Course Information
Richland College
School of Learning Enhancement and Academic Development (LEAD)
Office: C243
Phone: 972-238-6395
GOVT 2306-81460, and
GOVT 2306-91449, Texas Government, 3 credit hours,
Fall 2015
Online Distance Learning class, with no on campus component
11/23 – 12/17/2015
Professor Patrick Moore
office: WH132
e-mail: patrickmoore@dcccd.edu
phone: 972/238-3709

Course Description and Prerequisites
GOVT 2306 (3 Credit Hours)

Texas Government
This is a Texas Common Course Number. This is a Core Curriculum course selected by the colleges of DCCCD.
Prerequisite: One of the following must be met: (1) DREA 0093 AND DWRI 0093; (2) English as a Second Language (ESOL) 0044 AND 0054; or (3) have met Texas Success Initiative (TSI) in Reading and Writing standards.

Course Description: Origin and development of the Texas constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and inter-governmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas. (3 Lec.)

Coordinating Board Academic Approval Number 4510025125

Compliance with Core Curriculum Guidelines
This course is intended to help develop the following Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Intellectual Core Competencies and Perspectives in the Core Curriculum:

Intellectual Core Competencies
- READING: Reading at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials--books, articles and documents. A core curriculum should offer students the opportunity to master both general methods of analyzing printed materials and specific methods for analyzing the subject matter of individual disciplines.
- WRITING: Competency in writing is the ability to produce clear, correct and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion, and audience. Although correct grammar, spelling and punctuation are each a sine qua non in any composition, they do not automatically ensure that the composition itself makes sense or that the writer has much of anything to say. Students need to be familiar with the writing process including how to discover a topic and how to develop and organize it, how to phrase it effectively for their audience. These abilities can be acquired only through practice and reflection.
- SPEAKING: Competence in speaking is the ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion and audience. Developing this
competency includes acquiring poise and developing control of the language through experience in making presentations to small groups, to large groups and through the media.

- **LISTENING:** Listening at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication.
- **CRITICAL THINKING:** Critical thinking embraces methods of applying both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies. Problem solving is one of the applications of critical thinking, used to address an identified task.
- **COMPUTER LITERACY:** Computer Literacy at the college level means the ability to use computer-based technology in communicating, solving problems and acquiring information. Core-educated students should have an understanding of the limits, problems and possibilities associated with the use of technology and should have the tools necessary to evaluate and learn new technologies as they become available.

**Perspectives in the Core Curriculum**

The objective of disciplinary studies within a core curriculum is to foster multiple perspectives as well as to inform and deliver content. An imperative of a core curriculum is that it contains courses that help students attain the following perspectives:

1. Establish broad and multiple perspectives on the individual in relationship to the larger society and world in which he or she lives, and to understand the responsibilities of living in culturally and ethnically diversified world;
2. Stimulate a capacity to discuss and reflect upon individual, political, economic and social aspects of life in order to understand ways in which to be a responsible member of society;
3. Recognize the importance of maintaining health and wellness;
4. Develop a capacity to use knowledge of how technology and science affect their lives;
5. Develop personal values for ethical behavior;
6. Develop the ability to make aesthetic judgments;
7. Use logical reasoning in problem solving and
8. Integrate knowledge and understand the interrelationships of the scholarly disciplines.

**Additional Learning Outcomes:**

Students who successfully complete this class will be able to:

1. Understand and follow directions: both written and oral.
2. Demonstrate the importance of understanding opposing viewpoints in communication.
3. Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate an argument to determine its validity
4. Apply knowledge and learning skills outside of the classroom in order to create a sustainable local and global community.
5. Understand what constitutes academically accepted sources and work.

**Course Objective**

The objective for this course is to allow students to learn the basics of our governmental system, including:

* the constitutional basis of the Texas government,
* federalism and how it impacts Texas government,
* political parties and elections in Texas,
* the institutions of Texas government, and
* public policy making in Texas.
The class will also incorporate writing practice, development of critical and analytical thinking, and experience in debating sensitive topics in an enthusiastic but respectful way.

**How to Contact Me**

To contact me: e-mail - [patrickmoore@dcccd.edu](mailto:patrickmoore@dcccd.edu); phone 972/238-3709; office WH-132

You may also contact me through the LEAD Division office. The office is located in C-243.

