Instructor: Rey Flores
Office #: D-261
Office Phone: Please contact me through email.

Online / Virtual office hours - Mon./Wed./Fri. 11:00am-12:00pm & Tues./Thurs. 12:30pm - 1:30pm

E-mail Address: RFlores@dcccd.edu

Please note I will attempt to respond to your email ASAP and/or within 48 hours during regular business days (Monday-Friday). I do check my email on weekends. However, please exercise some patience if communicating with me during the weekend as I may be out of town and/or attending to other business. Thank you for your patience.

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. (3 Lec.)

Coordinating Board Academic Approval Number 4510025125.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this course is to help you obtain an understanding of the Texas systems of government and to become familiar with some of the important problems with which Texas government is concerned about. In addition, the course is intended to provide some basic facts on which to make political generalizations, to improve your capacity to think clearly, critically, and dispassionately about government and politics as well as to make rational judgments concerning political questions within the context of the values of American democratic tradition.
The course will provide you with a grasp of the organization and implementation of government, and the role of human beings in shaping and directing process.

**VERY IMPORTANT**: If you encounter any Technical Problem, contact technical support at 972-669-6402.

**TEXTBOOKS:**


Critical Thinking: Concepts & Tools
Author: Richard Paul and Linda Elder
Publisher: Foundation for Critical Thinking
Copyright: 2009

**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** – GOVT 2306 develops the following Core Objectives:

**Critical Thinking** - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information

**Communication** - to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication

**Social Responsibility** - to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

**Personal Responsibility** - to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making
This is a Developing Learning Power class and part of Richland College’s Learning to Learn: Developing Learning Power Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) in which your professor uses specific Thinking Routines to help you develop your learning power, become an even more engaged, successful learner, and master course content. Participating in Thinking Routines provides you a greater understanding of how you best learn and offers you techniques to boost your capacity to change and learn through effort and the intentional practice of thinking. Developing Learning Power shapes an exceptional learning experience, helps you advance in your academic career, and fosters traits in you of an effective lifelong learner. At the end of the course, you will be asked to reflect on your experience through an assignment about how you have changed as a learner.

ATTENDANCE - VERY IMPORTANT: Please note this is a distance learning course. With this in mind, no attendance is required. However, it is required that you complete the student orientation survey within the first two days from the start date. This will ensure that your attendance in the course is certified.

For financial aid and certification purposes, it is important that you complete the student orientation survey located in the welcome menu course button within the first two days from the start date. **Deadline to complete the survey is 12/12/17.**

It is important that all of you complete the orientation student survey and establish an e-mail account if you do not already have one. I will be sending e-mails to all of you periodically; therefore, you must have an email account.

TESTS AND GRADES:

Your performance will be evaluated as follows:

10% Information/Computer Literacy quiz to be completed anytime on or before **12/13/17 by 11:59pm**

*Test I 10% (Unit I) including retake to be completed anytime on or before **12/16/17 by 11:59pm**

15% Critical Thinking quiz to be completed anytime on or before **12/19/17 by 11:59pm**

Test II 10% (Unit II) to be completed anytime on or before **12/22/17 by 11:59pm**
Test III 10% (Unit III) including retake to be completed anytime on or before 12/28/17 by 11:59pm

Test IV 10% (Unit IV) to be completed anytime on or before 1/3/18 by 11:59pm

25% Problem Solving Research Paper to be completed on or before 1/5/18 by 11:59pm

10% Discussion Board Posts - see instructions and deadlines in discussion board.

*Please note you have an opportunity to take exam I and III twice and the highest score will remain as your official score. This policy does not apply to quizzes or any other exam.

A. Tests – Four (4) Exams - 10% each for a total of 40% of total grade

The educational objective for this test(s) requirement is five-fold:

The educational objective for this test(s) requirement is six-fold: 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.

The tests will include material from the chapters in the assigned units. You will have 1 hour (60 minutes) to complete each exam. Please note that a penalty may be assessed to your grade if you exceed the time limit allotted for each test. For this reason, I encourage you to use your allotted time accordingly. Each exam will become available on ecampus soon after the deadline of the preceding test.

(Please note: All answers to the exam questions come implicitly/explicitly from the assigned readings. With this in mind, it is important for you to comprehend beyond just their meanings, the terms, concepts, principles, etc. introduced in the chapters. In other words, when reading the chapters, be prepared to make inferences based on critical analyses of the material.)

