Texas Government
GOVT 2306 – Section 23250
Saturdays 1 – 4:15pm, K244

Brookhaven College – DCCCD

Division of Social Sciences
Spring 2015

Instructor Information
Name: Monica Alfaro Rodriguez
Office Location: Brookhaven College
E-mail: monicar@dcccd.edu (Primary method of contact)
Office # send an e-mail instead
Tech Support # (972) 669-6402

Required Textbooks/Reading materials:

  And
- Dallas Morning News, New York Times or access to any other major newspaper (knowledge of current events will be essential to course activities).

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)

Technical Support:

- Everything you need to know about accessing e-campus, using the tools and contacting tech support is located on their webpage.

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
- All Quizzes/Tests/Exams for this course require the use of the Respondus Lockdown Browser. This must be installed on the computer from which you intend to take a quiz. As part of the course orientation, you will be asked to view this guide on installing and using the Respondus Lockdown Browser.

Course Grading System

Grading Scale (point system)
A = 900 – 1000
B = 800 – 899
C = 700 – 799
D = 600 – 699
F = 0 – 599
Activity Grade Values (*required activity)

*Orientation Quiz (1 x 25): 2.5% = 25 points
Chapter Quizzes (9 x 25 each): 22.5% = 225 points
Discussion Forums (2 x 50 each): 10% = 100 points
Unit Essay (1 x 300 each): 30% = 300 points
*TX Policy Report (50 and 300): 35% = 350 points

Totals: 100% = 1000 points

Course Calendar - GOVT 2306 Sat – Spring 2015

(All Unit Deadlines are 11:55 pm on a Saturday)

Orientation

- Course begins Saturday – 01/24/2015.
- The orientation is required and must to be completed online in the first day(s) of the course.
- **Deadline: 11:55 pm on Wednesday – 01/24/2015 (Mandatory)**

Unit I – Deadline – 02/28/2015

- Quizzes for Chapters 19-22 Due
- Discussion Forum #1 Due (Primary post due 48 hours ahead of unit deadline)
- Unit I Essay Due

Unit II – Deadline – 04/11/2015

- Quizzes for Chapters 23-25 Due
- Discussion Forum #2 Due (Primary post due 48 hours ahead of unit deadline)
- Unit II Essay Due
- **Project Proposal Due (Mandatory)**

Unit III – Deadline – 05/02/2015

- Quizzes for Chapters 26-27 Due
- Discussion Forum #3 Due (Primary post due 48 hours ahead of unit deadline)
- Extra Credit Essay Due (optional)
- **TX Policy Report Due (Mandatory)**

Addendum I - General Course Information

Introduction to the Instructor

Welcome to American Government. My name is Monica Alfaro-Rodriguez. I am a graduate of Texas Woman’s University, where I received a Bachelors of Science degree in Political Science and Philosophy and a Master of Arts degree in Political Science. My academic focus is in Political Theory. I am particularly interested in a two-fold method for understanding Political Science. First, how theory and philosophy have shaped political thinking, and second how interpretation of the constitution by Justices on the United States Supreme Court have altered the course of U.S. Constitutional law and history. I have been teaching for five years and have taught numerous
courses in American and Texas Government as well as Constitutional Law, and I enjoy teaching this material to my students and learning with them.

I am also currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Humanities at University of Texas at Dallas. My course of study is called the History of Ideas, and I am concentrating on the political narrative in historical texts. Therefore, I have a clear understanding of the pressures that accompany being a student and coupling real world demands such as work and family. My best advice to you is to work hard, but also take time to enjoy what you are doing at every step of the way. Should you wish to chat about the course, or anything else in particular, please feel free to contact me via email or see me after our class time.

Course Content

GOVT 2306 is designed to introduce students to the organization, the principles and the various functions of the Texas State Government. Together we will analyze the history, structure, changes, and continued evolution of politics in the state of Texas. In addition, we will explore a variety of contemporary political issues as they relate to the course material. This course does cover some historical information, but is primarily a study of modern Texas politics (not history).