**Always include your name and your section (GOVT 2306-81460, for example, and please always use the correct course and section)** in the subject line of any e-mail you send me.

- an appropriate subject line would therefore be (This is just a sample!):
  Frodo Baggins, GOVT 2306-81460

It would be even better if you'd include just a couple of words about the topic of the e-mail as well, but you can get away with not doing that.

**You must follow these guidelines every time you send an e-mail!**

That includes any e-mail for any reason. If you do not follow this format, I will not open and read the e-mail, but will delete it. I know this seems harsh, and I’m sorry to be that way, but with so many students sending regular e-mails about many topics, I find I have difficulty keeping up with them unless the subject line is clear.

When you contact me I will respond within 24 - 36 hours. If you haven't heard from me by this time, I probably haven't gotten your message, and you might want to try again. Be sure that if you've e-mailed you've used the correct subject line, because if you haven't, I will likely have deleted it! :

When you send an e-mail, please remember that we are in an academic scholarly environment. You should use sentences with punctuation. You should use appropriate capitalization. You should, in short, write the same way you would on any assignment. Please get in the habit of this, and you will benefit not only in my class, but in all your future classes.

**Please confirm your email address**

And speaking of email, one thing you should do is confirm that your email address in the system is correct. Every semester it seems I have one or two students whose emails from me always bounce. Please go to eCampus and, once you’ve signed in, look on the left side of the page for the “Personal Information” link. Click it, then click “Edit Personal Information,” and confirm that your email is the one you check most often. That way you’ll be able to stay up-to-date.

**Textbook**

Title: Governing Texas, An Introduction to Texas Politics
Author: Anthony Champagne
Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company
         978-0-393-90422-2 (ebook)

**Testing and Evaluation**

This term will have 4 tests. These tests are not comprehensive. They will cover material as specified in the (color-coded!) Course Schedule. My tests are all structurally the same. I always have roughly 30-35 "objective" questions, like multiple choice, true/false, or matching. Then I'll generally have one or two short essays.
When you answer the essays, you will earn more points for more complete answers. So, the more you write, the better your grade, except that "the more you write" only counts for substantive content. If you write 1000 words, but don't really say anything, or repeat the same things over and over, I'll notice, and it won't help you.

The objective questions will only infrequently have more than one "possible" answer, but when they do, you should choose the best of the answers.

Tests are only open on the date shown in the schedule. They open at 12:30 a.m. and remain open until 9:00 p.m. Once you start the test you'll have one hour to finish it. If you start less than an hour before the 9:00 p.m. cutoff time the system will allow you to finish the test. I do not recommend this, however. You are always better off starting earlier in the day so there is an opportunity to respond to any problems that may arise. You only get one shot at the test, so be sure you take the following precautions before and during the test:

- Reboot your computer before starting.
- During the test, only have one window - the test window - open. Additional open windows greatly increase the possibility of crashes.
- Never hit "Back" in your browser, and never hit the "Backspace" key.- Be sure you have a good internet connection before starting.
- Please do not try to take the test on your phone.

**Evaluation**

Students will have the opportunity to earn up to 600 points during the semester, consisting of the following elements, with maximum possible points shown:

- 400 points for 4 tests (100 points each)
- 100 points for 4 online Discussion Boards (25 points each)
- 25 points for a Developing Learning Power essay
- 25 points for an essay on Texas legislation
- 15 points for a personal introduction you'll post online
- 10 points for a Learning Essay
- 10 points for a personal reflection on learning in the course
- 10 points for a Syllabus Quiz
- 5 points for a course evaluation survey

600 points Total

You may calculate your grade at any time, based on the points you have earned as a percentage of total possible points up to that time. The grading range will be as follows:

A = 90 - 100% (540 –600 points)
B = 80 - 89% (480 – 539 points)
C = 70 - 79% (420 – 479 points)
D = 60 - 69% (360 – 419 points)
F = 0 - 59% (Fewer than 360 points)

You may check your grades at any time on eCampus.

I will work to have grading as up to date as I can. In most cases, grading should be complete within 48 hours of the final due date. On some longer written work, I may be a bit slower. If you ever have a question about grades, of course you should contact me, and I'll let you know what's going on.
Late work: I will not accept late work. It is very important for you to keep up, and get
work done ahead of time. You need to plan for the unforeseen. Things like a crashing computer
or the internet going down will not be excuses. For that matter, nothing else is an excuse either.

