

**Government 2305—Intro. to American Government**

**Spring 2014**

**Mondays and Wednesdays**

**CRN #81510 @ 8:00am RM 606**

**Professor:** Dr. Verónica Reyna

**Contact Information**

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(Note: that is the number one after my name, *not* the letter “L.”)

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**Office & Office Hours**

Spring Branch Campus #AD2

**By appointment only: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30-2:00pm.**

**By pre-scheduled appointment for other days/times.**

Your performance in my class is very important to me. I am available to meet and discuss not only your academic concerns, but also any relevant ideas or course topics that may be important to you. Feel free to schedule an appointment to meet with me and please let me know if you need to cancel as soon as you can.

**Course Description**

Government 2305 is designed to introduce students to the politics of government at the national level. This course is fully transferable to other colleges and universities with a “C” course grade. Government 2305 is a study of the theories of American democracy and other ideologies, United States Constitution, federalism, Congress, the presidency, the courts, the federal bureaucracy, public policy, political economy, political socialization and public opinion, the media, interest groups, political parties, and elections.

**Course Co-requisites:** Must be placed into college level reading and college-level writing.

### **Instructional Materials**

Bianco, William T. and David T. Canon. 2013. *American Politics Today*. Third Essentials Edition.

**Eagle Online 2.0:** <http://eo2.hccs.edu/>

**Study Space:** <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/polisci/american-politics-today3/essentials/welcome.aspx>

Book Pricing and Availability:

#### **From the HCC Bookstore**

Rental Used	\$48.40
Rental New	55.90
Buy Used	56.25
Buy New	75.00

#### **From the Publisher Norton**

Paperback--\$93.75

<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/978-0-393-92106-9/>

Ebook—downloadable--\$62.49

<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail.aspx?ID=4294974182>

3-hole punch--\$65.62

<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail.aspx?ID=4294969948>

Ebook—online—180 days \$31.25

<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail.aspx?ID=4294974176>

## Social Science Competencies and Course Student Learning Objectives

Social Sciences comprise at least 15 semester hours of each student's core curriculum. Essential to the learning process in the social sciences disciplines are at least six basic intellectual competencies. These include:

- **READING** at the college level, meaning having the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials— books, articles, and documents.
- **WRITING** at the college level, meaning having the ability to produce clear, correct, and coherent prose, adapted to purpose, occasion, and audience. This includes not only grammar, spelling, and punctuation, but the writing process itself.
- **SPEAKING** effectively, meaning oral communication in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience.
- **LISTENING** at the college level, meaning the ability to analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication.
- **CRITICAL THINKING**, embracing methods for applying both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to the subject matter in order to evaluate arguments, solve problems, and construct alternative strategies.
- **COMPUTER LITERACY**, meaning having the ability to use computer-based technology in communicating, solving problems, and acquiring information. Students should also be able to evaluate the limits, problems, and possibilities associated with the use of present and future technologies.

## Program Student Learning Objectives

- To employ the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.
- To examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods, social structures, and cultures.
- To use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.
- To develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.
- To analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the subject of study.
- To comprehend the origins and evolution of the U.S. political system, with a focus on the growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S., federalism, civil liberties, and human rights.
- To understand the evolution and current role of the U.S. in the world.
- To differentiate and analyze historical evidence (documentary and statistical) and differing points of view.
- To recognize and apply reasonable criteria for the acceptability of historical evidence and social research.
- To analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems.
- To recognize and assume one's responsibility as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining

information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy.

- To identify and understand differences and commonalties with diverse cultures.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. U.S political culture and political environments.
2. U.S. Constitution.
3. The Federal System.
4. Civil Liberties.
5. U.S. Congress.
6. U.S. Presidency.
7. U.S. Courts.
8. Federal Bureaucracy.
9. Political Socialization and Public Opinion.
10. U.S. Political Participation.
11. The Media.
12. U.S. Interest Groups.
13. U.S. Political Parties.
14. U.S. Elections.
15. Policy.

### **SCANS or Core Curriculum Competencies**

Reading, Writing, and Critical Thinking.

## Course Calendar

### **I. Foundations**

Week January 13<sup>th</sup>: **Chapter One: Understanding American Politics.**

Week January 20<sup>th</sup>: **Chapter Two: The Constitution and the Founding.**

