

**Common Course Syllabus**  
**GOVT 2305**  
**Department of Social Sciences**  
**South Plains College**

**Department:** Social Sciences

**Discipline:** Government

**Course Number:** GOVERNMENT 2305

**Course Title:** Federal Government (Federal Constitution and Topics)

**Credit:** 3 Lecture, 0 Lab

**Satisfies a core curriculum requirement?** Yes, Social Science and ALL Undergraduate Degrees

**Prerequisites:** TSI compliance in Reading

**Available Formats:** Conventional, INET, ITV

**Campus:** Levelland, Reese, ATC, Plainview

**Textbook:** Varies according to instructor

**Course Specific Instructions:** Each instructor will attach his/her course with specific instructions.

**Course Description:** This course is a survey of fundamental principles of political science, including the American system of government and the origins and development of the constitutions of the United States. This course satisfies the Legislative requirements for teacher certification.

**Course Purpose:** Government 2305, as taught at South Plains College, is a reading intensive course designed to acquaint the learner with the origin and development of the US Constitution, structure and powers of the national government including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public policy, civil liberties and civil rights. This course meets the statutory requirements as set forth by the State of Texas.

**Approval Number:** 45.1002.51 25

**Course Requirements:** To maximize a student's potential to complete this course, he/she should attend all class meetings, complete all homework assignments and examinations in a timely manner, and complete all other projects or papers as assigned in the instructor's specific instructions.

**Course Evaluation:** See the instructor's course information sheet for specific items used in evaluating student performance.

**Attendance Policy:** Whenever absences become excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course. Each instructor will have additional information about attendance on his/her course information sheet.

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):**

Students who have completed this course will:

1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of our federal system.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties.
6. Analyze the election process.
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. Politics.

**Fundamental Component Areas (FCA):**

Students will be expected to perform satisfactorily in four FCA.

1. Critical Thinking Skills – to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information by:
  - a. Generating and communicating ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information,
  - b. Gathering and assessing information relevant to a question,
  - c. Analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information.
2. Communication – to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral or visual communication by:

Developing, interpreting, and expressing ideas through written, oral, or visual communication.
3. Social Responsibility Skills – to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively I regional, national, and global communities by:
  - a. Demonstrating intercultural competence,
  - b. Identifying civic responsibility,
  - c. Engaging in regional, national, and global communities.
4. Personal Responsibility – to include the ability to connect choices, action, and consequences to ethical decision-making by:
  - a. Reading, understanding and affirming agreement and acceptance of principles, guidelines and requirements set forth in the “Statement of Personal Responsibility of Students” (Attached)
  - b. Evaluating choices and actions and relating consequences to personal decision-making
  - c. Accepting personal responsibility for decisions and actions taken or not taken

**Fall 2023**  
**GOVT 2305-010, 442, and 511: Federal Government**  
**Department of Social Sciences**  
**South Plains College**

**Instructor Information**

Dr. Jonathan Martin

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Office Phone: 806-716-2198

Office Hours:

- Monday: 8:20-9:20am and 1-3pm
- Tuesday: 8:20-9:20am and 2:20-3:20pm
- Wednesday: 10:45-11:45am
- Thursday: 8:20-9:20am
- Friday: 9:30-11am

**Textbook**

We are using an OER (Open Educational Resource) from OpenStax. The textbook is FREE and available online through this link:

American Government 3e by Glen Kurtz and Sylvie Waskiewicz

ISBN: 978-1-951693-38-1

<https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e>

OpenStax allows you to read the textbook online at the URL I have provided, or you can download it to your computer as a PDF file. In addition to the textbook, I may assign other reading material in Blackboard throughout the semester.

**Policies and Procedures**

Classroom Decorum

You are expected to conduct yourself in an appropriate manner. It is important to arrive to class on time and not disturb others by talking, using your cell phone, or leaving class early.

Furthermore, I expect every student to be respectful to other students and instructor when discussing politics. Failure to adhere to classroom decorum may result in a point deduction to your participation grade.

Syllabus Statements

For information regarding Intellectual Exchange, Disabilities, Non-Discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) Team, and Campus Concealed Carry, please use the following link:

<https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/>

### Course Withdrawals

The last day to withdraw from this class with a grade of ‘W’ is **November 30**. Students are expected to do the required reading and turn in assignments by the due dates. As stated, if you get behind in your assignments, it is likely you will not finish the course and/or fail.