End-of-course Extra Credit

Please pay attention to the Course Schedule starting from the first day of class. Assignments for
the semester are spaced evenly, to try to make everything easier for you (and for me!). Please
don’t fall into the trap of thinking you can wait a while to get the book or get started working on
assignments. If you do, you run the risk of missing points early in the semester. Anything you
miss is gone! I do not offer extra credit at the end of the semester (other than what is shown in
eCampus).

Course Outline
(This information may also be found under the “Course Schedule” link in eCampus.)

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Written assignments: Some written assignments for the class will be turned in via
“SafeAssign.” To submit these assignments, go to the corresponding button on the left of the
course page on eCampus, find the appropriate assignment, click "view/complete" and follow
the directions. SafeAssign simultaneously places your paper into the proper “slot” for grading, scans
for viruses, and checks for plagiarism. Your paper will receive a score from the system
indicating how closely it resembles pre-existing material, so you should be careful not to include
material from other sources without proper citation. You do not have to do anything special to
submit to SafeAssign. Just submit your paper at the link and it will go to the right place.
Once you have submitted the assignment you will be able to view the report compiled by SafeAssign showing its evaluation of your paper. This is not your grade, which I will assign. If the percentage is more than about 10 percent I will look at your paper to evaluate whether too much is taken from other sources and whether it appropriately cited. Keep in mind that even if it is cited correctly, your work should be your work. Too high a percentage of copied material will result in negative consequences for your grade, and may be considered plagiarism.

When you turn in written assignments, the **only** acceptable file formats are:

- `.doc` or `.docx` (MS Word)
- `.rtf` (rich text format)
- `.odt` (Open Office format)

Open Office is an outstanding software package containing word processing, spreadsheet and slideshow applications. It is safe and free to download and use. (www.openoffice.org)

As a Richland College student you also have access to Microsoft Office for free home use. See the sign-in page of eCampus for information.

Please **do not** submit files in the following formats:

- `.wps` (Wordperfect)
- `.wks` (Microsoft Works)
- `.txt` (plain text files)
- `.pdf` (Adobe Acrobat)
- `.pages` (some kind of Mac thing, I think)

and if you’re using Google Docs, please download the document as one of the acceptable file formats, save it, and then attach it at the submission link.

**Writing Expectations:** Although this is not an English class, you are expected to write in grammatically-correct “formal register” English, suitable for an academic or professional office environment, and points will be deducted if you don't. You should, for example, write in sentences rather than outlines, you should use appropriate capitalization and punctuation, and you should **never** use text messaging abbreviations. “People” is not spelled "ppl," and people are not "peeps." **The personal pronoun “I” is ALWAYS capitalized.** Creativity is encouraged; excessive informality is inappropriate. Be mindful of the fact that your writing is academic work in an academic environment. I am not your "bro," for example. I will judge whether you have made a good faith effort to write correctly.

In addition, you should avoid common word-choice mistakes. For example, you need to know the difference between

- **their**, there and they're, and
- **you’re** and your and
- **its** and it’s

and you must use them properly.

All of those writing suggestions apply to everything you do for this class. Everything you submit to me and to your other instructors, including e-mail, should be written in a more formal way than if you were texting to your friends.

When you turn in an assignment I will make my best effort to grade it as quickly as possible. I should have assignments graded within 48 hours, in most cases. Papers and projects, because of their length, may take longer than that. If there is ever a time when I am going to take more than
a couple of days I will be sure to let you know. And if you ever have a question about grading or anything else, you should contact me right away!

If you need help with a writing assignment, of course you may come to me. Another resource you may use is the Writing Center (in Medina 216), which is not just for English students but is for any student who would like help with any writing assignment.

**Technical Help**

If you need help with any computer-related part of the class, such as e-mail or submitting assignments on eCampus, you can go to technical support or call 1-866-374-7169. They will be more help than I could ever be.

In my experience, using Internet Explorer can present problems. You should generally use Firefox or Google Chrome to submit assignments or take tests. If you find that something that has worked in that past is not working or if you can’t figure out why you can’t see something or if an assignment doesn’t go through when you submit it, try these two things first:

1) Close out of eCampus, restart it and try again;
2) Try a different browser. Whichever one you’re using, try another one. Don’t worry if that doesn’t seem to make sense; just try it. Trust me on this.