This is one of the rare collegiate courses where watching television (the news) will greatly benefit you. In addition, I highly encourage you to stay informed about current events issues that are related to the course via print, televised and electronic media. These additional resources will be of great assistance in your efforts to understand the content covered in this course.

The larger effort in this course is to understand how and why Texas has created a vast, dynamic and complex governmental system on the state and local levels. Upon completion of this course, you will have the knowledge and analytical skills necessary to better understand the philosophy, structure and logical processes which govern the world we live in. More importantly, this course will provide you with the resources necessary to participate in politics and make informed decisions in the future.

Course Information

GOVT 2306 – Texas Government. This is a Texas Common Course Number.

Prerequisite: The following must be met: (1) DREA 0093 or English as a Second Language (ESOL) 0044 or have met the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Reading Standard AND (2) DWRI 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. Coordinating Board Academic Approval Number 4510025125.

Student Learning Outcomes for GOVT 2306

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.
2. Describe 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. Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas.

Core Objectives for GOVT 2306

1. **Critical Thinking Skills**: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
2. **Communication Skills**: to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
3. **Social Responsibility**: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
4. **Personal Responsibility**: to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

**Addendum II - Course Policies and Performance Guidelines**

**General Guidelines for all Coursework**

All course assignments must comply with the following requirements to be considered a completed work (incomplete items will receive a zero). Please read these requirements carefully:

- **Each "Mandatory" activity must be submitted to earn credit for the course.** There are two categories of activities identified with an asterisks (*) in the syllabus (The Orientation and The Term Project).
- **The formatting requirements for all assignments are**: typed / word processed, double-spaced, size 12 font, Arial or Times New Roman script, 1 inch margins (default setting), and a limited number of grammatical errors.
- **All essays are to have a cover page with the following information**: Your name, course and section number, semester of enrollment, a word count and a title indicating the topic of your essay. The word count should reflect your own work (do not include citations, quotes, cover pages, or a bibliography).
- **Each student is expected to utilize 2-3 scholarly sources (peer-reviewed articles from academic journals) per writing assignment.** There is a tool built into the course to help you obtain quality sources for your writing assignment, it is labeled “research center” on the main menu of the course. For current events related information, use a newspaper, news magazine, news website, a court case or an actual law. The course textbook, Wikipedia, internet search engines, blogs and similar items are examples of unacceptable research sources on the collegiate level.
- **Failure to identify sources is plagiarism.** Provide the full MLA or APA citation for all outside sources. All references are to be documented within the body of the assignment and on a works cited page.
- **Only your own words will count toward the writing requirements.** The writing assignments are intended to assess your comprehension of the material.
All assignments are expected to meet college level writing requirements; all answers are to be in essay format and the expectation is for each student to engage the topics using critical analysis. Please do not attempt to provide simplified or elementary answers if you wish to earn credit for your work. Take the time to fully explain your ideas and demonstrate the depth of your understanding to earn the grade you want.

Do not use first person tones in the essay assignments. The prompts are designed to help you think about the topic, not to generate a direct response. First person tone is inappropriate in a college essay, but may be used in discussion forum activities.

There is no credit for partial work. The minimum writing expectation for each assignment or activity must be satisfied to earn a grade. Incomplete assignments will receive a zero.

There is a specific course policy regarding late work. Tests, class activities, extra credit, etc. are excluded from the late work policy and are always due by the stated deadline. Late work for a unit essay will only be accepted in a case where there are extenuating circumstances that the instructor was informed about in advance of the deadline.

All assignments are to be submitted as one electronic file to the appropriately titled online dropbox. Again, all pages of an assignment (cover page, body text, and works cited) are to be submitted together. Assignments will not be accepted via any other delivery method, unless prior approval was obtained. Assignments submitted online must be in one of the following file formats: doc, rtf or txt. Other document formats are unacceptable and will be rejected by the dropbox.

