COURSE DESCRIPTION
GOVT 2305: American Government (3 credit hours)
(This is a Texas Common Course Number)

- This course is an introduction to the study of political science.
- Topics include: The origin and development of constitutional democracy (United States and Texas); Federalism and intergovernmental relations; Local government; Parties; Politics; and Political behavior.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK
American Democracy Now – Texas Edition by Brigid Callahan, Jean Harris, Gary Halter and Susan J. Tolchin, 2009

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. Demonstrate knowledge of basic principles of American and Texas government, and an understanding of the operations of the American political system.
2. Demonstrate an appreciation of the interactions between and among various participants at all levels of the American political system, and rights of citizens under the United States Constitution.
3. To analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the area under study.
4. To analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
1. Reading of assigned textbook materials.
2. Attend class and participate in class discussions.
3. Completion of the midterm and the final, quizzes, homework assignments, and essays.

COURSE TOPICS
Topics that will be covered include: American political culture; Constitutional democracy; Federalism; Public opinion; Interest groups; the media; and how those ideas relate to Texas government.

OFFICE HOURS
Students may meet with me after class hours for this course to discuss course issues. My regular conference time is during 2nd period, 8:15 a.m. to 9:03 a.m., Monday-Friday, room 273. I will be available for tutorials Wednesdays and Thursdays 2:30-3:15 and every morning, from 6:50-7:20.

ATTENDANCE
Attendance/participation is important for your success in this class and other college classes. District policies are applicable for attendance.

ASSIGNMENTS
Your grade will be determined by your performance in four areas:

Area 1 (worth 40%): Tests. Approximately 20% of the questions will come from textbook material not covered in class.

Area 2 (worth 40%): Quizzes - Reading and vocabulary quizzes will be approximately 20 questions and the questions will be a mixture of question types.

Area 3 (worth 20%): Classwork - Homework and assignments completed in class.

Area 4: Final Exam The Final will cover everything from the semester. It will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. The Final will take place at the end of the semester.
GRADES
Grades will be based upon Tests (40%), Quizzes (40%), Classwork (20%)

The course grading scale is:

A = 90-100
B = 80-89
C = 70-79
F = 69 and below

EXAMINATIONS
Attendance is mandatory. THERE ARE NO EXEMPTIONS FOR THE DUAL CREDIT FINAL EXAM. More information regarding the exam will be given at a later date.

WRITING EXPECTATIONS:
Students are expected to submit their best possible writing, reflecting critical inquiry into the writing subject and the understanding of how to communicate informed thoughts and opinions. The MLA style of citation will be used in the larger—two to three page—writing assignment. Finished writing should convey the student’s clear understanding of proper grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, word usage and course vocabulary.

PLAGIARISM:
It is defined as “The unacknowledged, wholesale use of another writer’s work in a written assignment.” I will give a zero on the assignment or test if I find evidence or cheating or plagiarism. The district policy as written in the DCCCD handbook will be implemented. www.dcccd.edu/cat0506/ss/code.cfm

WITHDRAWALS
If you are unable to complete this course, it is your responsibility to withdraw formally.

- IF A STUDENT DROPS THIS CLASS ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 8, 2014, THE COURSE WILL NOT APPEAR ON A COLLEGE TRANSCRIPT.
- THE LAST DAY TO DROP WITH A GRADE OF “W” (WITHDRAW) IS SEPTEMBER 8, 2014. ANY STUDENT REMAINING IN A COURSE AFTER THIS DATE WILL EARN A GRADE.

CLASSROOM POLICIES
CITATION AND REFERENCE STYLE
Assignments completed in a narrative essay or composition format must follow MLA guidelines, as represented in the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers by Joseph Gibaldi. Students should use this web site for assistance: http://citationmachine.net/index2.php?reqstyleid=1

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR
Classroom decorum will be maintained at all times. This is a college course. Please behave as you would in a college classroom. Please turn off your cell phones prior to arrival in class.
ADA (American Disabilities Act)
If you are a student with a disability and/or special needs who requires ADA accommodations, please contact Richland College Disability Services Office, T-120 at (972) 238-6180.

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 take a make-up examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence. Students who will be absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day must notify the instructor in advance.

Institutional Policy on Withdrawal and Withdrawal Date
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 September 8, 2014. Failure to do so will result in 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.

Obtaining Final Course Grades Using eConnect
Final Grade Reports are no longer mailed. Convenient access is available online at www.econnect.dcccd.edu or by telephone at 972-613-1818. Use your identification number when you log onto eConnect, an online system developed by the DCCCD to provide you with timely information regarding your college record. Your grades will also be printed on your Student Advising Report, which is available in the Admissions and Student Records Office, T170.

Financial Aid
If you are receiving financial aid grants or loans, you must begin attendance in all classes. Do not drop or stop attending any class without consulting the Financial Aid Office. Changes in your enrollment level and failing grades may require that you repay financial aid funds. Withdrawals may affect your eligibility to receive further aid and could cause you to be in a position of repayment for the current semester. Students who fail to attend or participate after the drop date are also subject to this policy.

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 published in the DCCCD Catalog at http://www1.dcccd.edu/cat0506/ss/code.cfm.

Third Attempt to Enroll in 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 Education and some other courses will not be charged additional tuition. Third attempts include courses taken at any of the Dallas County Community Colleges since the Fall 2002, semester. Visit www.dcccd.edu/ThirdCourseAttempt for a list of courses and additional information.

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.dcccd.edu/6drop

The Texas Success Initiative (TSI)
The Texas Success Initiative (TSI) is a statewide program designed to ensure that students enrolled in Texas public colleges and universities have the basic academic skills needed to be successful in college-level course work. The TSI requires assessment, remediation (if necessary), and advising of students who attend a public college or university in the state of Texas. The program assesses a student's basic academic skills in reading, writing, and math. Passing the assessment is a prerequisite for enrollment in many college level classes such as English 1301/1302, History 1301/1302, Math 1414, etc. Students who do not meet assessment standards may complete prerequisite requirements by taking developmental courses in the deficient area and passing them with a grade of C or higher. In some cases retesting will also be required. It is up to each student to be aware and informed about requirements that are subject to change. Additional information is available at www.rlc.dcccd.edu/regi/resource/tsi.htm and from the TSI Office in T170T or T170S (phone number 972-238-6115 or 972-238-3787).