

Government 2305—Intro. to American Government

Spring 2015

Mondays and Wednesdays

CRN #44174

Professor: Dr. Verónica Reyna

Contact Information

Office Phone: 713-718-5215

E-mail: veronica.reynal@hccs.edu

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

Website: <http://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/veronica.reynal>

Note: Set up your HCC email account. I will NOT answer any emails that are NOT from HCC.

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.

NOTE: There are various price points and book options. The library has a book copy on reserve. Through the bookstore, you can rent used/new books or buy used/new books. Through the publisher, you can buy a paperback, e-book, or 3-hole punch book <http://books.wwnorton.com/books/978-0-393-92106-9/>. You can also rent an e-book just for the semester. You can share costs with a peer. In short, there is NO excuse to not have a book available to you at any point in the semester. Use it, read it.

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

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

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

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.

Grades will be based on the following:

- Projects: 50%
- Chapter Quizzes 40%
- Attendance: 10%

Course Assignments

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

Projects

There are THREE projects due at the end of each unit. The projects require you to apply the chapter and class knowledge.

Chapter Reading Quizzes

Each week chapter quizzes are taken IN CLASS. This allows me to make sure you are looking at the book information and assess your understanding of concepts. It is important to read and understand the chapter information BEFORE you come to class. This preparation will make class time and class activities meaningful for you and you will not get behind. ALL class time activities ASSUME you have read the assigned chapters and know what we are talking about! Class time can also be used to address questions and concerns you might have on the material—but this only work if you have tried to read the material ahead of time.

Attendance

I will take attendance at the beginning of class. If you are late and miss attendance, you are counted absent. TARDY = ABSENT. Come to class. Come to class on time. Class time is vital to learning and practicing course concepts. This is time for you to work in your groups and work on your projects with the help of peers.

I do not drop students for excessive absences. Being late and/or absent will only lower your course grade. If you have an excused absence (one that has documentation to verify the excuse), you will be marked absent but it will not count against your grade.

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.

Course Calendar

I. Politics and Media

- **Week of January 19th: Intro. and syllabus overview**

- **Week of January 26th: Chapter One**

Chapter One quiz Wednesday, January 28th

- Week of February 2nd: Chapter Six

Chapter Six quiz Wednesday, February 4th

February 2nd Day of Record

- Week of February 9th: Chapter Five (only media part) and Chapter Eight

Chapter Five and Eight quiz Wednesday, February 11th

- Week of February 16th : Continue with same chapters

- February 16th NO CLASS, President's Day Holiday

Spin/Fact Check PROJECT #1 due Saturday February 21st by 11:30pm in Eagle Online.

II. Participation and Democracy

- Week of February 23rd : Chapter Five (socialization and public opinion sections)

Chapter Five quiz Wednesday, February 25th

- Week of March 2nd : Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven quiz Wednesday, March 4th in class.

- Week of March 9th: Continue chapters

Spring Break Week of March 16th NO CLASSES

Participation PSA PROJECT #2 due Saturday March 28th by 11:30pm in Eagle Online (or Plan B if file too big).

III. Politics and Policy

- Week of March 23rd : Chapter Two

Last day to withdraw: March 24th by 4:30pm.

Chapters Two quiz Wednesday, March 25th

Project #2 Due March 28th

- Week of March 30th : Chapter Three

Chapters Three quiz Wednesday, April 1st

*****Listen to Chapter 13 PowerPoint lecture on Eagle Online*****

- Week of April 6th : Chapter Four

Chapter Four quiz Wednesday, April 8th

*****Listen to Chapter 14 Economic Policy PowerPoint lectures on Eagle Online*****

- Week of April 13th : Chapter Nine

Chapter Nine quiz Wednesday, April 15th

******Listen to Chapter 14 Social Policy PowerPoint lectures on Eagle Online******

- Week of April 20th: Chapter 12

Chapter 12 quiz Wednesday, April 22nd

******Listen to Chapter 15 Foreign Policy PowerPoint lectures on Eagle Online******

- **Week of April 27th : Chapter 10**

Chapter 10 quiz Wednesday, April 29th

- **Week of May 4th: Continue policy analysis**

Policy Project #3 due no later than Saturday May 9th by 11:30pm.

Student Assessments

The course assessments include chapter notes, projects, and attendance. 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 course work.
- 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.

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.

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, 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 come late and after I call attendance, you are counted absent. 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 24th 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.

3rd 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!

There is no eating, drinking, dipping, snacking, nibbling, any other form of consumption, etc. in class.