



# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Course Title & Course Number:	<b>GOVT 2305</b>
Semester Hours	<b>3</b>
Department Chair	Evelyn Ballard Government Department evelyn.ballard@hccs.edu 713-718-2490 Note: If you have a problem with your Government course, please contact me before going to the Department Chair.
Semester and Year:	<b>Spring 2016</b>
CRN Number	<b>13355, 13514</b>
Location of Class:	<b>DUAL CREDIT ONLINE (~15 WEEKS, 48 CONTACT HOURS)</b>
Instructor:	<b>Steven N. Tran</b>
E-mail:	<b>Quickmail is preferred (via Eagle Online), HCC email as backup (<a href="mailto:steven.tran@hccs.edu">steven.tran@hccs.edu</a>)</b>
Phone:	<b>713-718-6979 (Leave a message)</b>
Office Hours	<b>Tuesdays 10—3pm at Alief Hayes Campus, Room C408 Also by appointment</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>

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

## **INTRODUCTION**

On behalf of the Government Department faculty, I welcome you to the study of American Government at Houston Community College. This is a TOTALLY online course. You will not need to report to a campus to satisfy any of the course requirements. The course is designed for students who wish to complete their Government course requirements through a reading comprehension-based format. Online courses such as this one are designed for self-motivated students who find it difficult, if not impossible, to complete the required work in a traditional classroom format.

## **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 Texts:**

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

**SPECIAL NOTE ON THE CURRICULUM:** The state of Texas is forcing HCC to change its curriculum this fall. Instead of offering GOVT 2301 and 2302, we are now offering GOVT 2305 and 2306. The material is the same but it is organized differently. Ideally, you would have completed either the combination of GOVT 2301 and 2302 prior to the changes or have taken neither, in which case you would be required to take GOVT 2305 and 2306 from this point onward having taken neither 2301 nor 2302. However, it is possible that there be more than a few students who have taken only one of the courses during the old government sequence (either 2301 or 2302) but not the other. The following combinations have always worked for graduation and will continue to work toward graduation requirements after fall 2013:

GOVT 2301 & 2302 (both taken at HCC or elsewhere)  
GOVT 2305 & 2306 (both taken at HCC or elsewhere)  
GOVT 2301 & GOVT 2305 (both taken at HCC or elsewhere)  
GOVT 2301 & GOVT 2306 (both taken at HCC or elsewhere)  
**GOVT 2302 + 2305 + 2107 (see Note below)**  
**GOVT 2302 + 2306 + 2107 (see Note below)**

**Note:** In these two combinations, the student is either missing the Texas or the US Constitution. If a student has one of these combinations, the student will be required to take an additional one credit hour GOVT course to fulfill the Texas legislative requirement, **GOVT 2107** Federal and Texas Constitutions. **GOVT 2107 will only be offered via online education.**

### **EAGLE ONLINE User ID**

Students should familiarize themselves with communicating through the email portal within Eagle Online (<https://eagleonline.hccs.edu>). Emails sent to my HCC email account may NOT receive a response.

Your EAGLE ONLINE username/password is the same as your HCC Active Directory (AD) and HCC Student email username/password. (Note: This username/password is also used to log-on to computers and printers at the HCC campuses).

If you have never used AD or your HCC student email, you must claim your account [here](#) before using it. Select *Student Claim Policy* from the drop-down menu and then follow instructions. (Note: Your W-number is the same number used for entering the Student Center. If you do not know your W-number, you can retrieve it [here](#)).

Call the HCC IT Help Desk at (713) 718-8800, option 1 for AD and student email phone support.

### **MODE OF INSTRUCTION:**

While the amount of material covered in online courses should not be significantly different (let alone more difficult) than material covered in traditional in-class courses, online courses require a certain level of self-motivation not typically called upon in traditional courses. As such, online students will need to be much more disciplined in dedicated in their studies to excel in computer-based classes such as this one.

To meet the expectations placed in this course, students are required to do several things.

- *First*, students should complete assigned chapter readings in textbook, which are provided in the course schedule found at the end of the syllabus.
- *Second*, students should also take advantage of the modules that correspond with the chapters. Included in these modules are web links to online study guides that provide chapter outlines, additional practice questions, and topical PowerPoint slides related to the textbook.
- *Third*, I also will make class announcements, which will often address questions some of you might have about your status in the class or the general progress of the overall course. Students are encouraged to ask questions pertaining to topics and subtopics that are harder to understand and to also bring forward current events themselves so as long as they add to the course instruction. In short, **DON'T HESITATE TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS OVER THE READING MATERIAL.**

### **EXAMS (80 POINTS FOR EACH EXAM):**

There will be THREE non-comprehensive exams scheduled this term. Each exam will comprise of 50 multiple choice questions (one point per question) AND two short essay questions (15 points each). Students will be given 120 continuous minutes on each exam.

To preserve the integrity and security of each test, all questions will be delivered one at a time. The questions will also be randomized, both in the order of when the questions are asked during the exam and in the order of the possible answer options. In addition, students will only be allowed to move forward during the exam (never backward). That is, once an answer to a question is submitted, students may not go back and change the selected answer. Put another way, an exam question (essay or multiple choice) may appear at any point during the test and students MUST answer the question they see before moving forward.

The multiple choice component on each exam will account for 50 points of your overall grade (one point per correctly answered question). The two essay questions will account for the remaining 30 points on the exam, 15 points per essay.

Students SHOULD NOT take any breaks during the middle of the exam; doing so will count against the minutes remaining to complete the exam. As such, before starting the exam, make sure that all bodily needs have been met and that you are in a distraction-limited environment to insure exam completion within the allotted time.