B. 10% of your final grade also consists of an Information/Computer Literacy quiz.

The educational objective for this requirement is to teach you how to think critically and strategically about information and the processes of;

**Investigating** a topic.
**Searching** for information.
**Locating** the information in the library.
**Evaluating** the quality of information.
**Utilizing** the information in papers, speeches, or projects.
A course link with instructions and details concerning this requirement will be made available later in the term.

C. **15%** of your final grade consists of a Critical Thinking quiz.

The educational objective for this requirement is four-fold: 1) to learn different critical thinking skills, 2) to develop, as best possible, critical thinking skills, and 3) to apply critical thinking skills to problem solving, 4) to learn creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.

The material for the Critical Thinking quiz will come from the required textbook; Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools Guide.

D. **25%** of your final grade consists of a Problem Solving Research Paper. The analysis will be assessed using the problem solving value rubric located in the value rubrics link. In addition, points earned on the analysis are based on the quality/content of your responses and how well you apply the skills and concepts found/learned through the research as well as required textbook; The State of Texas. Evaluation of these expectations will be determined by the instructor.

The educational objective for this requirement is six-fold: 1) To develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues, 2) To analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems, and 3) To recognize and assume one's responsibility as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy, 4) To evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas, 5) To identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens, 6) To analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas.

(Read more details regarding this requirement in the Problem Solving Analysis link.)

A course link with instructions and details concerning this requirement will be made available later in the term.

E. **10%** Discussion Board Posts through the Discussion Board. Students are expected and required to engage in critical discussions/reactions to postings from other students. Students are expected to respect and appreciate all points of view. Do not post any discussions and/or comments unrelated to the topics under consideration. Please make note of the deadline(s) for the discussion board forums.

The analyses will be assessed using the critical thinking value rubric located in the value rubrics link. In addition, points earned on the analysis are based on the quality/content of your responses and how well you apply the skills and concepts found/learned through the research as well as required textbook. You can find more details regarding this requirement in the discussion board. Evaluation of these expectations will be determined by the instructor.
Communicating online in discussions groups and through email requires basic etiquette, and there are some basic principles to keep in mind to make this working well in an academic setting. It is required that you read and comply with the etiquette principles outlined in the following link: [http://www.rlc.dcccd.edu/dl/faculty/dl_etiquette.htm](http://www.rlc.dcccd.edu/dl/faculty/dl_etiquette.htm) Failure to comply with these instructions may result in an assessed penalty to your course performance and/or other disciplinary action.

The educational objective for this requirement is four-fold: 1) To recognize and assume one's responsibility as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy, and 2) To identify and understand differences and commonalities within diverse cultures, 3) To describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens, 4) To learn effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written communication.

Discussion Board Posts - See Discussion Board for deadlines.

F. There is no cumulative final exam.

G. Please note students will have one “free mulligan” to use at the end of the semester. What does a “free mulligan” mean? It means that if, for whatever reason, you missed a deadline for one of the quizzes or exams you will have one opportunity to make it up at the end of the semester. I must emphasize that this policy only applies towards quizzes and exams and does not include papers or discussion boards so please use it accordingly. **Please note it is your responsibility to inform me through email on Saturday, December 30, 2017 that you will be using this opportunity. No requests to use this policy will be accepted after 12/30/17.**

**GRADE PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN:**

A = 90 - 100%  D = 60 - 69%

B = 80 - 89%  F = 0 - 59%

C = 70 - 79%

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

UNIT I: Texas History and Political Culture

Chapters 1, 2, & 3

UNIT II: State and Local Government

Chapters 4, 5, & 6

UNIT III: Texas Politics
Chapters 7, 8, & 9

UNIT IV: Public Policy in Texas

Chapters 10, 11, & 12

PLEASE NOTE THAT A TEST WILL FOLLOW THE STUDY OF EACH UNIT.

VERY IMPORTANT: If you encounter any Technical Problem, contact technical support at 972-669-6402 or by email at ecampus.support@dcccd.edu.

Richland College Distance Learning Department - http://www.rlc.dcccd.edu/dl/index.htm.

FINAL WITHDRAWING 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 December 22, 2017. Failure to do so will result in your receiving a performance grade, usually an "F". If you drop a class or withdraw from the college before the official drop/withdrawal deadline, you will receive a "W" (Withdraw) in each class dropped.

For more information about drop deadlines, refer to the current printed Credit Class Schedule, contact the Admissions/Student Records office at 972-238-6100 or 6101 (Thunderduck Hall, T170), or contact the school office.

Withdrawing from a course is a formal procedure which you must initiate. I cannot do it for you.

