Course Title: Texas Government
Course Number: GOVT 2306-91479

Semester: Fall 2015

Prerequisite: The following must be met: (1) Developmental Reading 0093 or English as a Second Language (ESOL) 0044 or have met the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Reading Standard AND (2) Developmental Writing in 0093, or English as a Second Language (ESOL) 0054 or have met the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Writing Standard.

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.

Compliance with Core Curriculum Guidelines:
This Government 2306 course develops the following Core Curriculum Intellectual Competencies:
1 – READING: the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed material—books, documents, and articles—above 12th grade level.
2 – WRITING: the ability to produce clear, correct, and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion, and audience, above 12th grade level.
3 – CRITICAL THINKING: think and analyze at a critical level.
4 – LISTENING, SPEAKING: focus and participation
6 – COMPUTER LITERACY: understand our technological society, use computed-based technology in communication, solving problems, and acquiring information.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Upon completion of Government 2306, the successful student should be able to:
1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution
2. Demonstrate an understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive and judicial branches of Texas government
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups and political parties in Texas
6. Analyze the state and local election process
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens
8. Analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas.
INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor's Name: Dr. Kacem Ayachi

Office Location: Wichita Hall: WH288

Phone Number: 214-890-3840

Email: kayachi@dcccd.edu (preferred method of contact but email should be sent via Blackboard)
For a timely response, you must email me using the “Email the Professor” link on the course home page in Blackboard. Please include your course and section number in the subject line of your email message.


COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

READING ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS:
This course is divided into three units of study. The reading assignments from the text for each unit are:
Unit 1: chapters 1, 2, 3, 4
Unit 2: chapters 5, 6, 7, 8
Unit 3: chapters 9, 10, 11, 12
Unit 4: chapters 13 & 14

Course Grading System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Grade Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation/Syllabus Quiz:</td>
<td>= 10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro. Discussion:</td>
<td>= 10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Quizzes (14 x 20 each):</td>
<td>= 280 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Activities (2 x 50 each):</td>
<td>= 100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>= 100 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: = 500 points

This course uses a points system; final grade will be computed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Earned</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>448-500</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>398-447</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>348-397</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>298-347</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>297 or less</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that I do not round grades up to the next highest grade nor offer extra credit on an individual basis. Your accumulated points will decide the final grade you will earn in this course.
Chapter Quizzes
There are 14 Chapter level quizzes in this course and no cumulative exams. The design is to assess your reading comprehension and your ability to recall information from multiple chapters. The testing window for the assigned reading will be the start and end date of a given unit (see the course calendar for details). Each quiz must be completed within the unit it was assigned.

Each quiz covers material from the assigned chapter. The format for each test is “open book” and each quiz has a time limit. There are a plethora of resources that have been provided to help you succeed in the course, ranging from the textbook publisher’s website, to virtual lecture/PowerPoint presentations for chapter. It is the unsecured nature of the distance education environment that mandates that you are highly prepared before each test. These restrictions provide a measure of integrity for the course exams and help secure your identity.

The quizzes are automated; they are generated from a pool of hundreds of questions. The grade will post immediately after submission. Each student will have two attempts per quiz. The higher grade will be recorded. If you do not finish an attempt, it will count as a zero. There are 20 randomly generated multiple-choice questions per test. You will have 50 minutes to complete each quiz. By design, there is not enough time to look up each question. You must be prepared for each quiz by reading the assigned chapter. Do not procrastinate; give yourself time to complete each quiz in sequence as you progress through the unit. Once a test has started, you will not be able to leave, back out or close the test screen.

Discussion Forums
General guidelines for Discussion Forum Activities:

Each forum activity consists of two postings, a primary thread and a reply posting. The primary thread is to be posted 48 hours ahead of the unit deadline, providing your peers the opportunity to offer a meaningful reply. Both postings must be made by the deadline for each unit for the assignment to be considered complete. Discussion activities are excluded from the late work policy. This is a "conversation" between classmates, so it must be timely. Grades will be posted after the Unit deadline, to allow everyone an opportunity to participate.

