Texas Government
Brookhaven College, School of Social Sciences, Spring, 2019
GOVT 2306-23205 [3 Credit Hours] [Classroom – K244]
Class Times: Monday/Wednesday 1:30 – 2:50 PM
January 28, 2019 – May 16, 2019

Instructor Information

Name: Lehman Marks
Office Location: Brookhaven College Social Science Division Office
E-mail: LMarks@dcccd.edu
Office Phone Number: (972) 860–4130

Required Textbooks/Reading materials:


And

Dallas Morning News and 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 (checked daily, and always prior to class)
- Basic use of a personal computer (word processing and internet browsing).
- Access to the DCCCD e-campus system: http://ecampus.dcccd.edu

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.
- The E-Campus Technical Support and Help Desk can be found at http://dallastelecollege.dcccd.edu/
Course Grading System

Evaluation Procedure
Your grade is based on earning points in each area set out below. The sum of the points earned is your class grade. Please note that the "points" do not represent a percentage out of 100. They are simply points you have accumulated during the class.

Grading Scale
A = 100 points or above;  B = 93-99 points;  C = 85-92 points;  D = 78-84 points;  F = Less than 88 points

Regular Grade Point Allocation

1. Attendance – 1 point per class for a total of 10 points

2. Exams
   (a) Two required take-home essay exams designed to help students work their way through course material.
   (b) Three brief in-class objective exams designed to help students master terminology and concepts

3. Short Essays – Four our-of-class essays. The subject of each essay will be announced by E-mail several days in advance. Each essay must comply with the following requirements:
   (a) One side of one piece of paper
   (b) Handwritten, single spaced
   (c) Two sources of reference for each paper.
   Citation criteria: MLA Format including URL
   (d) Footnotes showing how you used sources within paper
   (d) Essays must be turned in on time.

4. Class Projects – subject to be announced

5. Course Evaluation Project

6. Extra Credit – special projects developed in class.

7. Final Exam – Administered during the Final Exam Week  Pass or Fail

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Scholastic dishonesty is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. As a college student, you are considered a responsible adult. Your enrollment indicates acceptance of the Dallas County Community College Code of Student Conduct published in the DCCCD Catalog at http://www1.dccd.edu/cat0506/ss/code.cfm

Plagiarism – claiming another’s writing as your own or the lending of your writing to another for that purpose – is a serious violation of the Richland College Student Code of Conduct. Any student caught plagiarizing can receiving a failing grade for the course.
Cheating – If you cheat on a test, you will get a zero on that test, and forfeit your right to do extra credit projects.

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, 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 & balances 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:

- **Students are expected to utilize high quality sources.** 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 citation for all outside sources. All references are to be documented within the body of the assignment.
- **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.

- **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.

### Course Etiquette

- **E-mail** – Please allow 12 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.
- **E-mails** should always begin with a “Greeting” and be properly signed so that I can quickly identify the e-mail author.
- **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.

### 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, or by e-mail instructions.

### Attendance Policy

Attendance and participation are essential to your success in a Government Class. At the start of each class, an attendance sheet will be circulated. It is each student’s responsibility to ensure that they are present and accounted for when attending class. **Again, be sure that you sign the attendance sheet each and every class.** On several occasions during the semester an assignment, quiz or test may substitute for the roll sheet. Only in the case of a disability may one student sign the roll for a peer. Dishonesty will be considered an act of collusion and will be dealt with as a disciplinary issue (as stated in the student code of conduct).

Anytime you miss class, it is your responsibility to stay current with all assignments. I highly suggest that each student seek out a study partner and form a support group that you can rely on throughout the semester. If you plan to miss class, use your absences wisely. **There will not be an opportunity to make up in-class activities, or quizzes once the item has been delivered to the class.** If you are affected by a medical or legal situation and can provide proof (documentation) to substantiate your claim, your absence(s) may be excused.

**The following course attendance policy is in effect immediately:** Students will lose one grade point for each absence up to a total of ten points per semester.
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.

Students are required to check their e-mail on a daily basis, and before attending class.

Course Honor Code

Scholastic dishonesty is a violation of the DCCCD Student Code of Student Conduct. This 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.

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.

Instructor’s Rights:

The instructor reserves the right to modify any course requirements and calendar due dates as necessary to manage and conduct this course. Students are responsible for contacting the instructor and seeking clarification of any requirement that is not understood.

Addendum III - Course Activities, Assignments, and Exams

Course Readings, Lectures and Presentations

Each student is expected to read the assigned material as detailed in the course. It is vital that you manage your time and maintain a high degree of self-discipline to ensure your success in any college course.

Formal Assessment Guidelines – Texas Policy Paper

Introduction

This activity is an opportunity for you to closely examine a contemporary policy issue between the state of Texas and the United States federal government. 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 (federalism).

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 and complete this project in its entirety will result in a failing grade for the course.

There are three steps to completing this project.