Last day to drop a class with a "W" - December 22, 2017.

http://www.rlc.dcccd.edu/admissns/drop.htm

CONFERENCES:

I will be happy to meet with you at any mutually convenient time; however, I encourage you to make appointments with me through email.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS:

Students are encouraged to discuss academic goals and degree completion with their instructors. Specific advising is available throughout the semester from academic advisors and career specialists.
Institutional Policies

*Institutional Policies relating to this course can be accessed from the following link*

www.richlandcollege.edu/syllabipolicies

Student Success

**Academic Advising and Degree Planning**

At Richland College, our Advising team works side by side with you in (1) picking the right major/program, (2) enrolling in the right classes and (3) finishing on time. Degree planning is critical as you prepare to be successful in the workforce and/or to transfer to other institutions.

If you are a first-time-in-college student, you are required to meet with an advisor and are encouraged to file a degree plan. If you are a continuing student, you are also encouraged to meet with available advisors, faculty and program coordinators to ensure your continued success in maintaining a quality educational pathway.

- Visit the [Richland College Advising webpage](#) for more information.
- Visit the [district website Advising Center page](#) for contact information for all college advising offices.

Tutoring

All students are eligible for free, convenient tutoring in a wide range of subjects.
• Visit the Richland College Tutoring webpage for more information.

• Visit the district website Tutoring page for contact information for all college tutoring services.

Students With Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and/or special needs who requires accommodations, please contact the Disability Services Office (DSO) at Richland College. If you are eligible for accommodations, please contact DSO to send your accommodation request to your instructor, preferably at the start of the semester or program. Please note that all communication with DSO is confidential. Visit the Disability Services webpage for more information about disability services available across the district or contact the DCCCD Office of Institutional Equity at 214-378-1633.

Cheating, Plagiarism and Collusion

Scholastic dishonesty is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct and Hazing. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism and collusion. Cheating includes copying from another student’s test or homework paper; using materials not authorized; collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test; knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing or soliciting (asking for) the contents of an un-administered test; and substituting for another person to take a test. Plagiarism is the appropriating (taking in a way that is illegal or unfair), buying, receiving as a gift or obtaining by any means another’s work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one’s own written work. Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of course requirements. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense in college. You can be given a failing grade on an assignment or test, can be failed for the class or you can even be suspended from college.

Your enrollment indicates acceptance of the DCCCD Code of Student Conduct and Hazing.
Student Survey of Instruction

We use the Student Survey of Instruction (SSI) to find out how students perceive the quality of courses, faculty and instruction and to get feedback for improvement. In order to minimize the disruption in the classroom, the SSI is now being given online in some courses through a link in eCampus. If you receive a request to complete the SSI, please do so as soon as possible. By completing this questionnaire, you will help the college and your instructors find out how we might improve your educational experiences. Your identity will remain strictly confidential and anonymous.

Religious and Ethnic Holiday Observance

Richland College honors the right of each student to observe the practices of their belief system. It is your responsibility to provide your instructors a written justification for a religious accommodation promptly after the course begins. It is the responsibility of the instructor and student to negotiate completion of all missed assignments before the absence, if possible.

Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct

We are committed to assure all community members learn and work in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Title VII, Title IX and DCCCD policy prohibit harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct. If you encounter harassment, sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, relationship violence) or retaliation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, national origin, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, parenting, gender identity and/or gender expression, please contact your college Title IX coordinator or the Office of Institutional Equity. We treat this information with the greatest degree of confidentiality possible while also ensuring student welfare and college safety.

We are concerned about the well-being and development of our students and are available to discuss any concerns. There are both confidential and nonconfidential resources and reporting options available to you. If you wish to keep the information confidential, please contact college Counseling or Student Health Services. As required by DCCCD policy, incidents of discrimination and/or sexual misconduct shared with faculty will be reported to the college Title IX coordinator or district Title IX coordinator. The Title IX coordinator will contact you and determine if further investigation is needed. For more information about policies, resources or reporting options, please contact your college Title IX coordinator or visit dccc.edu/TitleIX.
Each college within DCCCD has a designated Title IX coordinator.

**Richland College Title IX Coordinator:**

Bill Dial  
TitleIX-RLC@dcccd.edu  
972-238-6852

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**Students Receiving Financial Aid**

**Attendance and Participation**

If you do not attend classes, you could lose your financial aid. You must attend and participate in your on-campus or online course(s) before the course certification date and continue beyond the course withdrawal date.