**Class Discussions**

I like to have open, honest forthright discussions whether in class or online. Sometimes these discussions will be on controversial topics. It is my practice when I do enter into discussions to disagree with students. In some cases I may actually disagree with you in real life. On the other hand, I may just be “playing devil’s advocate.” Similarly, I may seem to be following one political philosophy or another, even though I’m just pretending. One of my goals in class is to force you to look at issues from different perspectives and not to accept things you are told unless there is adequate evidence to support them. Instead I suggest that you **“Take a step back, take a deep breath, and think.”**

You won’t typically know what my opinion is, even if you think you do. Your grade will never be affected by agreement (or disagreement) with my opinion and you should never tailor what you say or write trying to guess what you think I want to hear.

**Netiquette**

All online work must be respectful in tone. It is particularly important when you are online to remember that people reading your contributions to the class do not have the usual visual and verbal clues to give them the nuances of meaning that face-to-face communication provides. It is very easy for your writing to sound harsh, dogmatic and even insulting, even if saying the same things in a face-to-face conversation would not be interpreted that way. Be careful to ensure that your writing is thoughtful and moderate, making your point without "flaming" or being disrespectful. Any work not adhering to the requirement of a respectful tone will be removed and no credit will accrue.

**Other Useful and Important Information – CRITICAL TO READ!!**

**Academic honesty:** Scholastic dishonesty is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion.
As a college student, you are considered a responsible adult. Your enrollment indicates acceptance of the DCCCD Code of Student Conduct. A copy of the Code may be found at http://www.richlandcollege.edu/conduct.

Any violation of this policy will result in a grade of zero on the work involved, and other penalties or sanctions, as determined by the instructor or as described in the catalog.

**Plagiarism** is using someone else's words or ideas without giving credit and is a serious academic offense. It can range from:

* Turning in a paper any part of which you did not write,
* Cutting and pasting a paper together from various sources without attributing the sources correctly,
* Changing a few words but keeping most of the words and sentence structure of the original,
* Using the ideas of another without giving credit to the person who originally had the idea.
* Using the exact words of the source without using quotation marks even if you give the name of the source.

Turning in a paper most of which is quoted, even if you correctly cite it, is not acceptable. The idea is to have the paper be your work. If too much of your paper is quoted, it's not your work. You are encouraged to visit the Richland College Library and take the course (it's offered in person and online) dealing with plagiarism. If you take this course I'll give you extra credit.

**Collusion** is working with someone so closely on your paper that large sections have been reworded by someone other than you.

Collaboration with others is encouraged in the writing process (getting ideas, planning, revision, editing), but the final paper should be entirely your own writing, and edited mostly by you. For example, you may get help with editing questions from Center for Tutoring and Learning Connections personnel, but the grade you get for editing your paper should reflect your ability to edit--not someone else's.

Both plagiarism and collusion are serious academic offenses. Consequences could include performance grade of "0" for the assignment or test, or other appropriate disciplinary actions, according to the policies of Richland College.

**Drop Policy: Stop Before You Drop -- 6Drop**

For students who enrolled in college level courses for the first time in the fall of 2007, Texas Education Code 51.907 limits the number of courses a student may drop. You may drop no more than 6 courses during your entire undergraduate career unless the drop qualifies as an exception. Your campus counseling/advising center will give you more information on the allowable exceptions.

Remember that once you have accumulated 6 non-exempt drops, you cannot drop any other courses with a "W". Therefore, please exercise caution when dropping courses in any Texas public institution of higher learning, including all seven of the Dallas County Community Colleges. For more information, you may access https://www1.dccd.edu/6drop

**Course Drop Date: Last day to drop a class with a "W" - Friday, December 11.**

**Withdrawal Policy:** If you are unable to complete this course, it is your responsibility to withdraw formally. The withdrawal request must be received in the Registrar’s Office by the official drop date for this course (see Course Drop Date above). Failure to do so will result in your receiving a performance grade, usually an “F.” If you drop a class or withdraw from the
college before the official drop/withdrawal deadline, you will receive a “W” (Withdraw) in each class dropped. For more information about drop deadlines, refer to the current printed Credit Class Schedule, contact the Admissions/Student Records office at 972-238-6100 or 6101 (Thunderduck Hall, T170), or contact the school office.

