

**GOVT 2301 – National, State, and Local Government I - (ONLINE)
BRAZOSPORT COLLEGE**

Fall 2012

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*Politics is about who gets what, when, and
how.*

Harold Lasswell

Catalog Course Description: GOVT 2301 National, State, and Local Government I - CIP 4510025125 - With GOVT 2302 this course fulfills the legislative requirements for American Government. - A functional study of the United States and Texas Constitutions, the development of the Federal systems, a study of the United States and Texas court systems, civil liberties and rights of citizenship. (3 SCH, 3 lecture, 0 lab)

Politics is about who gets what, when, and how. In this course we will examine the American and Texas political cultures, the United States and Texas Constitutions, Federalism, the Federal court system and the Texas court system. You will also examine the politics of personal liberty and civil rights, the politics of social welfare programs, and the politics of public opinion and participation.

This course is designed with a focus on active participation and active learning. Students will be engaged in research, reading, and writing activities.

TEXT BOOK: There is not a required textbook for this course. If you wish to use a textbook on your own, you should be able to obtain one at the Brazosport College bookstore.

Course content will be presented in Unit Modules found in D2L **Content**. Each module will contain a PowerPoint presentation and links to various web sites and readings. PowerPoint presentations will contain narration by the instructor and will require a computer with speakers or a headset. (To hear the audio for each PowerPoint presentation click on "Slide Show" and then click on "From Beginning" and the presentation will automatically move from slide to slide with the narration.)

DESIRE2LEARN and Turnitin.com

This is an online course using the Desire2Learn (D2L) class management system and Turnitin.com. All course content will be delivered online. All class assignments will be submitted online. We will use the following D2L (tools) features:

Course Home Page – Here you will see the *Announcements* and *Calendar*. *Announcements* will convey vital information for the class throughout the semester.

It should always be the first section checked when you log in to D2L and should be checked several times each week throughout the semester. The Calendar is helpful in getting assignments in on time, especially the Discussions and Quizzes.

Content – Here you will find a variety of sources you will use throughout the course. These will include PowerPoint presentations, links to Internet sites, readings, and other references.

Discussions – One of the main components of the course, this is where you will post your responses to a number of discussion topics presented by the instructor and also read and reply to comments and questions presented by your fellow classmates.

Quizzes – Each unit will have a quiz over the PowerPoint for that unit. All quizzes are online in D2L and have a start and end date. D2L alerts you when a quiz is available and the calendar also indicates when a quiz is available. Once a quiz expires it is no longer available and cannot be completed late. A missed quiz receives a zero. You will usually have an 8-10 day window in which to complete a quiz, but once it is gone it is gone. Don't procrastinate.

Grades – This is the course grade book. At any time you can review your standing in the course. The grade will be shown as points earned and as a percentage.

Classlist – This is a list of your fellow classmates. You can see who is online and email classmates and the instructor using the Classlist.

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION BOARD PARTICIPATION (D2L)

- There will be five discussion board assignments for this course. Each discussion posting will be graded and receive written comments from the instructor. These items will be posted to the D2L "Discussions" and the assessments will be posted to the D2L **Grades**. This activity involves regular and frequent participation. Each discussion item will have a beginning and closing date for posting. **Once a discussion item has closed no late posts will be accepted and a grade of zero will apply for that post.** Your grade and the written comments I make on your discussion posting will only be visible to you.
- Discussion posts should be carefully written and demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the topic.
- The Discussion Board also allows for responses to the postings of your classmates. In responding to a classmate's post it is fine to share your opinions. Remember to keep your comments civil and respectful.
- Posts to the discussion board should be in complete sentences with careful attention to spelling and grammar standards. Proof read your Discussion posts just as carefully as you would any formal written assignment. Each discussion board post will be scored on **content and style**. I will not comment on grammar or spelling issues on the discussion board, but will make assessment comments which will only be viewable by you.

QUIZZES (D2L)

- There will be eight quizzes for this course. All quizzes will be completed online using D2L.
- Each quiz will consist of a set of multiple-choice and true/false items drawn from the Power Points found in the Content section.
- Each quiz will have a beginning date and time, and a closing date and time. **Once a quiz has closed it is gone and cannot be reopened. A missed quiz earns a zero grade.** Watch the course calendar closely.

- Once you have completed and submitted a quiz you will be able to view your grade in the D2L Grades tool.

MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAM ESSAYS (Turnitin.com)

Create your Turnitin account by visiting www.turnitin.com and clicking on the "Enroll in a Class" button. The Class ID Number is **5340071** and the password is **politics**. This is where you will post your mid-term and final exam essays.

- Essays are graded for content and style and should be your **original work**. Limit direct quotes to no more than fifty words per essay.
- Highlight essays with relevant current events where possible.
- Spelling and grammar check are helpful tools but cannot completely substitute for careful proof-reading.
- Points are deducted for spelling and grammar errors.
- Each essay should be at least 1000 words.
- **The mid-term essay and the final exam essay will have specific due dates and late essays will be penalized 10 points per day.**
- The final course grade is awarded based on the work submitted by the last class day. The last class day for this semester is August 15, 2012. No incompletes are assigned.
- The mid-term and final exam essays are to be submitted to www.Turnitin.com
- Essays are graded using the Turnitin Grade Mark system and will show any written comments made by your instructor. Essay grades will be posted in the Turnitin Grade Book and in your D2L *GRADES*.

