Professor: Auksuole A. Rubavichute
Email: arubavichute@dcccd.edu (Primary method of contact)
Meeting Days & Time: MTWRF (INET)
Room Number: INET
Credit Hours: 3 Semester Hours
Division: Communications and Social Sciences
Office Phone: 214-860-8830
Office Fax: 214-860-8755
Technical Support Phone: 1-866-374-7169 or (972) 669-6402

Required Textbooks/Reading materials:


   And

   Dallas Morning News, Washington Times, The Economist or access to any other major newspaper or political magazine or journal (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

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/

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 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 the following guide on installing and using the Respondus Lockdown Browser: http://ecampus.support.dcccd.edu/v91/studenttutorials/StudentLockDownBrowserv91/StudentLockDownBrowserv91.htm

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): = 25 points
- Chapter Quizzes (7 total): = 125 points
- Introduction Forum (1 x 100): = 100 points
- Discussion Forums (2 x 200 each): = 400 points
- TX Policy Report (1 X 350): = 350 points

Totals: 100% = 1000 points

GOVT 2306 INET – Spring 2016 – Course Calendar
(All Unit Deadlines are 11:55 pm)

Orientation* (Mandatory) Begins on Wednesday – January 20, 2016:
- The course orientation must be completed online in the first day(s) of the course.
- The deadline to complete all orientation activities and take the orientation quiz is 11:55 pm on Sunday, January 24, 2016.

The Classroom Introduction Forum must be completed by Sunday, January 31, 2016.

Unit I (Middle-of-Term) Deadline – Sunday, February 28, 2016.
• *Mid-Term Quizzes (Mandatory) Due (Chapters 15-17 and 21)
  • Discussion Forum #1 Due (Primary post due 48 hours ahead of unit deadline)

Texas Policy Report* (Mandatory) is due on Sunday, April 3, 2016: Please upload your essays into eCampus through the appropriate dropbox.

Unit II Deadline – Sunday, May 1, 2016:

• *Final Quizzes (Mandatory) Due (Chapters 18-20)
  • Discussion Forum #2 Due (Primary post due 48 hours ahead of unit deadline)

Extra Credit Essay Deadline – Sunday, May 8, 2016: This is the last day to submit all extra credit essays. There will be no exceptions. Please upload your extra credit essays into eCampus through the appropriate dropbox.

Addendum I - General Course Information

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, 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. Prerequisites: 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. Coordinating Board Academic Approval Number 4510025125.

Core Objectives

This course satisfies the following Core Curriculum Competencies defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board:

1. Critical Thinking Skills—to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
2. Communication Skills—to include effective written, oral and visual communication.
3. Social Responsibility—to include intercultural competency, 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.

Student Learning Outcomes for GOVT 2306: Texas Government

Upon successful completion of this course the students should be able to:

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.

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:
• The deadline for each unit will always be at 11:55 pm. Each unit and its
deadline have been clearly identified in the course calendar above.

• Each "required" 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 TX Policy Report).

• Each student is expected to utilize high quality sources (academic
journals, scholarly articles, current laws/policy, court cases, etc). 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 or
news website. 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; 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.

• 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 an essay or some other
project will only be accepted in a case where there are extenuating
circumstances that the instructor was informed about in advance of the
deadline.

• 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 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. Please don’t forget to upload them into
eCampus.
Course Etiquette

- **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 be 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 assignment. Any student who needs to submit a late project 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 1 calendar day (24 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.

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. **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 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 of the course. **The deadline to take the Orientation Quiz is 11:55 pm on Sunday, January 24th, 2016.**

Any student who 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) and a Virtual Lecture (PowerPoint presentation) posted online that further address the assigned reading material. Students will be held accountable for assigned materials via the course assignments, discussion forums and unit exams. The textbook readings create the core of the online 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 course is about 1 chapter per week during the full length term (or a chapter per day in a mini-term).**
Chapter Quizzes (*Mandatory; 1 per chapter)

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 approximately 15-20 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 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 (discussion 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/Pow...erPoint 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/Tests 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 the following guide on installing and using the Respondus Lockdown Browser:
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. Please post your word count at the end of each and every posting made in the discussion forum. Discussion activities are excluded from the late work policy. This is a "conversation" between classmates, so it must be timely. Grades will only be posted after the deadline, to allow everyone an opportunity to participate. 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. Incomplete assignments will receive a zero.**

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. Each student is expected to utilize high quality sources (academic journals, scholarly articles, current laws/policy, court cases, etc). 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.

"Good posting" or "I agree" will not suffice for this part of the assignment. This is an opportunity for a free exchange of ideas, so take advantage of the opportunity to learn from your classmates. Any personal attacks are grounds for immediate removal from the course and possibly the college. As always, your grade will be based on the quality and originality of your feedback. The minimum word count is 100 words per reply posting, be sure to add your word count at the end of the posting.

Extra Credit Option – Additional Reply Postings (up to 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 additional points for making additional reply comments to your peers. There is a maximum of 10 extra credit points awarded per forum, or up to 20 total during the semester. This only applies for the units in which you decide to participate in the activity.

Once the deadline for a given forum has passed, so does the opportunity for extra credit on that discussion topic.


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 under 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 disputes as well as political, economic and cultural differences. Look at the history underlying the dispute, how it is playing out within the governing institutions, and how you think the issue may be resolved, assuming that is possible.

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 three steps to completing this project.

Step 1: Identify the issue and how both the US government and Texas government have been currently addressing it (historical perspective).

Step 2: Gather a minimum of three scholarly research articles and additional news/current events relevant to the topic.

Step 3: Prepare a formal policy report that is a minimum of 1000 words (excluding cited text), which includes a discussion of 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

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.

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.

NOTE: Procrastination on this project has resulted in many students, who were otherwise passing, having to fail and repeat the course. The same paper submitted by the student for two or more courses will receive a zero.

Addendum IV - DCCCD Institutional Policies

Academic Dishonesty

Students who are caught plagiarizing an assignment will be subject to an “F” in the course and possible expulsion from the college.

Academic honesty is expected, and integrity is valued in the Dallas County Community Colleges. 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. More information is available at https://www1.dcccd.edu/catalog/ss/code.cfm.

Withdrawal Policy – Last day to withdraw with a “W” is April 14th, 2016:
If you are unable to complete this course, it is your responsibility to withdraw formally. Do not simply stop attending the course. The withdrawal request must be received in the Registrar’s Office by April 14th, 2016. 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.

Financial Aid

Students must begin attendance in all classes of enrollment. No exceptions. Financial Aid will not be granted to students who have been certified as not attending by the certification date of February 2nd, 2016. Students, who are not certified as beginning class, are responsible for any payments due as a result of non-certification, to include the dropping of courses. Students who are receiving any form of financial aid 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.

If you are receiving financial aid grants or loans, you must begin attendance in all classes prior to the certification date of **February 2nd, 2016**. 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.

**Institutional Policies**

Please visit [http://www.mountainviewcollege.edu/Academics/Documents/Institutional%20Policies.pdf](http://www.mountainviewcollege.edu/Academics/Documents/Institutional%20Policies.pdf) for a complete list of institutional policies (Stop Before You Drop; Withdrawal Policy; Repeating a Course; Financial Aid; Academic Dishonesty; Americans with Disabilities Act Statement; Religious Holidays; and Campus Emergency Operation Plan and Contingency Plan).