### Academic Integrity

Cheating, plagiarism, or any other act of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. At the bare minimum, a student who cheats or plagiarizes will receive a zero for the assignment. In addition, I reserve the right to seek additional penalties, such as a zero for the entire course and filing an Academic Dishonesty Report.

### Student Grievance Procedure

A student grievance is a College related issue or condition that a student believes to be unfair, inequitable, discriminatory, or a hindrance to the educational process. A grievance also includes discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. You can find more information about the student grievance procedure here:

[http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human\\_resources/policy\\_procedure/fm.php](http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human_resources/policy_procedure/fm.php)

## **Grading and Evaluation**

### Grading Scale

- A: 89.5-100%
- B: 79.5-89.4%
- C: 69.5-79.4%
- D: 59.5-69.4%
- F: Below 59.5%

### Final Grade Calculation

Exams	60%
Participation	20%
Quizzes	10%
Essay	10%

### Exams (60%)

There are three exams, and your exam average comprises 60% of your overall grade. The third exam will be given during the final exam period and is not cumulative. Furthermore, all three exams will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions. If you miss class on exam day for an unexcused reason, you will take the make-up exam.

### Participation (20%)

Active participation is crucial to your success in this class and, more broadly, to the success of any learning experience. There will be numerous opportunities throughout the semester to participate by engaging in class discussions and completing participation assignments. Moreover, I expect you to show up to class on time and be ready to participate. At the end of the semester, you will receive a participation grade based on the quality of your participation (e.g.,

participating in discussions, completing in-class assignments, attending class, and adhering to classroom decorum).

I will track your attendance, and you will get a low participation grade if you do not regularly attend class. Furthermore, I reserve the right to deduct points from your participation grade for excessive unexcused absences, violations of classroom decorum (e.g., tardiness, cell phone use, wearing earbuds, rude other students or the instructor). If you have questions about your participation grade throughout the semester, you are welcome to ask me for feedback on how you are doing.

#### Essay (10%)

The required essay for this course is a letter to the editor. For this essay, you will write about a current issue in federal government and develop a persuasive argument. I will provide you with detailed instructions later in the semester.

#### Quizzes (10%)

I will assign at least 5 quizzes throughout the semester in Blackboard. Quiz format will vary and will be based on assigned readings.

### **Course Schedule\***

#### Week 1 (Aug 28-31)

Course Overview

Chapter 1: American Government and Civic Engagement

#### Week 2 (Sept 5-7)

Chapter 2: The Constitution and Its Origins

#### Week 3 (Sept 11-14)

Chapter 3: American Federalism

#### Week 4 (Sept 18-21)

Chapter 4: Civil Liberties

#### Week 5 (Sept 25-28)

Chapter 4: Civil Liberties

#### Week 6 (Oct 2-5)

\*\*\*Exam 1 is on Tuesday, October 3\*\*\*

Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion

#### Week 7 (Oct 9-12)

Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion

Week 8 (Oct 16-19)  
Chapter 11: Congress

Week 9 (Oct 23-26)  
Chapter 11: Congress  
Chapter 12: The Presidency

Week 10 (Oct 30-Nov 2)  
Chapter 12: The Presidency

Week 11 (Nov 6-9)  
\*\*\*Exam 2 is on Tuesday, November 7\*\*\*  
Chapter 7: Voting and elections

Week 12 (Nov 13-16)  
Chapter 7: Voting and elections  
Chapter 13: The Courts

Week 13 (Nov 20-23)  
No Class due to Thanksgiving Break

Week 14 (Nov 27-30)  
Chapter 13: The Courts  
Chapter 9: Political Parties  
\*\*\*Letter to the Editor is due Thursday, November 30)\*\*\*

Week 15 (Dec 4-7)  
Chapter 10: Interest Groups and Lobbying  
Chapter 5: Civil Rights

Week 16 (Dec 11-14)  
\*\*\*Exam 3 is on Tuesday, December 12\*\*\*

\*I reserve the right to alter the class schedule as I deem necessary. Any adjustments will be announced in class and/or listed on Blackboard.