Please post your word count at the end of each and every posting made in the discussion forum. The expectation is that students have completed the assigned readings prior to engaging the discussion topic, and not before. This allows the discussions to remain relevant to the assigned topics. You may not go back and address discussion topics once the Unit has been completed. The deadline for the discussion postings will be the end of each Unit as noted in the syllabus. Again, this is a two part activity. Both the original and reply posting must be submitted for the activity to be considered complete.

Part I - Original Posting Guidelines:
During each unit, you are expected to post an answer (in your own words) to the primary set of questions posed for the discussion forum. Please do not wait until the deadline to make your submission. You and your peers are expected to reply to each other's posting, so try to allow enough time to reply. Each activity involves an element of independent research and critical analysis. The questions address your understanding of central themes in the textbook and your ability to think critically about the course material.

Your responses are to be in essay format. Be sure to fully explain your position, citing a high quality source as evidence if needed. The course textbook, Wikipedia, an online blog and similar
items are examples of unacceptable sources on the collegiate level. The grade for the primary posting will be determined by the quality, depth and originality of your writing. The minimum writing requirement is 250 words for the original posting, be sure to add your word count at the end of the posting.

Part II - Reply Posting Guidelines:
The second part of each discussion forum involves a reply to a primary posting made by at least one of your peers. You may choose to reply more often, but the minimum expectation is for each student to engage in a dialogue with one person in each forum. It is preferable that you reply to a posting that does not have any replies, so that everyone may receive some degree of feedback. Your reply or comment doesn't need to be quite as extensive as the original posting, but it must be of substantial academic and intellectual value. Be sure to directly address the main points made in the original posting. The minimum word count is 150 words per reply posting, be sure to add your word count at the end of the posting.

Assignment:

Students are required to research a social issue/problem that affects the state of Texas and write a letter to their state representative that describes the nature of the problem and its impact on the state, and offers a policy or solution that will resolve the problem. More details along with guidelines on this assignment are available on the course home page on Blackboard.

Online Course Attendance

Students are expected to log-in and utilize e-campus for a total of three hours per week in a regular semester. You will also need to dedicate about the same amount of time to studying and working on assignments (approx. 4-6 hours total). In shorter semesters, where a week is equivalent to each day, that means you should plan to have 4-6 hours per day for successfully completing the course. A general expectation, you should login to the course and check your e-mail three times per week (or once per day in a mini-term).

You are free to work ahead at your own pace. However, be sure to avoid falling behind. Each unit deadline will serve as a benchmark for your overall progress in the course. Remember, the distance education environment requires a high degree of self-discipline and intrinsic motivation. As you probably know, successfully completing an online course requires a special dedication. So, my advice is to make a schedule for this course and stick to it. Trying to work on all the assignments just before a deadline is the recipe for disaster.

Technology Requirements

- Internet access (free access available in campus computer labs)
- USB flash drive for back-up storage of electronic files
- Active E-mail account (check at least three times per week)
- Basic use of a personal computer (word processing and internet browsing).
- Access to the DCCCD e-campus system: http://ecampus.dcccd.edu

Use your student ID number preceded by a lower case letter "e" as both your username and password to gain access to the course the first time. Use the following example:

Username: e1234567
Password: e1234567
Technical Support:

- If you should have any technical difficulties, the fastest way to get technical support with e-campus is to click the "Help" link at the very top of the e-campus screen and then "Submit a Ticket" or call 972-669-6402.
- Everything you need to know about the Dallas Community Colleges and distance education can be found at the Dallas TeleCollege website: http://dallastelecollege.dcccd.edu/
- The e-campus Technical Support and Help Desk can be found at http://dallastelecollege.dcccd.edu/
- If you need to configure your computer for using e-campus, visit this link: http://e-campus.support.dcccd.edu/Tutorials/e-campusTutorials2/tutorialStudents/otherPrograms/browsercheck/browserSettings.pdf

Software Requirements (free versions of these programs are available for download on e-campus and inside the course):

- Microsoft Office or Open Office (word processor and presentation viewer)
- Windows Media Player
- Adobe Acrobat Reader

Inclement Weather: In case of inclement weather, you may call 972-238-6196 or visit the Richland College website to learn if the campus is closed.