Students will not find out their grade on any exam until AFTER the exam period closes. No exam will EVER be available for public viewing to preserve the exam's integrity. Students who wish to see the exam questions may only do so through two ways:

- 1) By setting up an appointment to meet with me in person on-site at HCC Alief Hayes Rd. Campus.
- 2) By setting up a phone appointment through the office number I have provided above (Leave a message).

### **MODULE QUIZZES (10 POINTS PER QUIZ, 60 POINTS TOTAL)**

There will be a total of SIX module quizzes. These quizzes, which are available in the assigned module as well as under "Assessments," will consist of a combination of multiple choice questions and true/false 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 60 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.

### **SYLLABUS QUIZ**

In addition to your six module quizzes, there will also be a required syllabus quiz open during the first week of the semester. Unlike module quizzes, students have unlimited opportunities to take and retake the quiz until the maximum number of points (TEN) can be earned. While this quiz will not be an official that grade students can earn, any student who fail to earn the maximum number of points on the syllabus quiz WILL be dropped from the course. The purpose of the syllabus quiz is to insure that all enrolled students become familiar with my course expectations and requirements.<sup>1</sup> Lastly, the format of the syllabus quiz is multiple choice.

### **MAKEUP POLICY**

*I STRONGLY recommend that you make yourself available for the exam date. However, if you have to miss either the first or second exam for any reason, you may take a makeup exam scheduled towards the*

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<sup>1</sup> HINT: While no quizzes are dropped per se, students can fully satisfy the course's quiz requirements by completing only six out of the seven quizzes (module quizzes plus syllabus quiz). Students who complete all quizzes can consider the additional points earned as extra credit.

*end of the semester. Students who miss BOTH Exams 1 and 2 will be allowed to make up only one of the two exams. While the material covered in the makeup exam is similar to material covered in the original exams, students typically do not score as high on the makeup.*

*Exam 3 is also scheduled during the last week of this term. Students who need to makeup Exam 1 or Exam 2 will be scheduled to do so near the end of the semester. STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO MAKE UP THE THIRD EXAM at that time as the makeup exam date is scheduled EITHER during the same week Exam 3 is scheduled OR in the 1-2 weeks prior. Students who miss the third exam will have VERY limited, if any opportunity to makeup Exam 3 given the test's proximity towards the end of the semester. Simply put, making up Exam 3 will be VERY inconveniencing administratively for the student.*

*There will be NO make-ups to missed module quizzes. Expect the deadlines to submit module quizzes to be hard, firm deadlines. Students are also encouraged to start early on these assignments to avoid any potential problems and/or difficulties that may surface as the respective deadlines approach.*

**LATE WORK:**

The deadlines for most assignments (i.e. quizzes and exams) are due at 10:00pm central time. I know it may say 11:00pm or some slightly different time, but HCC's and/or Eagle Online's clock always runs ahead of real time for some unexplained reason. My recommendation: Stay a day or two ahead of the deadlines in case something goes wrong (technical/computer difficulties, the death of a close relative, etc.) as once the deadlines to the respective assignment passes, the assignment themselves CANNOT be reopened.

**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 300 points.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS FOR EACH ASSIGNMENT
EXAM 1	80 POINTS
EXAM 2	80 POINTS
EXAM 3	80 POINTS
QUIZZES	60 POINTS
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300 POINTS</b>

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

TOTAL POINTS	LETTER GRADE
270-300	A
240-259	B
210-239	C
180-209	D
0-179	F

**SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY:**

Houston Community College is committed to a high standard of 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. To become more familiar with HCC's policy on Academic Honesty, refer to the student handbook readily available on the Internet.

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. Pleading ignorance on the rules regulating academic integrity WILL NOT help you.

## **DE STUDENT SERVICES**

The Online Education Student Handbook contains policies and procedures unique to the DE student. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the handbook's contents and part of the mandatory orientation. 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>

### **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.

### **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

**Tentative Lecture Outline:**

CLASS DATE	READING ASSIGNMENT	REFERENCE CHAPTER
1/17-1/20	Introduction & Course Expectations <b>Syllabus Quiz</b> <b>Mandatory meeting 1/20/16 (tentative)</b>	Syllabus
1/23-2/3	US Political Landscape US Constitution Federalism <b>Module Quiz 1 (Due 2/3) @ 10:00pm)</b>	Required: Ch. 1, Ch. 2, & Ch. 3 <i>Recommended: Declaration of Independence, US Constitution, Federalist #10</i>
2/6-2/17	Civil Liberties Civil Rights <b>Module Quiz 2 (Due 2/17 @ 10:00pm)</b>	Ch. 4 & Ch. 5
2/17 (tentative)	<b>Exam 1</b>	
2/20-3/3	Public Opinion News & Social Media Interest Groups <b>Module Quiz 3 (Due 3/3 @ 10:00pm)</b>	Ch. 6 & Ch. 7, & Ch. 8
3/6-3/24	Political Parties Elections & Campaigns Voting & Participation <b>Module Quiz 4 (Due 3/24 @ 10:00pm)</b>	Ch. 9, Ch. 10, & Ch. 11
3/27 (tentative)	<b>Exam 2</b>	
3/27-4/7	US Congress US Judiciary <b>Module Quiz 5 (Due 4/7 @ 10:00pm)</b>	Ch. 12 & Ch. 15 <i>Recommended: Federalist #51, Federalist #78</i>
4/10-4/21	US Presidency Bureaucracy Public Policy <b>Module Quiz 6 (Due 4/21 @ 10:00pm)</b>	Ch. 13, Ch. 14 & Ch. 16
Around 4/24-4/28	<b>Exam 1 or Exam 2 Makeup</b>	
5/5/16 (tentative)	<b>Exam 3</b>	

**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