

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

**Department:** Social Sciences

**Discipline:** Government

**Course Number:** GOVT 2305

**Course Title:** Federal Government

**Credit:** 3 Lecture, 0 Lab

**This course partially satisfies a core curriculum requirement:** Government/Political Science Foundational Component Area (070)

**Available Formats:** Conventional (Fully Face-to-Face), Fully Online, Hybrid, ITV

**Campus:** Levelland, Downtown Center, Plainview

**Textbook:** Varies according to instructor. Refer to each instructor's instructions for textbook requirements.

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

**Course Description:** Origin and development of the U.S. 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.

**Course Objectives addressed:**

1. **critical thinking:** to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
2. **communication:** to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
3. **social responsibility:** to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
4. **personal responsibility:** to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Dropping a Course:** Students may drop courses through Texan Connect, the Admissions and Records Office, or Advising and Testing Center through the late registration period.

After late registration has closed, a student must complete the online [Student Initiated Drop Request](#) to drop a course.

Students may also drop courses in person at any campus location by completing a Student Initiated Drop Form. Complete a [Student Initiated Drop Form](#) and return the signed form to the Levelland Admissions and Records Office, the Student Support Center at the Lubbock Downtown Center, the Lubbock Career and Technical Center, or Plainview Center. You must have a picture ID to complete the drop.

A mark of "W" will be given for student-initiated drops that occur prior to and through the last day to drop as indicated in the online Academic Calendar found here:

<https://www.southplainscollege.edu/academiccalendar/index.php>.

**Spring 2025**  
**GOVT 2305-002: Federal Government**  
**Department of Social Sciences**  
**South Plains College**

**Instructor Information**

Dr. Jonathan Martin

Office: Student Services Building 116

E-mail: [jmartin@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:jmartin@southplainscollege.edu)

Office Phone: 806-716-2198

Office Hours:

- Monday: 1-2pm
- Tuesday: 9-11:30am
- Wednesday: 11am to Noon
- Thursday: 9-11:30am
- Friday: 10-11am

**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.

Participation Statement

For online courses, students **MUST** actively participate by completing an academic assignment by the official census date **January 29**. Students who do not do so, will be dropped from the course.

### 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 **April 24**. 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	15%
Quizzes	15%
Essay	10%

#### Exams (60%)

There are three exams, and your exam average comprises 60% of your overall grade. Furthermore, all three exams will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions. For the first two exams, there is a late penalty if you miss the exam for an unexcused reason. If you miss Exam 3 (final exam), you will receive a zero. Finally, you are not allowed to take any exam early.

### Participation (15%)

Active participation is essential 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 answering questions and completing participation assignments. At the end of the semester, your participation grade will be based on attendance, the successful completion of participation assignments, and engagement during class discussions.

I will track your participation and attendance throughout the semester. You are allowed up to 6 unexcused absences without penalty. Beginning with the seventh unexcused absence, 5 points will be deducted from your participation grade for each additional absence. Furthermore, I reserve the right to deduct points from your participation grade for excessive tardiness, violations of classroom decorum (e.g., cell phone use, leaving class early for unexcused reason, 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.

### Quizzes (15%)

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

### 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.

## **Course Schedule\***

### Week 1 (Jan 13 & 15)

Course Overview

Chapter 1: American Government and Civic Engagement

### Week 2 (Jan 22)

\*\*\*No Class on Monday, January 20 (MLK Day)\*\*\*

Chapter 2: The Constitution and Its Origins

### Week 3 (Jan 27 & 29)

Chapter 2: The Constitution and Its Origins

Chapter 3: American Federalism

### Week 4 (Feb 3 & 5)

Chapter 3: American Federalism

### Week 5 (Feb 10 & 12)

Chapter 4: Civil Liberties (Part One)

Week 6 (Feb 17 & 19)

Chapter 4: Civil Liberties (Part One)

\*\*\*Exam 1 is on Wednesday, February 19\*\*\*

Week 7 (Feb 24 & 26)

Chapter 4: Civil Liberties (Part Two)

Week 8 (March 3 & 5)

Chapter 6: The Politics of Public Opinion

Week 9 (March 17 & 19)

\*\*\*Spring Break is March 10-14\*\*\*

Chapter 11: Congress

Week 10 (March 24 & 26)

Chapter 7: Voting and elections

Week 11 (March 31 & April 2)

Chapter 12: The Presidency

Week 12 (April 7 & 9)

Chapter 12: The Presidency

\*\*\*Exam 2 is on Wednesday, April 9\*\*\*

Week 13 (April 14 & 16)

Chapter 13: The Courts

Week 14 (April 21 & 23)

Chapter 9: Political Parties

\*\*\*Letter to the Editor is due Wednesday, April 23\*\*\*

Week 15 (April 28 & 30)

Chapter 10: Interest Groups and Lobbying

Chapter 5: Civil Rights

Week 16 (May 7)

\*\*\*Exam 3 is on Wednesday, May 7 at **8:00am**\*\*\*

\*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.