

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

**Spring 2017**

**Spring Branch Campus, M/W**

**CRN #13366**

**3 Lecture Hours, 48 Hrs. Total Course Hrs, 16-wk, in-person**

**Professor:** Dr. Verónica Reyna

**Contact Information**

Office Phone: 713-718-5215

E-mail: [veronica.reynal@hccs.edu](mailto: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 and I will only email your HCC account.**

**Government Chair**

Evelyn Ballard

[Evelyn.ballard@hccs.edu](mailto:Evelyn.ballard@hccs.edu)

713-718-2490

NOTE: If you have a problem with your government course, please contact Dr. Reyna before contacting the Chair.

## **Office & Office Hours**

Spring Branch Campus #AD2

**By appointment only: Mondays & Wednesdays, 7-8am and 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. If you email me or leave a voicemail with course questions, please allow me up to 48 hours to respond. While I strive to return messages quickly, I am not online 24/7. I do not respond after 9:00pm.

## **Course Description**

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.

**Course Co-requisites:** Must have passed ENGL 1301 or co-enrolled in ENGL 1301.

## **Instructional Materials**

Geer, John et al. Third Edition (full edition, NOT essentials). *Gateways to Democracy: An Introduction to American Government*. Cengage Learning Publishers.

**HCC ONLINE:** <https://eagleonline.hccs.edu/>

## **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.

COURSE 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.
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**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:

- Unit Tests: 20% each
- Final Exam: 20%

## **Course Assignments**

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

### *Unit Tests*

Each unit test covers unit themes, big ideas, and important concepts. You will need scantrons and notebook paper for these tests. Unit reviews are provided to guide test preparation. The tests are multiple choice with short essays.

### *Final Exam*

The Final Exam is not accumulative. It is the last unit exam and has the same format as all the other unit exams. The only difference is that there is NO essay.

### *Extra Credit Papers*

When appropriate, extra credit opportunities and assignments will be announced in class. All options can be found in Eagle Online and on the Learning Web course page. Points are added to test grades.

## **Course Calendar**

### **I. Politics and Media**

- **Week of January 17th: Chapter One—Intro. and American values, culture, ideology.**
- **Week of January 23rd: Chapter Seven—News, Social Media, and Politics.**
- **Week of January 30th: Chapter Six—Public Opinion.**

**February 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Record**

## **II. Participation and Democracy**

- **Week of February 6th: Chapter Nine—Political Parties.**
- **Week of February 13th: Chapter Eleven—Voting and Participation**

**Unit I Test February 15<sup>th</sup>**

- **Week of February 20th: Chapter Ten—Elections and Campaigns**
- **Week of February 27<sup>th</sup> : Chapter Eight: Interest Groups**

## **III. Politics and Policy: Immigration and Environment**

- **Week of March 6<sup>th</sup>: Chapter Two—the Constitution.**

**SPRING BREAK March 13<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>**

- **Week of March 20<sup>th</sup> : Chapter Three—Federalism**

**Unit II Test March 22<sup>nd</sup>**

- Week of March 27<sup>th</sup> Federalism con't.

#### **IV. Politics and Policy: Gay Marriage and Religious Freedom**

- Week of April 3<sup>rd</sup> : Chapters Four—Civil Liberties

**April 3<sup>rd</sup> last day to withdraw.**

#### **Unit III Test April 5<sup>th</sup>**

- Week of April 10<sup>th</sup> : Chapter Five—Civil Rights
- Week of April 17<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 15—the Judiciary

#### **V. Politics and Policy: Policymakers**

Week of April 24<sup>th</sup> : Chapter 12—Congress

#### **Unit IV Test April 26<sup>th</sup>**

- **Week of May 1<sup>st</sup> : Chapter 13—the presidency**

#### **Final Exam: Unit V Test**

**8:00am Section Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup> @ 8:00am**

#### **Student Assessments**

The course assessments include exams, test essays, and papers. 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](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 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 April 3<sup>rd</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!

No electronic devices can be used to take notes. No recording is allowed unless there is an ADA accommodation documented request.

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