

HCC Government 2306 (CRN# 44200 & 44201)

Texas Government

Spring 2015

Professor: Dr. Verónica Reyna

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

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ONLY email me from you HCC EMAIL account. If you do not email from this account, and use a private email (i.e. gmail, yahoo, hotmail, icloud, etc.) I will not return your email.

Office & Office Hours: Spring Branch Campus #AD2

Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30-2pm

All other days by pre-arranged appointments only.

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.

Instructional Materials: Newell, Charldean et al. *Texas Politics* 12th ed.

Eagle Online 2.0: <https://eo2.hccs.edu/login/index.php>

UT Texas Politics Online: <http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/>

Course Description

Government 2306 is designed to introduce students to the politics of government at the state and local level. This course is fully transferable to other colleges and universities with a “C” course grade. Government 2306 is a study of the theories of democracy, Texas constitutions, federalism, state Congress, state executive, the state courts, the state bureaucracy, Texas public policy, Texas political economy, political socialization and Texas interest groups, Texas political parties, and Texas elections.

Course Pre- and co-requisites: Must be placed into college level reading and college-level writing.

Grades/Assignments:	Papers	50%	A= 90+
	Attendance	10%	B= 89-80
	Reading Quizzes	40%	C=79-70
			D=69-60
			F= 59 and below

The course is separated into units, each covering an important policy issue in Texas. Each unit has a reading quiz most weeks in class. Each unit has a paper. In order for the course to work, attendance and participation in the class is vital. So is READING the background material BEFORE you come to class!

There is no final exam.

For all course grades and overall course grade, I do not grade on a curve and the lowest exam/assignment grade is *not* dropped. The grade earned is the grade earned; if you have an 88, I will not simply give two points for an 'A!' There is extra credit throughout the semester.

Late Work/Make-up Exam Policy:

I do not accept late work. 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 can always be turned in earlier. Documentation of an excuse of absence (a doctor’s note, a note from work, or a funeral service handout, etc.) is mandatory to have any make up work allowed.

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 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 unless asked to use them for group work. 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.

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. and Texas political systems, with a focus on the growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S. and Texas, 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.

****Dates subject to change****

Course Calendar

UNIT I: Power, Demographics, and Change in Texas

- Week of January 19th: Course overview and Chapter One
- Week of January 26th: Chapter One and Chapter 13
 - Chapter One Quiz Wednesday, January 28th
- Week of February 2nd: Chapter 13
 - Chapter 13 Quiz: Wednesday, February 4th

Day of Record, February 2nd

- Week of February 9th: Chapter 11
 - Chapter 11 Quiz: Wednesday, February 11th
- Week of February 16th: continue chapters

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

Unit I Paper due Saturday, February 21st by 11:30pm in Eagle Online

UNIT II: Access to Justice and Death Penalty

- Week of February 23rd: Chapter Two
 - Chapter Two Quiz: Wednesday, February 25th
- Week of March 2nd: Chapter 9
 - Chapter Nine Quiz: Wednesday, March 4th

- Week of March 9th: Chapter 10
 - Chapter 10 Quiz: Wednesday, March 11th

Spring Break the Week of March 16th NO CLASSES

Unit II Paper due Saturday, March 28th by 11:30pm in Eagle Online

Unit III: Interest Group Power—Energy & the Environment

- Week of March 23rd: Chapter Three
 - Chapter Three Quiz, Wednesday, March 25th

Remember: Unit II Paper due on March 28th

- Week of March 30th: Chapter 12
 - Chapter 12 Quiz: Wednesday, April 1st
- Week of April 6th: Chapter 14
 - Chapter 14 Quiz: Wednesday, April 8th

Unit III Paper due Saturday, April 18th by 11:30pm in Eagle Online

Unit IV: Power—Participation, Political Polarization, Gerrymandering, and Special Sessions

- Week of April 13th: Chapter Four
 - Chapter Four Quiz: Wednesday, April 15th

Remember Unit III Paper due April 18th

- Week of April 20th: Chapter Six
 - Chapter Six Quiz: Wednesday, April 22nd

- Week of April 27th: Chapter Seven
 - Chapter Seven Quiz: Wednesday, April 29th
- Week of May 4th: Chapter Five
 - Chapter Five Quiz: Wednesday, May 6th

Unit IV Paper due Saturday, May 9th by 11:30pm in Eagle Online