Course Etiquette Policy

E-mail – Please allow 48 hours for a reply via e-mail. There may be periods where it may take longer to get a reply (such as weekends and holidays). Again, be patient and allow me time to get back to you. For any technical issues with e-campus or your computer, please contact the technical support team.

Communication Dialogue – Personal attacks, racial or ethnic slurs, outbursts or other inappropriate forms of communication will result in immediate removal from the class and possibly from the college (see academic freedom statement). Think about what you are saying, before you hit the send or submit button.

Personal Requests – I am happy to assist you with any questions you may have about the course, about the news, or even college life in general. However, personal requests for exemptions to course policies will not be granted unless there is a legitimate reason. It is a form of discrimination by the instructor to grant exceptions without basis. Any exceptions made may require documentation and will only be considered in advance of a deadline. Please refrain from asking the instructor to engage in unprofessional or unethical behavior, such requests will not receive an audience.

Late Work Policy

Ample time has been allotted to complete each Unit activity. All assignments are expected on or before the deadline indicated in the syllabus. I am certainly willing to work with you through extenuating personal circumstances should the need arise to submit a late essay. Any student that needs to submit a late paper must contact me in advance of the deadline for approval and to make alternative arrangements. You may be required to provide some form of written documentation in order to substantiate a request to submit a late assignment.

If approved, late work will be considered for up to 50% of the original value of an assignment. Late work must be submitted within two calendar days (48 hours) of the original deadline (including weekends and holidays). If the assignment has not been submitted within the time allotted after the original deadline, it will receive a zero. Due to time constraints, late work will not
be accepted in the final unit of the course (the final course deadline). Tests, discussion forum activities and extra credit are excluded from the late work policy and are due by the stated deadline.

**Course Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend all regular class sessions and 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. As 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. I want you to know that this task is possible, as hundreds of students have completed online courses with me in the past. Over time I have collected feedback from my students and they consistently report that time management is something they struggle with. 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.

**Course E-mail / Announcements**

There are frequent updates posted in the course announcements area and sent out via e-mail. This is the primary avenue of communication for this course. Each student is expected to read the information and keep current with the course. Many frequently asked questions are addressed via announcements and some may contain vital course information. These are official course communications, so bear in mind that you will be held accountable for the information provided via electronic communications.

**Course Honor Code**

Scholastic dishonesty is a violation of the DCCCD Student Code of Student Conduct. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. Students are expected to complete all course work by their own efforts and in their own words.

When you cite or paraphrase another author, you are required to properly acknowledge all sources with a parenthetical citation in the body text and provide a bibliographic listing on a works cited page. If you have any questions about citations, contact me immediately. Any attempt to submit work that is not a product of your own efforts will result in an automatic “F” for the assignment and the course. In addition, you may face disciplinary action by the college administration leading up to expulsion from the college.

The college uses a premier plagiarism detection program known as “SafeAssign.” Since all papers will be electronically submitted for review, I implore you to avoid procrastinating and begin your work as soon as possible. Time seems to be the largest factor in a student’s decision to plagiarize. Details on how to submit your work to the dropbox will be posted in the course announcement area.

**Statement of Academic Freedom**

The collegiate environment is one that promotes tolerance, understanding, communication and equality. Use the guidelines below in your interactions with the instructor and your peers:
Students are provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their comprehension of political issues and express their understanding of key points in this course. The discussion format in particular is an opportunity for students to enjoy their constitutional right to free speech and expression. This is not intended to serve as a platform for one to express their political ideology or personal feelings about a given issue. It is a forum for an intellectual dialogue and an exchange of ideas. Again, the expectation is that you will conduct yourself to the standards befitting a college student engaged in an intellectual dialogue (both inside and outside the classroom).

Academic freedom will be protected and respected by all students and the instructor. However, there are some limitations on free speech. Hateful, sexist, racist, hurtful, or otherwise obscene comments that are intended as a personal attack will not be tolerated. Additionally, any dialogue that does not specifically pertain to the topic at hand will not receive an audience. At the instructor's discretion, a student that violates these guidelines may be removed from the course and possibly from the college.

