



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 – Texas Government
Course Prefix and Number – GOVT 2306
Department – Government and Economics **Division** – Social and Behavioral Science
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 Satisfied in Reading and Writing

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

Prepared by Elizabeth Rexford

Date 9-11-13

Reviewed by Department Head Elizabeth Rexford

Date 9-11-13

Accuracy verified by Division Chair Amanda Shelton

Date 1/17/14

Approved by Dean or Vice President of Instruction gghunt

Date 2-4-14



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

Learning Outcomes	Methods of Assessment
<p>Upon successful completion of this course, students will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution. 2. Describe the state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government. 3. Describe the 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. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructor generated tests on text chapters covering Texas history and Texas Constitution. Tests may include multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer or essay questions. 2. Instructor generated tests on text chapters covering federalism and local government structures and functions.. Tests may include multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer or essay questions. 3. Instructor generated tests on text chapters covering U.S. Constitution, Texas Constitution and the three branches of Texas government. Tests may include multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer or essay questions. 4. . Instructor generated tests on text chapters covering the three branches of government. Tests may include multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer or essay questions 5. Instructor generated tests on text chapters covering political participation (media, public opinion, interest groups and political parties). Tests may include multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer or essay questions. 6. . Instructor generated tests on text chapters covering political participation, electoral systems and campaigns. Tests may include multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer or essay questions. 7. . Instructor generated tests on text chapters covering political participation, campaigns and elections, and civil rights and liberties. Tests may include multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer or essay questions. 8. Instructor generated tests on text chapters covering Texas public policy, civil rights and civil liberties and ideology and political culture. Tests may include multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer or essay questions. <p>Additionally all objectives are evaluated by instructor generated out of class writing assignments, and/or oral presentations. All outcomes are tested by comprehensive mandatory final exams.</p>

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

Tannahill, Neal. Texas Government: Policy and Politics. 12th Edition. Pearson Press: Upper Saddle River, NJ.: 2013.

IV. Suggested Course Maximum - 35

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

None

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

Instructors may use the narrative/lecture method of instruction to impart course content. The narrative method is also useful for setting the stage for class discussions.

Class discussion between students and instructors is encouraged for the purpose of developing in students the ability to speak before others about course content. Class discussions should arise from the readings that students complete and from points of interest and the interpretation of facts that emerge in class, especially those relevant to students.

Students will be required to complete written work or to prepare oral presentations to further elaborate or explain what has been presented and discussed by the instructor. These requirements are designed to challenge the student to analyze and critique the material presented. The written work may be in the form of essay test topics, book reviews, reports on articles in scholarly journals, or other written assignments as assigned by the instructor. Oral presentations may be designed as debates, informative overviews, or persuasive monologues.

Minimum requirements include the following:

- 1.) Attend class in accordance with college policy and as stipulated by the instructor.
- 2.) Complete appropriate reading assignments made by the instructor
- 3.) Complete appropriate writing assignments based on the readings, classroom presentations and discussion
- 4.) Complete oral presentations (if assigned by instructor)
- 5.) Complete appropriate tests (quizzes, major examinations, and a final examination)

The grading scale used for all tests, papers, and projects will be as follows:

90% to 100% = A
80% to 89% = B
70% to 79% = C
60% to 69% = D
Below 60% = F

Instructors may also use a point system to determine final scores as long as this point system is clearly outlined in the instructor's syllabus. All faculty must give a cumulative final exam that will constitute a minimum of ten percent of the students final grade. Written work will constitute a minimum of 25% of the students grade.

Assessment will be conducted using a variety of methods. Objective questions such as multiple-choice, matching, true/false and fill-in-the blank will be used as will subjective questions which may demand narrative identification, lengthy narrative responses, and also critical thinking. Students will be tested on materials presented in class and are expected to develop listening and note-taking skills. The weight, style, and nature of the specific assessment tool are left to the discretion of the individual instructor, but each instructor must place emphasis on the development of writing and critical thinking skills. Balance in testing to accommodate for varied learning styles is the desired goal.

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	
Core Objective	Method of Assessment
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	
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.	

