

**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, Lubbock Downtown Center, 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:** Since this is an online course, I will not take daily attendance. However, you are expected to complete your work on time in accordance with the course calendar. You may be dropped from the course if you miss two or more consecutive weeks of activities. Please email me if you are sick or have another valid reason for a prolonged absence.

**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

**Spring II 2023**  
**GOVT 2305-181: Federal Government**  
**Department of Social Sciences**  
**South Plains College**

**Instructor Information**

Dr. Jonathan Martin

Office: ADM 121

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Office Phone: 806-716-2198

Office Hours:

- Monday: 9:30am-11:30am
- Tuesday: 9:50-10:50am
- Wednesday: 9:30am-11:30am
- Thursday: 9:50-10:50am
- Friday: 9-11am

**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.

**Participation Statement**

For online courses, students MUST actively participate by completing an academic assignment by the official census date **March 27**. Students who do not do so, will be dropped from the course.

**Blackboard Information**

We will be using Blackboard for this course. Blackboard is used for announcements, completing assignments, emails, discussion boards and the gradebook. You will also find additional resource materials to help you this semester, such as lecture notes, power point presentations, video clips, audio clips, and more.

Blackboard can be accessed by logging into the MySPC portal or going directly to <https://southplainscollege.blackboard.com>.

**Troubleshooting**

If you experience technical difficulties with Blackboard, please submit at Blackboard help ticket on this webpage: <http://www.southplainscollege.edu/instructional-technology/Help.php>

## **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%

## **Overall Grade Formula**

|                          |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Quizzes                  | (20%) |
| Discussions              | (20%) |
| Short Answer Assignments | (25%) |
| Essay                    | (10%) |
| Exams                    | (25%) |

## **Assignments**

### Quizzes (20%)

Most weeks that cover a textbook chapter will include a quiz. Generally, a quiz will have at least 10 questions (e.g., multiple choice, true/false, or free response) based on the assigned reading and videos for that particular week. Your *two lowest quiz grades* will be dropped. Also, the syllabus quiz will count as a regular quiz.

### Discussions (20%)

There are five discussion assignments in this course. Some discussion threads might focus on a current event in American politics, while other discussions will examine the structure of the federal government. The purpose of the discussions is for students to demonstrate their knowledge of course material and engage with other students on important topics in American politics.

For each discussion, you will be required to make an initial post in which you answer the question(s) posed in the prompt. After you make your initial post, you must read the posts from your fellow classmates and make two additional posts in response to posts from other students. While I do accept late discussion assignments, there is a late penalty. Each discussion assignment will have detailed instructions.

### Short Answer Assignments (25%)

There are four short answer assignments in this course. Each assignment will ask you to answer a series of questions covering important material from the textbook and lectures. It is important that you accurately answer all parts of the questions and cite the textbook (or another reputable source) to support your answers. All short answer assignments will be submitted through Blackboard. Late short answer assignments will be accepted, but there is a late penalty.

### Essay (10%)

There is one essay in this course with a required word count of at least 500 words. Detailed instructions will be provided in Blackboard.

### Exams (25%)

There are two exams (midterm and final) in this course. Both exams will have a combination of multiple-choice, true/false, and free response questions.

### **Policies and Procedures**

#### SPC Standard Disability Statement

Any students who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make and necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from the SPC Disability Service Office during the instructor's office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations until appropriate verification from the SPC Disability Service Office has been provided. For more information, you may contact the Disability Services Office (located in the Health & Wellness Center) at 806-716-2529 or visit <http://www.southplainscollege.edu/health/disabilityservices.php>.

For information regarding official South Plains College statements about diversity, disabilities, non-discrimination, Title V Pregnancy Accommodations, and Campus Concealed Carry, please visit: <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/>.

#### Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Non-Discrimination Statement

South Plains College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Vice President for Student Affairs, South Plains College, 1401 College Avenue, Box 5, Levelland, TX 79336. Phone number 806-716-2360. South Plains College is dedicated to providing a safe and equitable learning environment for all students. Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the college. The Health and Wellness Center offers confidential support (806-716-2529) and Voice of Hope has a 24-hour hotline: 806-763-7273. You are encouraged to report any incidents online at [https://www.southplainscollege.edu/student\\_consumer/TitleIX-NonDiscrim-TermNotification.pdf](https://www.southplainscollege.edu/student_consumer/TitleIX-NonDiscrim-TermNotification.pdf).

#### Covid-19 Statement

For information and resources about COVID-19, please visit <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/emergency/covid19-faq.php>.

#### Course Withdrawals

The last day to withdraw/drop with a grade of "W" is **May 3**. It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from this course. Otherwise, students will be assigned their earned letter grade at the end of the course. Course averages will be updated twice each week, and guidance will be provided throughout the term to help students decide whether they need to drop the class or not. For more information regarding drops/withdrawals, please visit <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/admission-aid/apply/schedulechanges.php>.

### 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.

There are now websites that will actually generate semi-unique material that somewhat resembles original material. Since the technology is available to create this content, technology is also available to detect this content. Make no mistake, this is plagiarism. I am not asking AI to write a paper, I am asking you, the student, to create this content. If you submit work that is not your own, original material, it will be considered plagiarism and receive a grade of zero. The incident will also be detailed to the Dean of Students for disciplinary actions.

### 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)

### **Course Schedule\***

| <b>Week</b>                        | <b>Assignments</b>                  | <b>Due Date</b> |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1: Introduction                    | Syllabus Quiz                       | March 23        |
| 2: The Constitution                | Quiz, Discussion                    | March 23        |
| 3: Federalism                      | Quiz, Discussion                    | March 30        |
| 4: Civil Liberties                 | Quiz, Short Answer<br>Assignment #1 | March 30        |
| 5: Public Opinion                  | Quiz                                | April 6         |
| 6: Congress                        | Quiz, Discussion                    | April 6         |
| 7: Presidency                      | Quiz, Short Answer<br>Assignment #2 | April 11        |
| 8: Midterm                         | Midterm Exam                        | April 13        |
| 9: The Federal Courts              | Quiz, Discussion                    | April 20        |
| 10: Essay                          | Letter to the Editor                | April 20        |
| 11: Parties and Interest<br>Groups | Quiz, Short Answer<br>Assignment #3 | April 27        |
| 12: Voting and Elections           | Quiz, Discussion                    | April 27        |
| 13: Civil Rights                   | Quiz                                | May 4           |
| 14: The Media                      | Short Answer Assignment #4          | May 4           |
| 15: Final Exam                     | Final Exam                          | May 9           |