Addendum III - Course Activities, Assignments, and Exams

* Indicates a mandatory course requirement. Failure to submit a compulsory assignment will result in a failing grade (F/N) for the course.

*Orientation Activity (*Mandatory)

As stated in the course catalog and on your registration forms, all INET courses have a mandatory orientation process. For this course, the process will be completed totally online. Once it has been completed, your attendance and participation will be reported to the college administration to certify you in the course. The Orientation is to be completed on the first day(s) of the course.

Any student that fails to complete the mandatory orientation will be reported as non-attending and will receive a letter grade of N (non-attending) on their final transcript. If you do not properly drop/withdraw, this will show up as an F on your permanent records. Be sure that your intentions are made clear to the registration office during the first day of the course.

Course Readings, Lectures and Presentations

Each student is expected to read the assigned material as detailed in the course calendar. In addition, there is a corresponding video(s) for each chapter (approx. 30 minutes each) which we will be watching in class together, and an in class lecture (PowerPoint presentation). The video will be posted online. Students will be held accountable for assigned materials via the course assignments, discussion forums and unit quizzes. The textbook readings and in class lecture create the core of the course experience. The supplemental materials are there to reinforce key points and help you succeed. Making appropriate use of the materials will have a significant impact on your grades.

It is vital that you manage your time and maintain a high degree of self-discipline to ensure your success in any college course. The course schedule has been designed to spread apart the major course topics so that you are able to comprehend the material. If you fall behind, it is difficult to adequately address the topics and this often creates a snowball effect leading to failure. Again, I implore you to keep pace with the class and not fall behind. The pace of the
The course is about 1 chapter per week during the full length term (or a chapter per day in a mini-term).

Chapter Quizzes (9 total)

There are chapter level quizzes in this course, not cumulative exams. The design is to assess your reading comprehension one chapter at a time, rather than assessing your ability to recall information across multiple chapters. The window to complete the quizzes will be the start and end date of a given unit (see the course calendar for details). Again, each quiz must be completed within the unit it was assigned.

The format for each quiz is “open book” and there are 25 randomly generated multiple-choice questions per quiz. You will have 30 minutes to complete each quiz attempt. The quizzes are automated; they are randomly generated from a pool of hundreds of questions. The grade will post immediately after submission. Each quiz covers detailed material from the assigned chapter. You may have two attempts per quiz and the higher grade will be recorded. Once a quiz has started, you will not be able to leave, back out or close the quiz screen. It is strongly suggested that you do not take the quiz on a computer with a wireless connection. The most reliable location for taking a quiz is in a DCCCD campus computer lab, where there are dedicated internet lines. If you do not finish an attempt, it will count as a zero.

By design, there is not enough time to look up an answer to each question. You must be highly 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. You may move at your own pace ahead of each deadline. I suggest completing the readings and quizzes well ahead of each deadline so you can focus on the primary unit activities (essays and forums). 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 quiz. These restrictions provide a measure of integrity for the course assessments and help secure your identity.

On rare occasion, there may be an issue with the questions in the quiz pool. I will address those issues on a case-by-case basis. Also, unforeseen glitches during a quiz attempt can occur from time to time. There are several steps you can take to ensure you do not have a problem during an attempt. Detail information will be provided in the orientation to help ensure your computer is configured to interact with the e-campus system. Please contact the tech support team in case of a problem. However, they cannot and will not re-set a quiz. Tech support can assist in helping identify the source of any potential problem. I will then need to verify and document the problem with e-campus, if an attempt is to be re-set. If the error was on your end, the grade will be recorded “as is.” At the instructor’s discretion, a penalty may be imposed for any re-take to maintain the integrity of the course and an equitable assessment procedure. The only valid reason a quiz attempt will be re-set is when e-campus has a technical problem. Again, I will not simply re-set a quiz attempt due to a technical error that could have been avoided on your end.

