult. Typically, students do not perform as well on the makeup.

IN-CLASS QUIZZES (7 POINTS PER QUIZ, 40 POINTS TOTAL)

Expect there to be about six quizzes assigned throughout the course. Simply put, while there may be classes in which no quiz is given, it is generally safe to assume there will be quizzes every day. These

quizzes will be mostly short answer format and are intended to encourage students to keep up with assigned readings and lectures. Quizzes will be worth around 7 points each and, when combined, should sum up to a maximum possibility of 40 points. All quizzes are open note and textbook. *There will be absolutely NO makeups to any missed quizzes.NO EXCEPTIONS!!!*

TWO PAPER ASSIGNMENTS (30 POINTS PER ESSAY, 60 POINTS TOTAL):

You will also be given two short paper assignments. More information concerning the specific assignment themselves will be provided later during this term as the course progresses. It is the student's responsibility to remain up to speed once details concerning these assignments become available to the class.

Papers are required to be submitted BOTH in class AND electronically through Eagle Online. To submit your paper through Eagle Online, students will need to either look for the "Turnitin Activities" tab found under the "Assignments" tab found on the left side of your screen or on "Paper Assignments" found somewhere near the middle of your screen (you may have to scroll down to see the link). Papers not submitted to www.turnitin.com by weekend following the paper deadline WILL NOT be graded.

When submitted to Eagle Online, your paper will also be submitted to www.turnitin.com, an antiplagiarism tool many professors use to check for plagiarism. Papers in which www.turnitin.com reports at least 20% of which are from uncited and/or improperly outside sources also WILL NOT be graded.

EXTRA CREDIT

Any and all extra credit opportunities to improve your grade will be announced ONLY in class. Points awarded will be calculated in your overall grade in addition to points earned at the end of the semester. No other extra credit chances will be provided beyond what I announce in class.

LETTER GRADE ASSIGNMENT:

To calculate your grade, simply add up your top three exam scores and both of your written assignments. You can earn a maximum of 250 points.

Course Assignments	Points for Each Assignment
EXAM 1	50 POINTS
EXAM 2	50 POINTS
EXAM 3	50 POINTS
QUIZZES	40 POINTS
PAPER 1	30 POINTS
PAPER 2	30 POINTS
TOTAL	250 POINTS

After adding up all the necessary grades, match your total number with the appropriate letter grade as follows below.

Total Points	Letter Grade
225-250	A
200-224	B
175-199	C
150-174	D
0-149	F

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

While you should expect attendance to be taken everyday, aside from missing any quizzes and/or in-class assignments administered that day, there will be no other direct penalty for being absent. However, much of the material tested over will consist of information I present in class. It is the student's responsibility to obtain lecture notes from other students should they miss a class. My personal lecture notes will not be made available to students.

CLASS PARTICIPATION POLICY:

There is no penalty for not participating in class discussions, but I will discuss current events and politics and you are welcome to add to these political discussions. There is also no such thing as a dumb question. Please feel free to ask any question and engage in political discussions relevant to the class. Please also be cognizant that there are fellow students who may not necessarily agree with your point of view. So please engage in any and all discussions in a civil, mature manner.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

Students with disabilities who need to use a recording device as a reasonable accommodation should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities for information regarding reasonable accommodations.

Laptop computers are permitted for note-taking purposes on a conditional basis. However, if it is clear to me that laptops become a source of disruption at any point during the semester, I reserve the right to prohibit any and all laptop use.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE POLICY:

Disruptive behavior/ activities, which interfere with teaching and /or learning will not be tolerated, and may result in an administrative withdrawal without refund. At a minimum, such disruption may result in the student in question being asked to leave the classroom and not be allowed back until a sincere, contrite apology is forthcoming.

While I will be happy to discuss any grade inquiries and concerns with students especially on graded written assignments, I will not discuss grades individually until AT LEAST 24 hours after I hand back these assignments. Patience is virtue.

Student Notification Statements:

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. Logging into a DE course 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 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.

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY:

Houston Community College is committed to a high standard of academic integrity in the academic community. In becoming a part of the academic community, students are responsible for honesty and independent effort. Examples of these violations include, but are not limited to, the following: Plagiarizing written work or projects, cheating on exams or assignments, collusion on an exam or project, and misrepresentation of credentials or prerequisites when registering for a course.

Simply put, violations of academic integrity will NOT be tolerated. At a minimum, a grade of "0" will be recorded on the assignment or exam in question. Additional sanctions may include but are not necessarily

limited to the following: Being assigned a grade of "F" for the course, being withdrawn from the course, or being expelled from the College.

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 documented 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.

EGLS3: At Houston Community College, professors believe that thoughtful student feedback is necessary to improve teaching and learning. During a designated time near the end of the term, 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 department 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.

HCC Course Withdrawal Policy: 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 April 5, 2015

Student Services: DISTANCE EDUCATION ADVISING AND COUNSELING SERVICES: Much DE student information can be found on the DE Student Services website: de.hccs.edu. Advising or counseling can be accomplished through our online request form [AskDECounseling](#). Counselors and Student Services Associates (SSA) can assist students with admissions, registration, entrance testing requirements, degree planning, transfer issues, and career counseling. In-person, confidential sessions, can also be scheduled to provide brief counseling and community referrals to address personal concerns impacting academic success.

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.

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.

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 2305/2306 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.

Government Program Student Learning Outcomes

1. Identify and describe the institutions of American national government. GOVT 2302/2305
2. Identify and describe the institutions of the State of Texas government. GOVT 2302/2306
3. Identify and evaluate information sources for political news, data, and opinion. GOVT 2306
4. Analyze the effects of the historical, social, political, economic, and cultural forces on politics and government. GOVT 2306
5. Recognize and assume the responsibilities of citizenship by developing one's critical thinking skills, engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media. GOVT 2305

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/>

Course Calendar and Assignments

CLASS DATE	READING ASSIGNMENT	REFERENCE CHAPTER
1/19	Syllabus and Course Expectations	
1/21 & 1/26	US Political Landscape	<i>1, Declaration of Independence</i>
1/28	Public Opinion	6
2/2	The Media	7
2/4-2/9	Elections & Campaigns	10
2/11	Voting & Participation	11
2/16	Interest Groups	8
2/18-2/23	Political parties	9
2/23	Paper 1 Due	
2/25	Exam 1	
3/1-3/3	US Constitution	<i>2, US Constitution</i>
3/8 & 3/22	Federalism	<i>3, Federalist #10</i>
3/10	<i>Class Cancellation</i>	
3/15 & 3/17	Spring Break: No Classes!	
3/24-3/29	<i>US Congress</i>	<i>12, Federalist #51</i>
3/31-4/5	<i>US Presidency & Bureaucracy</i>	13 & 14
4/7-4/12	<i>US Judiciary</i>	<i>15, Federalist #78</i>
4/14	<i>Exam 2</i>	
4/19-4/21	Public Policy: Foreign & Domestic	16
4/21	<i>Exam 1 or Exam 2 Makeup (See New Makeup Policy)</i>	
4/26-4/28	Civil Liberties	4
5/3-5/5	Civil Rights	5
5/5	Paper 2 Due	
5/12	Exam 3	

****The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus at any point during the semester ****