Step 1 – Identifying the Issue

Identify an issue that involves federalism, then conduct research on how both the US federal government and Texas state government addressing it (this requires examining the history, application and effectiveness of laws at both levels).
Pick one of the following topics:

- Women's rights and funding for family planning
- Women’s rights and access to abortion services
- Public education policy and funding
- Public education policy and Common Core
- Environmental policy and air pollution
- Environmental policy and hydraulic fracking
- Affordable Care Act and Medicaid funding
- Joint law enforcement efforts to combat drug trafficking
- Joint law enforcement efforts to combat human trafficking
- Texas Voter ID Law and the Voting Rights Act (1965)

Step 2 - Gathering Sources

Conduct research to locate three peer-reviewed academic journal articles (aka: scholarly sources) that specifically address the policy issue that you selected and meet the following criteria:

- The articles must be no more than ten (10) years old.
- The article must have more than five (5) pages of actual content (without graphs, charts, footnotes, citations, etc.).
- Books will not count toward the minimum research requirements.
- Carefully choose those sources that provide a variety of perspectives on your selected topic.
- In addition to the minimum research requirements, you should offer “supplemental sources” for essential current events information relevant to your topic. These may include academic sources that are not peer-reviewed (position papers), newspaper articles, magazine articles, and other quality or reputable sources.
- Textbooks, Dictionaries, Encyclopedias (including Wikipedia), Almanacs, or an Atlas are reference materials and are not to be listed as sources on the collegiate level.
- Provide the formal MLA citation for each source, both in the essay and on the works cited page.
Step 3 – The Proposal

Submit a one-page proposal to the Instructor by the date specified in the course calendar. The proposal is to contain the following:

- Identify the topic in a single paragraph by:
  (a) Summarize the policy topic you will be addressing.
  (b) Describe the current status of the policy or topic.
  (c) Describe why the policy is important.

- Include a bibliography listing the three primary sources. The citations are to be formatted using MLA citation style.

- A model proposal has been provided in eCampus.

Revise and Resubmit Policy: The purpose of the proposal process is for your instructor to confirm that 1) you have selected three appropriate peer-reviewed journal articles and 2) that you have selected an appropriate topic. Additionally, it allows your instructor to give you feedback on your writing (grammar, sentence composition, punctuation, and spelling) as well as your use of proper MLA citation formatting.

Should you submit a proposal that does not address a topic that meet the criteria, or does not have three peer-reviewed journal articles, you will be asked to “revise and resubmit” the assignment. In such cases, each revision will be deducted 10 points and after 4 attempts the assignment will earn a zero and will be considered incomplete.

The instructor will inform you of the due date and conditions of resubmission. Failure to resubmit the revision before the provided due date, or failure to correct the identified issues in need of revision, will result in a zero for the proposal grade.

Failure to complete the proposal or a requested revision will result in the entire assignment being incomplete.

Step 4 – The Policy Paper

Your task will be to prepare a formal research paper regarding the selected policy. The assignment is to be around 5-6 pages with in-text citations for your research. The minimum writing requirement is a 1000 of your own words or around 3 pages of a word document (excluding the cited information). The essay is to discuss each of the following prompts:

- An introduction and brief overview of the policy relationship.
- What are the major issues facing each level of government?
- What are the reasons for initiating changes to the policy?
- What are the options to be considered (discuss several)?
- What are the pros and cons of each potential reform (costs v. benefits)?
• Which is the best option moving forward (pick one)?
• A summary and conclusion

Special Notes:

The grading standards used to assess the quality of your work for this project will be detailed in a grading rubric, which will be provided during the semester.

It is strongly suggested that every student read ahead and use the library database during the first week of the course to begin researching a topic. This project requires carefully planning throughout the semester.

Addendum IV - DCCCD Institutional Policies

All institutional policies affecting this course can be found at the following link: http://www.brookhavencollege.edu/syllabusaddendum
Addendum V
COURSE CALENDAR – Spring, 2019 - 2306-23205 – MW

Jan 28  Class Begins
Jan 30  First In-Class Project Assigned
Feb 4   First Class Project Presentations
         Texas Constitutions
Feb 6   Second In-Class Project Assigned
Feb 11  Second Project Presentations
Feb 13  Texas Executive
Feb 18  Texas Executive (continued)
Feb 20  Legislative Branch
Feb 25  Texas Policy Paper discussed
Feb 27  Legislative Branch (continued)
Mar 4   Texas Policy Paper assigned
Mar 6   Texas Judiciary
Mar 11-15  Spring Break – no class
Mar 18  Discuss Policy Proposals
         Texas Judiciary (continued)
Mar 20  Main Course Project Explained
Mar 25  Main Course Project
Mar 27  Special Texas Legislature Project
Apr 1   Discuss Main Course Project
Apr 3   Project
Apr 8   Project
Apr 10  Project
Apr 15  Project
Apr 17  Project
Apr 22  Project
Apr 24  Project Debate/Election
Apr 29  Local Government
May 1   County Government
May 6   Special Issues in TX Legislature
May 8   Class Discussion Session
May 13-15  Final Exam Week

*Dates may change to better coincide with class work, or world events.*