All Quizzes for this course require the use of the Respondus Lockdown Browser. This must be installed on the computer from which you intend to take a quiz. As part of the course orientation, you will be asked to view this guide on installing and using the Respondus Lockdown Browser.

Discussion Forums (pick 2 out of 3, you may skip this activity in one unit)

General Guidelines:
The discussion forums provide an opportunity for a collaborative and informative dialogue among peers. The expectation is that students have completed the assigned readings prior to engaging the discussion topic and have conducted independent research into the assigned prompts. This allows the discussions to remain focused and relevant.

Each forum activity consists of two postings, a primary thread and a reply posting. **Again, this is a two part activity. Both the original and reply posting must be submitted for the activity to be considered complete.** Discussion activities are excluded from the late work policy. This is a “conversation” between classmates, so it must be timely. Discussion grades will only be posted after the Unit deadline, to allow everyone an opportunity to participate. You may not go back and address discussion topics once the Unit has been completed. The deadline for a discussion forum will be the end of each Unit as noted in the syllabus.

**Part I - Original Post/Thread Guidelines:**

The original post/thread will always be due 48 hours ahead of the unit deadline. This allows your peers time to compose a meaningful reply.

Each discussion 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. The intent is to go beyond the textbook.

Each student is expected to utilize 2-3 scholarly sources (peer-reviewed articles from academic journals) in the original post. In addition, you may cite a newspaper, news magazine, news website, a court case or an actual law for current events related information. The course textbook, reference materials, Wikipedia, internet search engines, blogs and similar items are examples of unacceptable sources on the collegiate level.

Your responses are to be in essay/paragraph format. Be sure to fully address each prompt and cite supporting evidence. The grade for the primary post will be determined by the quality, depth and originality of your writing. **The minimum writing requirement for the original post is 250 of your own words (excluding cited information from the word count).** Finally, provide a word count and a list of all works cited at the end of the post.

**Part II - Reply Posting Guidelines:**

The second part of each discussion forum involves replying to an original post offered 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. **Please reply to someone who does not have any replies, so that everyone may receive some degree of feedback.** Your reply does not involve the same level of rigor as the original post, but it must be of substantial academic and intellectual value. Be sure to directly address the main points made in the original post and even offer additional sources to consider.

Simply cheering on your peers with phrases like “Good posting” or “I agree” will not suffice for this assignment. This is an opportunity for real exchange of ideas, so make the most of the opportunity to teach and learn from your classmates. Any personal attacks are grounds for immediate removal from the course and possibly the college.

Again, your grade will be based on the quality and originality of your feedback. **The minimum writing requirement for a reply post is 100 of your own words (excluding cited information from the word count).** Finally, provide a word count and if needed list any works cited at the end of the reply.
Extra Credit Discussion Option – Additional Reply Posts (up to extra 5 per forum):

In each discussion forum, one reply is required as part of the activity. As incentive to keep the conversation going, you can earn up to 2 extra credit points for making up to 5 additional reply comments to your peers (1 required + 5 optional = 6 total). There is a maximum of 10 extra credit points awarded per forum, or up to 20 points in total during the course. This option only applies when you are a participant in the forum. If your work is late or incomplete, you will not earn extra credit. Once the deadline for a given forum has passed, so does the opportunity for extra credit on that discussion topic.

Unit Essay (pick 1 out of 2, you may skip this activity in one of the first two units)

The unit essay is the primary assessment of your learning in this course. Reading the material and taking an open book tests does not fully demonstrate your command of the information. For this reason, the majority of your grade will be based on your written work. The deadline for each essay is the end of the unit for which it was assigned (see calendar for details). Late work will only be considered according to the late work policy. Once the deadline passes, the grade will be recorded as a zero. It is suggested that you identify which essay you want to work on at the start of each unit and consistently progress toward a final draft.

