



# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

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Course Title	<b>GOVT 2305: American Government: Federal Constitution &amp; Topics</b>
Semester and Year:	<b>Spring 2017</b>
Class Days and Times:	<b>Monday &amp; Wednesday (9:30-11:00)</b>
CRN Number	<b>13344 (16 WEEKS, 48 CONTACT HOURS)</b>
Location of Class:	<b>ROOM# B110, ALIEF-HAYES CAMPUS</b>
Instructor:	<b>Steven N. Tran</b>
Office Hours:	<b>Tuesday 10:00—3:00pm at Alief Hayes Campus, Room C408</b> <b>Also by appointment</b>
Office Phone:	<b>713-718-6979 (Leave a Message)</b>
E-mail:	<b><a href="mailto:steven.tran@hccs.edu">steven.tran@hccs.edu</a> (Preferred form of Communication)</b>
Department Chair Contact Information	<b>Evelyn Ballard</b> <b>Chair-Government Department</b> <b><a href="mailto:Evelyn.ballard@hccs.edu">Evelyn.ballard@hccs.edu</a></b> <b>713-718-2490</b>
Course Prerequisite or Co-Requisite	<b>Must have passed ENGL 1301 (Composition I) or co-enrolled in ENGL 1301 as a co-requisite.</b>

## **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:**

Patterson, Thomas (2017) *We the People: An Introduction to American Government, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition*. McGraw-Hill. (Pilot)

Note: The textbook would be completely digital and is provided to students for free this semester.

**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.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Identify and describe the institutions of American national government. GOVT 2305
2. Identify and describe the institutions of the State of Texas government. GOVT 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

**Grades**

**EXAMS (100 POINTS EACH; 300 POINTS TOTAL):**

Three exams will be administered during the semester. Each exam, which will include a combination of multiple choice and essay questions, should cover a assigned material from the text and lectures. 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. 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 are required to consult with me about their missing any Exam. Expect the makeup exam to be at least somewhat different from the originally scheduled exam, but not necessarily more difficult. Typically, students do not perform as well on the makeup.

**ONLINE QUIZZES (10 POINTS PER QUIZ, 100 POINTS TOTAL)**

There will be a total of 12 online quizzes; TWO quizzes of which will either be dropped from your semester point total OR be considered as extra credit. These quizzes will consist of a combination of ten multiple choice questions. All quizzes will be worth between TEN points each and (one point per question), when combined, should sum up to a maximum total of 100 points. The quizzes are intended to insure that students remain up to date with class. A few questions that appear on a quiz MAY appear a second time on the upcoming Exam.

Quizzes will be open note and open practically everything else. Once a quiz is made available for students to start on, you will have ample time to submit answers to all quiz questions. Students only have once chance to turn in quizzes.

**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 400 points.

<b>Course Assignments</b>	<b>Points for Each Assignment</b>
EXAM 1	100 POINTS
EXAM 2	100 POINTS
EXAM 3	100 POINTS
QUIZZES	100 POINTS
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>400 POINTS</b>

  

<b>Course Assignments</b>	<b>Points for Each Assignment</b>
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After adding up all the necessary grades, match your total number with the appropriate letter grade as follows below.

<b>Total Points</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>
360-400	A
320-359	B
280-319	C
240-279	D
0-239	F

**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.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

While you should expect attendance to be taken every 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 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](http://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](http://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.

**Student Services:** DISTANCE EDUCATION ADVISING AND COUNSELING SERVICES: Much DE student information can be found on the DE Student Services website: [de.hccs.edu](http://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**

- \* Identify the structure, functions and nature of the institutions of the American national government.
- \* Understand and describe the development, purpose and attributes of the US Constitution
- \* Identify the policy making process and comprehend the outcomes of foreign and domestic policy in the United States.
- \* Understand how political values and ideas are developed and expressed and the means through which one may engage in the political system.
- \* Comprehend how media, interest groups, parties and the structure of the political system influence political participation.

**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/>

### **Other important dates:**

Martin Luther King Day: 1/16/17

President's Day: 2/20/17

Spring Break: 3/13/17-3/17/17

Spring Holiday (Easter): 4/14/16

Last day to withdraw with A "W" 4/3/17

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

**Course Calendar and Assignments**

<b>CLASS DATE</b>	<b>READING ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>REFERENCE CHAPTER</b>
1/18	Syllabus and Course Expectations	
1/23	SmartBook Orientation/Pilot	
1/25-1/30	Political Thinking & Political Culture <b>Quiz 1: Due 2/3</b>	1, <i>Declaration of Independence</i>
2/1	Public Opinion & Political Socialization	6
2/6	The News Media <b>Quiz 2 (Ch 6 &amp; 10): Due 2/10</b>	10
2/8-2/13	Interest Groups <b>Quiz 3: Due 2/17</b>	9
2/15-2/20	Political parties, Candidates, and Campaigns <b>Quiz 4: Due 2/24</b>	8
2/22-2/27	Voting & Participation <b>Quiz 5: Due 3/3</b>	7
3/1	<b>Exam 1</b>	
3/6-3/8	Constitutional Democracy <b>Quiz 6: Due 3/10</b>	2, <i>US Constitution</i>
3/13-3/15	<b>Spring Break: No Classes</b>	
3/20	Federalism	3, <i>Federalist #10</i>
3/22-3/27	Congress <b>Quiz 7 (Ch. 3 &amp; 11): Due 3/31</b>	11, <i>Federalist #51</i>
3/29-4/3	The Presidency and Federal Bureaucracy <b>Quiz 8 (Ch. 12 &amp; 13): Due 4/7</b>	12 & 13
4/5-4/10	The Federal Judicial System <b>Quiz 9: Due 4/14</b>	14, <i>Federalist #78</i>
4/12	<b>Exam 2</b>	
4/17	Domestic Policy	15 & 16
4/19	Foreign Policy <b>Quiz 10 (Ch. 15-7): Due 4/21</b>	17
4/24-4/26	Civil Liberties <b>Quiz 11: Due 4/28</b>	4
5/1-5/3	Civil Rights <b>Quiz 12: Due 5/5</b>	5
5/8 @ 9AM	<b>Exam 3</b>	