



Purpose: It is the intention of this Administrative-Master Syllabus to provide a general description of the course, outline the required elements of the course and to lay the foundation for course assessment for the improvement of student learning, as specified by the faculty of Wharton County Junior College, regardless of who teaches the course, the timeframe by which it is instructed, or the instructional method by which the course is delivered. It is not intended to restrict the manner by which an individual faculty member teaches the course but to be an administrative tool to aid in the improvement of instruction.

Course Title – American Government I (*Federal & Texas Constitutions*)

Course Prefix and Number – GOVT 2301

Department – Government, History and Geography

Division – Social and Behavioral Sciences

Course Type: (check one)

- Academic General Education Course (from ACGM – but not in WCJC Core)
- Academic WCJC Core Course
- WECM course (This course is a Special Topics or Unique Needs Course: Y or N

Semester Credit Hours # : Lecture hours# : Lab/other hours # 3:3:0

Equated Pay hours for course - 3

Course Catalog Description – Survey of the American national and state systems of government. Topics covered in this course include: political ideology; the origin and development of the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Texas; the principles of federalism and federal-state-local governmental relations; the instruments and methods of political participation; and the various forms of local government. Meets the legislative requirements for a course on the Constitutions of the United States and Texas for teacher certification.

List Lab/ Other Hours
Lab Hours
Clinical Hours
Practicum Hours
Other (list)

Prerequisites/Co requisites – THEA reading and writing requirements met.

Prepared by

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Date
12-6-11

Reviewed by department head

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12-6-11

Accuracy verified by Division Chair

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Date
12-7-11

Approved by Dean of Vocational Instruction or Vice President of Instruction

Leigh Ann Collins

Date
12-15-11



I. Topical Outline – Each offering of this course must include the following topics (be sure to include information regarding lab, practicum, clinical or other non-lecture instruction):

This class is divided into five primary areas.

Area One: Ideology and political culture - This area introduces students to the various forms of government and to the various alternatives with regard to political and economic ideology.

Students will learn about liberalism, conservatism, libertarianism, pluralism, elitism, communism, capitalism, socialism and the social contract.

Area Two: Federalism – This area introduces students to the concepts of federalism, confederation and unitary state.

Students will learn about the historical evolution of federalism, the impact of federalism on the operation of national, state and local governments, the system of grants and mandates and the importance of judicial review.

Area Three: Local Government - This area introduces students to the various forms of local government in the U.S. and Texas.

It explores the types of municipal charters including home rule, the elected and appointed officials involved in local government and the functions and finances of local government.

Area Four: Constitutions (National and State) - This area introduces students to the content and evolution of the U.S. and Texas constitutions.

Students will compare statutory constitutions to liberal constitutions. The distribution of powers, the structure of the national and state government, and the process of amending constitutions is explored. Students are also taught about the various compromises that yielded the U.S. constitution.

Area Five: Participation - This area provides an overview of the media, public opinion, political parties, political socialization and interest groups.

Students learn about the structure of parties, functions of parties, interest groups and the media; the pros, cons and methodology of measuring public opinion; the types of interest groups and the impact all of these have on the political process.

II. Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcome	Method of Assessment
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the meaning of power, politics, and political culture and evaluate the role of government. 2. Identify the elements of democracy 3. Understand the roots of the American political system 4. Identify the characteristics and the development of the U.S. and Texas Constitutions. 5. Understand the concept of federalism. 6. Define public opinion, how it is measured and its impact on public policy. 7. Explain the role and activities of interest groups. 8. Trace the evolution of political parties and evaluate their role in the American Political system. 9. Analyze the dynamics of the electoral process 10. Analyze realigning elections and de-alignment. 11. Assess the major functions of the media, and its influence on politics. 	<p>Outcomes one through eleven are incorporated into the Pre-Test and Post-Test and will also be covered by instructors on unit tests and out of class assignments. These core areas are also covered in the assigned text.</p> <p>The method of assessment may also include quizzes, various projects, including oral presentations, and out of classroom assignments such as council meeting attendance and written paper assignments to supplement periodic unit exams.</p>

III. Required Text(s), Optional Text(s) and/or Materials to be Supplied by Student.

Politics in America (Texas Edition); Thomas Dye; Pearson Publishing 2009; ISBN 0558217672

IV. Suggested Course Maximum - 35

V. List any specific spatial or physical requirements beyond a typical classroom required to teach the course.

No special requirements for face-to-face course. Instructor must have access to working computer and all appropriate technology for WWW course as well as courses taught by ITV.

