Mountain View College Faculty Syllabus  
Spring 2015

Course Number: GOVT 2305/2306 -63505/63504

Course Title: American Government

Instructor’s Information:  
Instructor’s Name: Brian White, Ph.D  
Office Number: B220  
Office Hours: After Class or by appointment

Contact Information: Phone: 972.548.6750  
Email: bwhite@collin.edu

Class Information:  
Class Meeting Times: MW 6:00-8:50pm  
Class Meeting Location: MVC, W117

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 Credit Hours: Lecture Hours: 3

Assessment(s): Prior to enrolling in this course, the student must demonstrate eligibility to enroll in the following: college level reading and ENGL 1301.

Prerequisite: None

Prerequisite/Concurrent Enrollment: None

Textbook: The following text is required for the course: Ginsberg and Lowe, We the People

Course Resources: Please see the Tentative Course Calendar for a detailed list of the required readings. The instructor may assign additional readings during the semester.

Supplies: Students are required to purchase 4 882-E scantron forms for the exams.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

- State-mandated Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, students will:
1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States. (Communication Skills)
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system. (Communication Skills)
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice. (Social Responsibility)
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government. (Communication Skills; Personal Responsibility)
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system. (Critical Thinking; Personal Responsibility)
6. Analyze the election process. (Critical Thinking)
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens. (Personal Responsibility; Social Responsibility)
8. Analyze issues and policies in the U.S. politics. (Critical Thinking; Social Responsibility)

Course Requirements:

1. Reading of assigned textbook material.
2. Class participation.
3. Reading of assigned supplemental materials.
4. Completion of experiential learning assignments which comprise between twenty (20) and thirty (30) percent of the semester grade.
5. Completion of an assigned number of tests and a final examination.

General Description: Please see the Tentative Course Calendar later in this syllabus for a description of the topics covered in this course.

Major Course Requirements & Method of Evaluation:

For purposes of grade determination, there will be five (5) components of evaluation. The five items upon which grades will be based are as follows:

1. Exam 1 20%
2. Exam 2 20%
3. Exam 3 20%
4. Assignments 1 & 2 20%
5. Quizzes 20%

[A=90-100  B=80-89  C=70-79  D=60-69  F=Below 59]

There will be Two (2) exams in the course, each worth 40% of the final grade. The Assignments and Quizzes are also worth 20% each of your grade.

Grade Policy: Students concerned about their grades should endeavor to attend all class sessions and complete all work to the best of their ability. Students earn high grades by demonstrating a mastery of the subject matter and not based on what they want or need for their overall GPA, their scholarship, etc.
MAKE-UP EXAMS:  
Only students with legitimate reasons for missing a regularly scheduled exam will be allowed to take a makeup. Appropriate documentation is always necessary in evaluating circumstances (i.e. medical excuse or court documentation). Students who cannot, for any reason, take an exam must notify the instructor at least 24 hours before the scheduled examination. Make-up times will be determined in consultation with the instructor.  No make up on quizzes or homework.

ASSIGNMENTS:  
Assignments require students to provide responses to questions or instructions identified in the Course Schedule and Reading Assignments section of the syllabus. Other assignments that may be given at the discretion of the instructor (including Internet site visits or group assignments) are due on the dates prescribed. No assignments are to be turned in via email unless professor gives permission in advance.

Attendance Policy: See the current Registration Guide for the last day to withdraw.

Regular and punctual class attendance is mandatory. More than 5 absences may lead to a grade reduction or other penalty. Students are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings. Remember, in-class participation means taking an active part during class meetings. The best way for you to develop and sharpen your capacity to think is for you to be actively involved in class discussions. If you should miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain lecture notes and assignments from your classmates.

Students should avoid any form of class disturbance including talking out of turn, reading the newspapers in class, sleeping in class, doing other class work in the class, ringing cell phones, texting on cell phones, getting up to leave class to talk on a cell phone and then returning to class. Any student who violates these rules can receive up to 8 points deduction for each occurrence on their overall grade.

If you are seven (7) or more minutes late by the instructor’s watch, a penalty will be assessed. Five points (5) will be deducted for each late occurrence. The total number of days you are late will be multiplied by 5 points and subtracted from the total points scored at the end of the semester.