All course readings, videos and virtual lectures are expected to have been examined prior to submitting the unit essay. As a standing requirement for all coursework, your assignment must utilize 2-3 scholarly sources (peer-reviewed articles from an academic journal). Each source is to be properly cited in the body of your text and on a works cited page using formal MLA or APA citation format. Each essay must be completed using the formatting guidelines provided in Addendum II of the syllabus as “Guidelines for all Coursework.” Detailed directions on what is expected for each essay have been provided in the guidelines for each assignment. Any additional information will be provided during the semester. The essays will be graded with an assessment rubric, it has been provided for your reference in the “resources” area of the course. As a reminder, first person tone is inappropriate in any college research essay.

Each unit essay is to be 3-4 pages in length, with a minimum writing requirement of two full pages in your own words (excluding cited information). Any assignment that does not meet or exceed the minimum writing expectations will be considered incomplete and will result in a zero. Simply meeting the minimum expectation does not guarantee a C; it only qualifies the assignment for a grade. Again, each essay must be 2 full pages in your own words and generally 3-4 pages with cited materials included. If you want to earn a high grade, take the time to carefully respond to each question with research and critical thought.

There is a list of essay topics in units I and II, there are no essay options in unit III. Each prompt can be download (in MS Word format) at any time, so feel free to plan ahead to determine which essays you wish to complete during the semester. All assignments must be submitted to the SafeAssign dropbox when completed. Detailed procedures on using SafeAssign Dropbox are provided in the course orientation.

Extra Credit Essay Option:

You may submit an additional unit essay for up to 50 points, the equivalent of half a letter grade in the course. The extra credit essay must be a topic that you have not selected previously for a major essay grade.
Please clearly identify the essay topic and that it is for extra credit on the cover page. The minimum expectations, research requirements and all guidelines remain the same. In Unit III, there is a dropbox labeled "extra credit paper." That is where you are to submit your work. The deadline is the end of Unit III, see the calendar for details.

*Formal Assessment Guidelines – Texas Policy Paper (Mandatory Term Project)

Introduction

This activity is an opportunity for you to closely examine a contemporary policy issue facing the state of Texas. Over its history, the Texas government has had many conflicts with the national government as part of the dynamics in a federal system of governance. These disputes have heated up in recent years, and include immigration policy, education policy, environmental policy, social welfare policy and many others issues. Select one of personal interest and objectively outline the nature of the dispute. This will allow you to work towards finding a solution.

Take into consideration constitutional/legal issues along with political, economic and cultural differences. Look at the history underlying the dispute, how it is playing out within the governing institutions, and how it may be resolved. It is strongly suggested that you use the library database at the start of the semester to begin researching a topic. This assignment requires carefully planning throughout the semester. Refer to the course calendar for the specific due date. The final draft is to be submitted via the submission guidelines identified by the instructor.

The grading standards used to assess the quality of your work for this policy paper will be detailed in a grading rubric, which will be provided during the semester. Completing this activity is a mandatory component of this course. It serves as the standard course assessment for all GOVT 2306 students. Failure to submit this project in its entirety will result in a failing grade for the course.

There are four steps to completing this project:

**Step 1:** Identify the issue and how the policies of both the US government and Texas government have been addressing it historically.

**Step 2:** Conduct research to locate three (3) peer-reviewed articles published in an academic journal (aka: scholarly sources) using the following criteria:

- **The article must be less than ten years old and a minimum of five pages in length.**
- Carefully choose those works that provide a variety of perspectives on the topic.
- For current events information relevant to your topic, you may use newspaper articles, magazine articles, government publications and other reliable sources as "supplemental sources." That is, in addition to the 3 scholarly sources.
- Textbooks, Dictionaries, Encyclopedias (including Wikipedia), Almanacs, or an Atlas are reference materials and should not be listed in any works cited page on the collegiate level.
- Properly document your sources in your memo and on a works cited page.

**Step 3:** Submit a proposal via e-mail by the date specified in the course calendar. Identify your topic and present a bibliography listing the 3 primary sources. Failure to submit a proposal will result in the assignment being incomplete.
Step 4: Prepare a formal policy report that is a minimum of 800 of your own words (excluding cited text), which must include the following:

- A statement of the current policy
- Reasons for initiating changes
- Policy options to be considered
- Pros and cons of each option
- Recommended course of action
- Reasoning for selecting that course of action

NOTE: Procrastination on this project has resulted in many students, who were otherwise passing, having to fail and repeat the course.