Student Success Tips

- Read the course syllabus carefully and ask questions on anything you are not sure about.
- Visit your Course Home page frequently to keep engaged with your course. Check Announcements/News Items and the course calendar often.
- Check the Discussions and Quizzes tools often to make sure you do not miss deadlines.
- Communicate with your instructor.
- Carefully proof read everything you turn in for this course. Dedicate yourself to making sure all assignments you submit for this class are your own original work and are grammatically correct. Discussion items should meet the same standards as all other work. Pay careful attention to capitalization, punctuation, sentence structure and spelling.
- Turn in assignments on time or even early. Computer problems are not an excuse for missing an assignment. If you wait until the last minute to submit an assignment you are more likely to have some type of unexpected problem. When you have the time and your computer is working it is always a good idea to complete an assignment. You may also use computers here at the college for completing and submitting work.

COURSE GRADE FORMULA

The course grade will be earned based on student performance and participation on the course Discussions, Quizzes, a Mid-term essay, and a Final exam essay. All grades will be posted to your D2L **Grades**.

Course Activities	Possible Points	Percentage of Final Course Grade
Discussions	Five Discussions @ 20 Points Each	20%
Quizzes	Eight Quizzes @ 25 Points Each	40%
Mid-Term Exam Essay	100 Points	20%
Final Exam Essay	100 Points	20%

Your “final calculated grade” will give you an up-to-date view of where you stand in the course at any given point in the semester. The following scale will be used to determine your course grade:

Final Calculated Grade	Course Grade
100-90 %	A
89-80 %	B
79-70 %	C
69-60 %	D
59-0 %	F

Student Learning Outcomes (Objectives)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and understand the basic elements and development of the United States Constitution including federalism, checks and balances, and separation of powers.
- Identify and understand the basic structure of the United States judiciary, civil liberties, civil rights, social policy, citizenship, and immigration policy.
- Identify and understand basic elements and development of the Texas Constitution.
- Identify and understand the Texas judiciary, including the criminal justice system.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

I. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- A. Government 2301 is a survey course in American and Texas government with emphasis upon the foundation of our national and state constitutional systems.

- B. Students will participate in the following course activities: student/instructor discussions (via the Desire2Learn discussion board), reading assignments from the Unit Modules and online resources.
- C. Upon completing this course, students will have gained a better understanding of the concepts and foundations that have shaped and molded the American political/governmental process. Students will realize that educated and informed citizens are the cornerstones that will enhance and improve our system of constitutional representative democracy.

II. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND COURSE CONTENT

- A. Students who successfully complete this course should have basic knowledge of various aspects of the political and governmental system of the United States as well as Texas. Students will assess the politics of who gets what, when, and how. Students will examine the concepts of politics and political science, politics and government, the meaning of democracy, the paradox of democracy, direct versus representative democracy, and discuss the issue of who really governs in America.
- B. To introduce students to basic political philosophical concepts and to the functions and purposes of government, to the concepts of political culture, individual liberty, and the dilemmas of equality. To introduce students to beliefs about fairness, religion and secularization in politics, liberalism and conservatism, social mobility, and dissent in the United States.
- C. To obtain some perception concerning the many varied and differing governing systems, students will be introduced to the basic principles of comparative government. This will include comparing aspects of our presidential form of government to the traditional British model of parliamentary government, as well as federal vs. unitary systems. Students will be asked to examine their own political viewpoints in addressing such issues as whether they consider themselves a political liberal or conservative or some other classification.
- D. Students will be introduced to documents such as the Magna Carta, Mayflower Compact, the Colonial Charters, The Declaration of Independence, and the Articles of Confederation. A more thorough study will be conducted on the forces, factors, circumstances, and events leading to and influencing the writing and adoption of the U.S. Constitution and the Federal Bill of Rights. In summary students will be able to identify and understand the basic elements and development of the United States Constitution including federalism, checks and balances, and separation of powers.
- E. Students will be exposed to an investigation of the original design of American federalism and the evolution of federalism in the American system, why the Founding Fathers embraced federalism, and the concept of an indestructible Union of indestructible States.

- F. Students will study the judicial branches of both the national and state governments, with particular attention paid to the structure of the judicial system of Texas. Students will examine the issues of activism versus self-restraint, the politics of selecting federal judges and electing Texas judges, Supreme Court decision making, and the politics of the Supreme Court. Students will investigate the changes that have occurred in recent years concerning procedural rights for the accused in criminal cases. In summary students will be able to identify and understand the basic structure of the United States judiciary, civil liberties, civil rights, social policy, citizenship, and immigration policy, and identify and understand the Texas judiciary, including the criminal justice system.

- G. Students will be introduced to various topics in the area of civil liberties and constitutional law. Students will be introduced to the fundamental rights that are found in the Bill of Rights (Amendments 1-10) to the Constitution. Students will examine the issues of power and individual liberty, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, the right to bear arms, privacy as defined in the Constitution, obscenity and the law, rights of criminal defendants, the death penalty, the politics of equality, slavery, segregation and the Constitutional legacy, the Civil Rights Acts, affirmative action, Hispanic politics, gender equality and the Fourteenth Amendment, and gender equality and the economy. Recent Supreme Court cases will be covered.

- H. Students will examine and discuss issues such as politics and economics, the performance of the American economy, economic globalization, and the politics of taxation, poverty in the United States, social welfare politics, and health care in America.

- I. Students will examine issues concerning the politics of Texas, examine the myths and legends of Texas, the political culture of Texas, the people of Texas, the role of race and ethnicity in Texas culture and politics, demographic trends in Texas, the economy of Texas, the economic regions of Texas and the ways immigration is impacting institutions in Texas including public education, and the expanding economic and social interdependence of South Texas and Mexico.

- J. Students will examine the Texas Constitution, its legacy, its general principles, the commonly cited weaknesses and criticisms of the Constitution of 1876, how the Texas Constitution changes and is amended, the restraints the Texas Constitution places on the ability of government to govern in the 21st century. In summary students will be able to identify and understand basic elements and development of the Texas Constitution.