**Developing Learning Power!:** This is a Developing Learning Power class and part of Richland College’s Learning to Learn: Developing Learning Power Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) in which your professor uses specific Thinking Routines to help you develop your learning power, become an even more engaged, successful learner, and master course content. Participating in Thinking Routines provides you a greater understanding of how you best learn and offers you techniques to boost your capacity to change and learn through effort and the intentional practice of thinking. Developing Learning Power shapes an exceptional learning experience, helps you advance in your academic career, and fosters traits in you of an effective lifelong learner. At the end of the course, you will be asked to reflect on your experience through an assignment about how you have changed as a learner.

**Achieving your Academic Goals:** I strongly encourage you to discuss academic goals and degree completion with an academic advisor or with me. Degree plan advising is available throughout the semester. Information about academic advising at Richland is available on the Advising page on the Richland College website.

**Repeating a Course:** Effective for Fall Semester 2005, the Dallas County Community Colleges will charge additional tuition to students registering the third or subsequent time for a course. All third and subsequent attempts of the majority of credit and Continuing Education/Workforce Training courses will result in additional tuition to be charged. Developmental Studies and some other courses will not be charged a higher tuition rate. Third attempts include courses taken at any of the Dallas County Community Colleges since the Fall 2002 Semester. See Third Attempt to Enroll in a Course at http://www.dcccd.edu/thirdcourseattempt/

**Financial Aid:** Your instructor is required by law to validate/certify your attendance in your on-campus or online course(s) in order for you to receive financial aid. To meet the attendance requirement, you must attend and participate in your on-campus or online course(s) prior to the course certification date and continue beyond the course withdrawal date. You must participate in an academic related activity pertaining to the course such as but not limited to the following examples: initiating contact with your instructor to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course; submitting an academic assignment; taking an exam; completing an interactive tutorial; participating in computer-assisted instruction; attending a study group that is assigned by the instructor; or participating in an online discussion about academic matters relating to the course. In an online class, simply logging in is not sufficient by itself to demonstrate academic attendance. You must demonstrate that you are participating in your online class and are engaged in an academically related activity such as in the examples described above.

**Where to go if you need additional help:** The Learning Center is located in Medina 216. You can receive free tutoring by appointment or on a drop-in basis. The Center offers a series of workshops throughout the semester on writing and study skills in general. Dates and times for these free workshops are posted on the door of M216. The phone number is (972)238-6180.

**Americans with Disabilities Act compliance:** ADA Statement -- If you are a student with a disability and/or special needs who requires accommodations, please contact the college
Disability Services Office at 972-238-6180 (Voice/TTY), visit Thunderduck Hall, suite T120, or go to http://www.richlandcollege.edu/dso/

**Religious Holidays:** Absences for observance of a religious holy day are excused if you inform your instructor at the beginning of the course. A student whose absence is excused to observe a religious holy day is allowed to contract with the instructor to take a make-up examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

**Campus Emergency Operation Plan:** Richland College and the Dallas County Community College District have developed policies and procedures for dealing with emergencies that may occur on campus.

- To familiarize yourself with these procedures, please take time to watch the overview video: http://video.dcccd.edu/rtv/DO/emergency_dcccd.wmv
- The complete Emergency Operations Plan can be viewed and printed at the following website: http://www.richlandcollege.edu/emergency

If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Richland College Office of Emergency Management. This office can be reached by phone (972/238-3794) or by e-mail (BOrton@dcccd.edu)

**Contingency Plan:** Richland College has developed an Instructional Contingency Plan for Temporary College Closing for On-Campus Courses. Please discuss this contingency plan with your instructor. For distance learning courses, I will use email to contact you in the event of extended technology downtime. To assure work in the class continues, it is important for all students to have an accurate email address recorded in both eCampus and eConnect. As described earlier, please click on the “Personal Information” link in eCampus to confirm that any email I send will be directed to the email address you check most consistently.

If eCampus becomes unavailable for more than 24 hours, I will provide an alternate e-mail address to which you may submit assignments that are due during the outage. It will be your responsibility to know what those assignments are.

**Syllabus and Course Schedule revision.** I may revise this Syllabus or the Course Schedule as needed during the semester.