Extra Credit Opportunities

At various points in the course, extra credit MIGHT be available in several forms. It may be part of an assignment, a separate assignment or simply a reply to an e-mail. If it is part of an assignment, be sure to include the extra credit on a separate page that appears after the works cited page. Again, extra credit that is part of an assignment should be submitted along with the primary assignment (combine all files into one for submission).

Extra credit that is assigned as a separate project will have its own Dropbox. If the extra credit is to reply to an e-mail based activity, be sure to reply by the deadline. Again, make sure that you submit any extra credit via the appropriate avenue to receive credit for the work.

Addendum IV - Fall 2014 DCCCD Institutional Policies

DROP/WITHDRAWAL POLICY: Withdrawing from a course is a formal procedure which YOU must initiate; the instructor cannot do it for you. You may withdraw from a class in either the Admissions office or Advising Center. If you stop attending or are unable to complete this class and you do not withdraw before the official drop date, you will receive a performance grade, usually a grade of “F.” Students sometimes drop a class when help is available that would enable them to continue. Please discuss your plans with the instructor if you feel you need to withdraw. The full drop and withdrawal policy is online in the college catalog. https://www1.dcccd.edu/catalog/ss/oep/dw.cfm?use_nav=acad_info&loc=econ

STOP BEFORE YOU DROP: For students who enroll 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. Remember that once you have accumulated six 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. The full drop and withdrawal policy is online in the college catalog. https://www1.dcccd.edu/coursedrops

FINANCIAL AID STATEMENT: Failure to attend classes could result in a loss of Financial Aid (FA). If you are receiving any form of financial aid, you should check with the Financial Aid Office prior to withdrawing from classes. 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.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: Students on an F-1 visa cannot withdraw from classes
without jeopardizing their official status. If you are on an F-1 visa, you MUST NOT withdraw from any class without the permission of an International Student Advisor in the Multicultural Center, in Room S-136 or at 972-860-4192.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: A student shall be excused from attending classes, or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this provision may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

ADA STATEMENT: If you feel you may need special assistance or accommodation (such as help with taking notes, extra time on tests, etc.) because of any type of physical disability or learning difference, please contact the Special Services office in Room S124 or at 972-860-4673.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Scholastic dishonesty is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and is punishable as stated in college policies. Please review the full Student Code of Conduct as listed in the college catalog for additional information. https://www1.dcccd.edu/catalog/ss/code.cfm. Scholastic dishonesty shall include, but not be limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. The purpose of the Student Code of Conduct is to provide guidelines for the educational environment of the Dallas County Community College District. This environment views students in a holistic manner, encouraging and inviting them to learn and grow independently. Such an environment presupposes both rights and responsibilities.

REPEATING THIS COURSE: Each college of the DCCCD charges 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 being charged. Developmental Studies and some other courses will not be charged a higher tuition rate. Third attempts included courses taken at any of the DCCCD colleges since the Fall 2002 semester. The District’s policy for tuition charges relating to a third attempt is in the college’s catalog. https://www1.dcccd.edu/catalog/ss/oep/third_attempt.cfm?loc=econ

GRADE REPORTS: Final grade reports are not mailed to students. You may obtain your final grades online at eConnect, https://econnect.dcccd.edu/. From the student menu, select “My Grades” under “My Personal Information.” If you are not already logged in, you will be prompted to do so. Select the grade type you wish to review. Press the submit button and all grades for the selected grade type will be displayed.

INSTRUCTOR’S RIGHT TO MODIFY: The instructor has the right to add, delete, or revise segments of this course syllabus.

FERPA: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. More information about the FERPA guidelines is available online in the college catalog at https://www1.dcccd.edu/catalog/about/privacy.cfm