**Assignment #1 due Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup> by 11:30pm.**

Week January 27<sup>th</sup>: **Chapter Three: Federalism.**

Week February 3<sup>rd</sup>: **Chapter Four: Civil Liberties.**

### **II. Politics**

Week February 10<sup>th</sup>: **Chapter Five: Public Opinion and the Media.**

**Assignment #2 due Saturday, February 15<sup>th</sup> by 11:30pm.**

Week February 17<sup>th</sup>: **Chapter Six: Political Parties.**

Week February 24<sup>th</sup>: **Chapter Seven: Elections.**

**Exam #1 on Chapters 1-4 on February 26<sup>th</sup>.**

Week March 3<sup>rd</sup>: **Chapter Eight: Interest Groups.**

**Assignment #3 is due Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup> by 11:30pm.**

### **III. Institutions**

Week March 17<sup>th</sup>: **Chapter Nine: Congress.**

**Exam #2 on Chapters 5-8 on March 19<sup>th</sup>.**

Week March 24<sup>th</sup>: **Chapter Ten: The Presidency.**

Week March 31<sup>st</sup>: **Chapter 11: The Bureaucracy.**

**Assignment #4 is due Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup> by 11:30pm.**

Week April 7<sup>th</sup>: **Chapter 12: The Courts.**

#### **IV. Policy**

Week April 14<sup>th</sup>: **Chapter 14: Economic Policy and Social Policy.**

Week April 21<sup>st</sup>: **Chapter 13: Civil Rights.**

**Exam #3 on Chapters 9-12 on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.**

Week April 28<sup>th</sup>: **Chapter 15: Foreign Policy.**

**Assignment #5 is due Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> by 11:30pm.**

**\*\*\* FINAL EXAM is on Chapters 13-15.\*\*\***

**If your class is at: 8:00am → the final is on Wednesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> @ 8:00am**

## **Instructional Methods**

Government 2305 prepares you for higher level American Politics courses. As an instructor, it is my responsibility to prepare you not only with the basic concepts needed to be successful in higher level college courses, but also with practical political analysis skills to enable you to be a responsible citizen.

As a student, it is your responsibility to read the textbook, take notes during lectures, submit assignments on their due dates, study for and take exams on their appropriate date, participate in class discussions, ask questions, and attend class. I will help any student wanting to improve study skills, exam-taking skills, writing skills, time management skills, or political analysis skills. However, it is expected that students take full responsibility for their behavior, choices, and course preparation.

## **Course Assignments**

All course assignments have been developed to enhance and assess learning:

### *Chapter Exams/Final Exam*

Chapter exams occur every three to four chapters and test knowledge and application of key chapter concepts and vocabulary. There are multiple choice questions and essay questions. Test reviews are given at least a week in advance for students to prepare. There are five chapter exams. The Final Exam is not cumulative. It is essentially a chapter exam over the remaining chapters (though it is longer because there are more chapters).

### *Discussion Assignments*

There are several Discussion assignments that will help solidify course concepts. They will be submitted either through Eagle Online. Assignments and instructions will be announced per chapter.

### *Extra Credit Papers*

When appropriate, extra credit opportunities and assignments will be announced in class. All options can be found on the Learning Web course page.

## **Student Assessments**

The course assessments include chapter exams, assignments, and writing assignments. These assessments help determine how successful you are in achieving course learning outcomes. If you have any problems with assessment outcomes, I am more than happy to assist you to improve assessment scores.

## **Instructor's Requirements**

*As your instructor, it is my responsibility to:*

- Provide the grading scale and detailed grading formula explaining how students' final grades are derived.
- Facilitate an effective learning environment through class activities, discussions, and lectures.
- Description of any special projects or assignments.
- Inform students of policies such as attendance, withdrawal, and make-up exams/assignments.
- Provide the course outline and class calendar which will include a description of any special projects or assignments.
- Arrange to meet with individual students during office hours or by appointment.

*To be successful in this class, it is the student's responsibility to:*

- Attend class and participate in class discussions and activities.
- Take notes during lecture.
- Read and comprehend the textbook.
- Complete the required assignments and exams.
- Ask for help if there is a question or a problem.
- Get missed lecture notes from a peer if class is missed.



**Program/Discipline Requirements**

Govt. 2305 is a core transfer course for the political science discipline.

**HCC Grading Scale**

A = 100-90:.....	4 points per semester hour
B = 89-80:.....	3 points per semester hour
C = 79-70:.....	2 points per semester hour
D = 69-60:.....	1 point per semester hour
59 and below = F.....	0 points per semester hour
59 and below because of excessive absences = FX...	0 points per semester hour
IP (In Progress).....	0 points per semester hour
W (Withdrawal).....	0 points per semester hour
I (Incomplete).....	0 points per semester hour
AUD (Audit).....	0 points per semester hour

IP (In Progress) is given only in certain developmental courses. The student must re-enroll to receive credit. COM (Completed) is given in non-credit and continuing education courses. To compute grade point average (GPA), divide the total grade points by the total number of semester hours attempted. The grades “IP”, “COM” and “I” do not affect GPA.

**Final Grade Criteria**

Your instructor will conduct exams, assignments, and writing assignments 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 on campus that will improve your performance.