Your instructor is also required by law to validate/certify your attendance in your on-campus or online course(s) in order for you to receive financial aid. To meet this attendance requirement, you must participate in an academic-related activity pertaining to the course such as, but not limited to, the following examples: initiating contact with your instructor to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course, submitting an academic assignment, taking an exam, completing an interactive tutorial, participating in computer-assisted instruction, attending a study group that is assigned by the instructor, or participating in an online discussion about academic matters relating to the course.

In an online class, simply logging in is not enough by itself to demonstrate academic attendance. You must show that you are participating in your online class and are engaged in an academically related activity as described above.
Withdrawing From Classes

If you are receiving any form of financial aid, you should check with the Financial Aid Office before withdrawing from classes. If you withdraw, it may affect your eligibility to receive aid in the future and could cause you to have to repay funds you received for the current semester. If you fail to attend or participate after the drop date, this policy will also affect you. To speak with someone, please contact the Financial Aid Call Center at 972-587-2599 or by email at facc@dcccd.edu, or visit one of our campus Financial Aid Offices (dcccd.edu/FinancialAidOffices).

Class Drop and Repeat Options

Withdrawal Policy

If you are unable to complete this course, it is your responsibility to officially withdraw by the official drop date for this course. 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 deadline, you will receive a W (withdraw). Students sometimes drop a course when help is available that would enable them to continue. Before you make the decision to drop this course, please contact the instructor by email. If you are receiving any form of financial aid, check with the Financial Aid Office before withdrawing from classes. International students on an F-1 visa cannot withdraw from classes without jeopardizing their official status. For more information, visit the Dropping or Withdrawing From Classes webpage.

Six Drop Rule

Under a Texas law (TEC Section 51.907), if you drop too many classes without having an acceptable reason, your GPA could be affected. Be sure you understand how this law may affect you before you drop a class. The law applies to students who enroll in a Texas public institution of higher education (including the colleges of DCCCD) for the first time in fall 2007 or later. You may drop no more than six courses during your entire undergraduate career unless the drop qualifies as an exception. Your campus advising center will give you more information on the allowable exceptions. Remember that once you have accumulated six non-exempt drops, you cannot drop any other courses with a W. For more information, visit dcccd.edu/SixDrop.
Repeating a Course and Third Drop Rule

Dallas County Community Colleges charge additional tuition to students registering the third or subsequent time for a course taken at any of the DCCCD colleges since the Fall 2002 semester. All third and subsequent attempts of the majority of credit and continuing education/workforce training courses will result in an additional tuition charge. Developmental Education and some other courses will not be charged a higher tuition rate. See Third Attempt to Enroll in a Course at dcccd.edu/ThirdCourseAttempt.

In Case of a Campus Emergency

Sign up for DCCCD Emergency Alerts to receive a text message, email and/or phone call when there is an unscheduled evacuation or closure of a DCCCD campus or office because of weather, utility outages or police or other emergencies. Subscribing is free, but standard text message charges from your cell phone provider will apply. For more information, see dcccd.edu/Alerts.

Concealed Carry

Any person who holds a license to carry may carry a concealed handgun on college district property as permitted by law and college district policy. A license holder who carries a handgun on college district property must keep it concealed and on or about their person at all times. The open carry of a handgun (i.e., completely or partially visible) is prohibited on college district property, including any public driveway, street, sidewalk, walkway, parking lot, parking garage or other parking area.

Weapons

The use, possession or display of a weapon in violation of law and college district policy is strictly prohibited. This prohibition applies to firearms, knives, clubs, fireworks of any kind, incendiary devices, razors, chains, throwing stars and any other device designed to expel a projectile or to inflict bodily harm.
Violations may result in disciplinary action and/or criminal penalties.

Syllabus Change Disclaimer

Instructors reserve the right to amend a syllabus as necessary.

Other College-Specific Information

Richland College Quality Enhancement Plan

Richland College is implementing its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) in select classes. The QEP provides techniques, practices and tools to help students develop the habits, traits or behaviors needed to be effective and successful lifelong learners in college and in life. For more information, please visit richlandcollege.edu/qep.

Texas Success Initiative Assessment Requirements and Course Placement Guidelines

The Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) was 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 TSIA requires assessment, remediation (if necessary) and advising of students who attend a public college or university in the state of Texas. Passing the TSIA is a prerequisite for enrollment in many college-level classes such as English 1301/1302, History 1301/1302 and Math 1414. If you do not meet assessment standards, you must complete developmental courses in the deficient area with a grade of C or higher. Additional information is available from the TSI Office in T170T or T170S (972-238-6115 or 972-238-3787) or the Test Referral Steps webpage.