Course Drop Limit Provisions: Texas Education Code 51.907
Students who enroll as an entering freshman or a first-time college student in undergraduate courses at any Texas public community college, technical institute, health sciences institution, or any public university offering undergraduate courses must comply with the legislation of TEC51.907.

TEC51.907 states that students who enroll for the first time during the fall 2007 semester or any subsequent semester are subject to the course drop limit of six course drops. This includes any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution.

MVC will not begin to count dropped courses until the fall 2008 semester.

NOTE: You will not be allowed to withdraw from classes if your official transcripts (required for admission) are not on file.
Drops after the term census date are considered withdrawals and appear as a "W" on the transcript.

**Withdraw Policy:** The deadline for withdrawal with a "W" this semester is **Monday January 26, 2015**. It is the student's responsibility to drop the course; I cannot do it for you. Students who fail to drop the course and remain on the roll after the drop date will receive a performance grade!

**Religious Holidays:** Refer to the MVC Student Handbook.

**Americans with Disabilities Act Statement:** MVC will adhere to all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the ACCESS office, S2080 to arrange for appropriate accommodations. See the current Student Handbook for additional information.

**Academic Policies:** See the current Student Handbook.

I will allow a student to submit an assignment (in whole or in part) for more than one (1) class.

Every member of the College community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The College may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty. While specific examples are listed below, this is not an exhaustive list and scholastic dishonesty may encompass other conduct, including any conduct through electronic or computerized means. Scholastic dishonesty shall involve, but is not limited to, one or more of the following acts:

**General Scholastic Dishonesty** includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts, or omissions related to applications for enrollment, credit or class work, research, and/or the award of a degree; falsifying academic records; using annotated texts or teacher’s editions; using information about exams posted on the Internet or in any electronic medium; leaving a test site without authority; failing to secure test materials; and/or submitting work that is not one’s own. All work submitted for credit is expected to be the student’s own work. Students are expected to record honestly and accurately the results of all their research. Falsification of research results includes misrepresentation, distortions, or omissions in data or reports on research.

**Plagiarism** is the use of an author’s words or ideas as if they were one’s own without giving credit to the source, including, but not limited to, failure to acknowledge a direct quotation. In the preparation of all papers and other written work, students must distinguish their own ideas
and knowledge from information derived from other sources. The term “sources” includes not only published primary and secondary materials, but also information and opinions gained directly from other people. Whenever ideas or facts are derived from a source, the source must be indicated by the student.

**Cheating** is the willful giving or receiving of information in an unauthorized manner during an examination or to complete an assignment; collaborating with another student during an examination without authority; using, buying, selling, soliciting, stealing, or otherwise obtaining course assignments and/or examination questions in advance; unauthorized copying of computer or Internet files; using someone else’s work for assignments as if it were one’s own; submitting or resubmitting an assignment (in whole or in part) for more than one (1) class or institution without permission from the professor(s); or any other dishonest means of attempting to fulfill the requirements of a course.

**Collusion** is intentionally or unintentionally aiding or attempting to aid another in an act of scholastic dishonesty, including but not limited to, failing to secure academic work; providing a paper or project to another student; providing an inappropriate level of assistance or unauthorized collaboration; communicating answers to a classmate about an examination or any other course assignment; removing tests or answer sheets from a test site; and allowing a classmate to copy answers.

Students found responsible for scholastic dishonesty offenses will receive an authorized disciplinary penalty or penalties from the Dean of Student Development Office. The student may also receive an academic penalty in the course where the scholastic dishonesty took place. The faculty member will determine the appropriate academic penalty.

**Tentative Course Calendar:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>Introduction to American Government and Ch. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 26-28</td>
<td>Constitution <em>(Review Assignment 1 Jan 26)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>Congress: Nature of Representation and the Constitutional Basis of the Legislative Branch and the U.S Constitution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>Campaigns and Elections</td>
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</tbody>
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Feb 11  Economic Policy  and  Test 1
Feb 16  Federal Judiciary and assignment 1 Due
Feb 18  Interest Groups
Feb 23  Civil Liberties
Feb 25  Civil Rights
March 4  Politics and Social Welfare
March 9  Foreign Policy
March 16  Presentations
March 18  Final

*There will be a review for each scheduled examination. The instructor reserves the right to modify course content (i.e. due to unforeseen circumstances or calendar conflicts, etc.) Without affecting the common grade agreement.