Children on Campus: Minors should not be brought to campus in lieu of appropriate childcare. A student will not be allowed to attend class when minors are accompanying the student. Minors should not be brought into classrooms, laboratories, the Test Center, the Learning Center, Library, or Academic Computing areas because of disruption of instruction or study, exposure to material unsuitable for minors, and possible danger to minors.

Useful services: Connections (formerly Center for Independent Study) has tutors, offers study methods workshops, and has a writing center. M216, 972-238-6226, http://www.rlc.dcccd.edu/ctlc. Also see http://webster.commnet.edu/grammar/ for help with grammar. Richland Library offers over 30 courses on how to use the library. The library is in the Lavaca Building, Room L126, 972-238-6081 or visit them at http://www.rlc.dccd.edu/library, to check on when the various courses will be given.

Institutional policies:
Stop Before You Drop - 6 Drop Rule: For students who enroll in college level courses 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.dcccd.edu/6drop

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, 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.

**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 the credit and Continuing Education/Workforce Training courses will result in additional tuition to be charged. Developmental Studies and other courses will not be charged a higher tuition rate. Third attempts include any courses taken at any Dallas County Community Colleges since the Fall 2002 semester. See third attempt to enroll in a course at [http://www.dcccd.edu/thirdcourseattempt](http://www.dcccd.edu/thirdcourseattempt).

**Academic Progress:** Students are encouraged to discuss academic goals and degree completion with their instructors. Specific advising is available throughout the semester. Check “7 Steps 2 Success,” [www.richlandcollege.edu/admissions/process.php](http://www.richlandcollege.edu/admissions/process.php), for more details.

**Richland College’s Quality Enhancement Plan – Learning to Learn: Developing Learning Power.** Richland College is piloting its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) in select classes. The QEP provides techniques, practices, and tools to help students develop the habits, traits or behaviors needed to be effective and successful lifelong learners in college and in life. For more information, please log onto [http://www.richlandcolleg/qep2013/](http://www.richlandcolleg/qep2013/).

**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.

**Academic Honesty:** Scholastic dishonesty is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct and may result in an F grade in the course. 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 published in the DCCCD catalog at [http://www1.dcccd.edu/cat0506/ss/code.cfm](http://www1.dcccd.edu/cat0506/ss/code.cfm) (Select Purpose).

**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.dcccd.edu/Current+Students/Student+Services/Disability+Services/](http://www.dcccd.edu/Current+Students/Student+Services/Disability+Services/) (CTRL + Click to access “Current Students” site to “Student Services” to “Disability Services”)

**Religious Holidays:** Absences for observance of a religious holy day are excused. 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](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.rlc.dcccd.edu/emergency](http://www.rlc.dcccd.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 email (rlcoem@dcccd.edu).

**Tentative Course Calendar***:

Please note that I will not open a test, discussion board or any other assignment beyond the due date for any reason even computer glitches. You need to plan ahead and complete your work on time!

*(All Unit assignments are due by 11:55 pm)*
The introductory Discussion post and syllabus quiz are required to certify your attendance in this course; they must be completed by 11:55 pm on Wednesday - 11/11/2015 (Mandatory)

**Unit I Deadline – 11/20/2015**
Quizzes for Chapters 1 through 4 due
Discussion Forum #1 Due (Primary post due 48 hours ahead of unit deadline)

**Unit II Deadline – 11/29/2015**
Quizzes for Chapters 5-8 due

**Unit III Deadline – 12/10/2015**
Quizzes for Chapters 9-12 due
Discussion Forum #2 due (Primary post due 48 hours ahead of unit deadline)

**Unit IV Deadline – 12/17/2015**
Quizzes for Chapters 13 &14 due
Writing Assignment due 12-17

*I reserve the right to revise the syllabus at any time. I will announce any changes ahead of time.*