Grades will be based on the following:

- Chapter Exams: 50%
- Discussions 30%
- Final Exam: 20%

### **Late Work/Make-up Exam Policy**

**I do not accept late work. There are no make-up exams.** My recommendation: Stay a day or two ahead of the deadlines in case something goes wrong. ***I do not accept excuses about technology problems, lack of preparedness, or forgetfulness.*** If there is ANY situation that will prevent you from submitting your work in on time, do not hesitate to contact me ASAP. Any late work is a zero. If you have any religious holidays that correspond with material due dates, please work ahead and plan accordingly. The due dates listed are final due dates, so work, for example assignments, can always be turned in earlier. If there are extenuating circumstances due to illness or something else, please let me know ASAP and we can look at available administrative options. ***However, I need proof of a valid absence:*** if you are ill for a long time, provide a doctor's note; if you are out because of the death of a family member, provide an obituary or service program; if you are out because of work, provide documentation of needing to be gone.

**All make up exams will be held on Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup> in the Testing Center. Make up exams are ALL ESSAY.**

### **HCC Policy Statements**

All HCC Student Services Policies can be found at: <http://hccs.edu/student-rights>

#### ***HCC Policy—ADA***

If you have any special needs that affect your ability to learn in this class, please inform me ASAP (this means NOW, not the day of an exam). 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 Disability Services Office at Northwest College (713-718-5808) or the Northwest College ADA Counselor, Mahnaz Kolaini (713-718-5422), at the *beginning* of each semester. Faculty members are authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office. To visit the ADA Web site, log on to [www.hccs.edu](http://www.hccs.edu), click Future students, scroll down the page and click on the words Disability Information.

## ***HCC Policy—Academic Honesty***

If you are caught committing scholastic dishonesty in any way, you will receive an F for the course. No negotiation. Please seek me out for help if you are having problems, rather than resort to something that will tarnish your record. HCC Policy states, “Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating on a test includes copying from another student's test paper; using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test; collaborating with another student during a test without authority; knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test; or bribing another person to obtain a test that is to be administered. ‘Plagiarism’ means the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work for credit. ‘Collusion’ means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit.”

In simplified terms, cheating is: (1) taking unchanged passages (or slightly edited) from another person's writing and portraying them as one's own; (2) submitting a paper that includes paraphrases of another person's writing without giving credit; (3) having someone else write your paper for you; (4) copying or using another person's work during in-class writing or testing; and (5) the unauthorized use of electronic devices during in-class writing or testing. Keep in mind also that whether you are cheating or not, not following testing or writing rules properly, such as communicating with your neighbor or using a cell phone during a test will be construed as cheating. This is not an exhaustive list of the forms of scholastic dishonesty. If you are in doubt, consult your instructor.

## **Student Attendance**

If you don't come to class, *you won't do well in the course*. Students with good attendance records usually do well in the course because they hear the information several times, can ask questions, and can interact with fellow students. Please **keep me informed** if you are having problems that are affecting your attendance and I will do my best to work with you. If you decide you must drop the course, **you can now do this online**. If you suddenly stop coming to class, ***it is YOUR responsibility to drop the course. I will not drop you.*** If you do not drop, I must give the course grade that is earned. **The last day you can drop is March 31<sup>st</sup> by 4:30pm.**

There is a new “F” grade, “FX,” that alerts financial aid to excessive absences. Financial aid is cracking down on students who register for classes to receive aid monies and then do not come to class. If you do not drop after excessive absences, you will receive a grade of “FX” and it will negatively affect your ability to receive financial aid.

While it is still advisable you receive good counsel from instructional and counseling faculty prior to dropping one or more classes, you will no longer be required to “see” someone before they will be allowed to drop. You will be provided information related to the implications and possible consequences of dropping their courses. The following will occur when a you select the “drop” option during an enrollment request:

- Students will be required to select a drop reason in order to complete the withdrawal request (the drop reason will cue whether the dropped course will count toward the 6 drop rule or not).
- Students will be invited to click on several links to learn more of the implications of dropping on the 6 drop rule (<http://imc02.hccs.edu/gcac/drop.htm>), on veterans, on financial aid, and on international students.
- Students will be required to acknowledge the implications of withdrawing from a class.

### **3<sup>Rd</sup> Time Course Policy**

As of Fall 2006, students who take a course for the third time or more will face significant tuition/fee increases at HCC and other Texas public colleges and universities. 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.

### **Classroom Conduct**

This is a college classroom where adult behavior is expected and required. Respect your peers' learning environment. Conduct which interferes with the teaching or learning process will result in the student being dropped from the course. If an administrative/instructional drop occurs, there will be no refund of fees or tuition.

Students who enter class late should not, under any circumstances, walk in front of the instructor to find a seat. Please sit in the open desks by the door. The doors are very sensitive, so make sure to not slam the door when entering or leaving.

Cell phones or other electronic devices must be turned off/vibrate on during class time. Text-messaging during class is unacceptable behavior. If you are expecting an emergency phone call, please put phone on vibrate and quietly leave the room (try to sit by the door). If you habitually receive phone calls in class, I am not shy about answering the phone for you and explaining that you are in class!

You cannot use a laptop or notebook or other electronic device to take notes unless you have an accommodation letter from the ADA office. There is no eating, drinking, dipping, snacking, nibbling, any other form of consumption, etc. in class.