VI. Course Requirements/Grading System – Describe any course specific requirements such as research papers or reading assignments and the generalized grading format for the course

The government courses require significant written effort. This written component may include any of or a combination of the following: research paper, oral presentation, special projects dealing with interest groups, bills in Congress or political parties, and/or essay examinations. Reading assignments come primarily from the assigned text, but are not limited to the text. These may include articles from newspapers, academic journals or web assigned readings. The grading system for the course is the traditional college grading scale: A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=50-59.

VII. Curriculum Checklist

- **Academic General Education Course** (from ACGM – but not in WCJC Core)
No additional documentation needed

- **Academic WCJC Core Course**
Attach the Core Curriculum Checklist, including the following:
 - Basic Intellectual Competencies
 - Perspectives
 - Exemplary Educational Objectives

- **WECM Courses**
If needed, revise the Program SCANS Matrix & Competencies Checklist.



Page 1: Competencies

Course Prefix & Number: GOVT 2301	
Component Area for this Course: Social & Behavioral Sciences Intellectual Competencies for this course: Critical Thinking	
Competency	Method of Assessment
READING: Reading at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials – books, articles, and documents.	NA
WRITING: Competency in writing is the ability to produce clear, correct, and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion, and audience.	NA
CRITICAL THINKING: Critical thinking embraces methods for applying both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies.	Completion of independently researched papers pertaining the various institutions of government, including student analysis, offering their own opinion supported by competent research from academically acceptable sources at collegiate level. Competency may also be assessed through essay questions on tests which require students to demonstrate critical thinking.
COMPUTER LITERACY: Computer literacy at the college level means the ability to use computer-based technology in communicating, solving problems, and acquiring information.	NA



Page 2: Perspectives

Course Prefix & Number: GOVT 2301	
Perspective	Method of Assessment
1. Establish broad and multiple perspectives of the individual in relationship to the larger society and world in which he or she lives, and help the student to understand the responsibilities of living in a culturally and ethically-diversified world;	
2. Stimulate a capacity to discuss and reflect upon individual, political, economic, and social aspects of life to understand ways to be a responsible member of society;	Independent research projects, voting and civic participation, in class positions of various aspects of government and its institutions and how it directly or indirectly affects individual students on a daily basis.
3. Recognize the importance of maintaining health and wellness;	
4. Develop a capacity to use knowledge of how technology and science affect lives;	
5. Develop personal values for ethical behavior;	
6. Develop the ability to make aesthetic judgments;	
7. Use logical reasoning in problem solving;	Quizzes and test questions. Students will analyze voting and other graphical and tabular data to explain different results and outcomes.
8. Integrate knowledge and understanding of the interrelationships of the scholarly disciplines	



Page 3: Exemplary Educational Objectives

Course Prefix & Number: GOVT 2301	
Component Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences	
Exemplary Educational Objective	Method of Assessment
1. Employ the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.	
2. Examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods, social structures, and cultures.	
3. Use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.	Questions on quizzes and exams plus class discussion regarding the various competing theories and forms of government and approaches to public policy.
4. Develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.	
5. Analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the area under study.	Questions on quizzes and exams plus class discussion regarding the various domestic forces such as interest groups and political parties that have impact on the American polity.
6. Comprehend the origins and evolution of U.S. and Texas political systems, with a focus on the growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S. and Texas, federalism, civil liberties, and civil and human rights.	Questions on quizzes and exams plus class discussion regarding the various competing theories and forms of government and approaches to public policy.
7. Understand the evolution and current role of the U.S. in the world.	
8. Differentiate and analyze historical evidence (documentary and statistical) and differing viewpoints.	
9. Recognize and apply reasonable criteria for the acceptability of historical evidence and social research.	
10. Analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy issues.	
11. 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.	
12. Identify and understand differences and commonalities within diverse cultures.	