



**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

**Course Title** – Texas Government (Texas Constitution & Topics)  
**Course Prefix and Number** –Government 2306  
**Department** – History, Geography, Government, and Economics **Division** – Social and Behavioral Sci.  
**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** - 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.

**Prerequisites/Co requisites** – TSI reading and writing requirements met.

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

*Prepared by Amanda Shelton/Government Department*

*Date August 2012*

*Reviewed by department head Amanda Shelton*

*Date 09/07/12*

*Accuracy verified by Division Chair Amanda Shelton*

*Date 2/26/13*

*Approved by Dean of Vocational Instruction or Vice President of Instruction*

*Date 2-26-13*



**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 course will cover the following areas:

- Area One - Constitutional Foundations:
  - Identify and describe the impact of the economic, social, ethnic, and geographical diversity of the state on the development of the Texas political system.
  - Describe the evolution of the Texas Constitution.
  - Identify and evaluate the key characteristics of the 1876 Constitution with an emphasis on separation of powers and how the document promotes limited government in Texas.
  - Identify and evaluate the nature of the relationship between the U.S. and Texas constitutions and the concept of federalism.
  
- Area Two - Linkage Institutions:
  - Interest Groups:
    - Define and explain functions of the interest groups.
    - Identify and describe the various tools and techniques of lobbying and the impact of lobbying on all three branches of Texas government.
    - Analyze the impact of interest groups on the public policy process in Texas.
  - Political Parties:
    - Identify and describe the functions of the temporary and permanent organizations of the political party.
    - Identify significant third parties in Texas, the impact of these parties on the two major parties, and the operation of the Texas political system.
  - Elections
    - Describe the electoral process in Texas and evaluate the impact of this process on campaigns in Texas.
    - Identify the unique factors of Texas elections and voting.
  - Media
    - Identify and evaluate the impact of the media on Texas campaigns and elections.
    - Identify and evaluate the impact of the media on Texas public policy.
  
- Area Three - Political Learning/Socialization:
  - Identify and evaluate the importance of political subcultures (including Texas Creed) within the state particularly with regard to the structure of Texas Government and participation.

- Evaluate how political ideologies are learned.
  
- Area Four - Political Institutions:
  - Judicial
    - Identify the structure and function of the various components of the Texas judiciary.
    - Identify and explain the methods of judicial selection and replacement in Texas
  - Executive
    - Identify and explain the strengths and weaknesses of the governor of Texas.
    - Identify and explain the components of the Texas Plural Executive.
    - Identify/outline the Texas Executive branch (type of agency, function, and relationship to people)
  - Legislative
    - Identify and analyze the functions of the Texas State Legislature.
    - Identify and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the Texas legislative structure.
    - Evaluate the influence of Texas House and Senate leaders upon operation and policy choices made by the state legislature.
    - Discuss the impact/influence of the executive branch and interest groups on the state legislature.
  
- Area Five – Local Government:
  - Identify and describe the structure of city and county governments.
  - Identify and describe financing for city, county and special districts.
  - Describe the functions/powers of major policy makers and administrators of the city/county.
  - Describe and evaluate the role of special districts in Texas.
  
- Area Six-Public Policy:
  - Budget/Finances
    - Evaluate the biennial budget process in Texas.
    - Identify and evaluate the key sources of revenue in Texas.
    - Identify and evaluate the budget priorities for the state of Texas.
    - Identify and analyze the demographic, ideological, and political influences on the Texas budget.
  - Policy Areas
    - Identify the key administrative agencies and challenges/policy issues those agencies will have to respond to for the following areas: Education, Health and Human Services, Transportation and Energy Policy, Environment, Criminal Justice, Economic Development.

## II. Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the student will:

Course Learning Outcome	Method of Assessment
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.</li><li>2. Describe state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.</li><li>3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.</li><li>4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.</li><li>5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.</li><li>6. Analyze the state and local election process.</li><li>7. Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens.</li><li>8. Analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas.</li></ol>	Exams consisting of objective and/or essay questions. Instructors may also assign outside writing projects and/or oral presentations to measure student learning.

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

Textbook is determined by the department. See syllabus or bookstore for details.

## 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 courses 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

Government courses require significant written effort. The written component may include any 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 scale for the course is the traditional college grading scale: A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D= 60-69; F=59 and below.

## 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: Core Objectives**

Course Prefix & Number: GOVT 2306	
<b>Core Objective</b>	<b>Method of Assessment</b>
Critical Thinking	Completion of independently researched papers pertaining to 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.
Communication	NA
Social Responsibility	NA
Personal Responsibility	NA



**Page 2: Perspectives**

Course Prefix & Number: GOVT 2306	
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 position papers on 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 2306	
<b>Component Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences</b>	
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.	