**GOVT 2306**

**Texas State & Local Government**

**Master Syllabus**

**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to Texas State and Local Government. The course includes an introduction to a framework for analyzing Texas government and politics, the constitutional basis for Texas government and politics, the processes of Texas government and politics, the institutions of Texas government and politics, and the policies of Texas government and politics.

**Competencies**

Students will need good reading, writing, critical thinking, and study skills to succeed in this course. Students will be expected to read and learn from a textbook, complete out-of-class assignments, navigate the Web in a search for information, write essays on exams, and, depending on the instructor, submit research papers or book reviews or policy analyses or other such work. Students will be expected to follow grammar and spelling rules in all elements of the course, as well as observe MLA or Turabian or some other accepted citation style in completing research-based course work. Although students will be provided with test dates and general learning outcomes, they will be expected to attend class, learn from lectures, and study information in detail to prepare for the tests.

**General Education Learning Outcomes**

• Civic and Cultural Awareness - Analyzing and critiquing competing perspectives in a democratic society; comparing, contrasting, and interpreting differences and commonalities among peoples, ideas, aesthetic traditions, and cultural practices

• Critical Thinking - Gathering, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating and applying information.

•Personal Responsibility - Identifying and applying ethical principles and practices; demonstrating effective learning, creative thinking, and personal responsibility.

•Written, Oral and Visual Communication - Communicating effectively, adapting to purpose, structure, audience, and medium.

**Instructional Methodology**

Varies with instructor and with class format.

**Course Rationale**

The Texas Education Code (51.301) mandates that “every college and university receiving state support or state aid from public funds shall give a course of instruction in government or political science that includes consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas. This course shall have a credit value of not less than six semester hours or its equivalent.”

Therefore, the Government Department of Austin Community College has established the following goals:

* To provide six semester hours of instruction in politics and government emphasizing participatory democracy.
* To provide ACC Government majors the foundation needed to pursue a baccalaureate degree in government or political science.

**Common Course Objectives**

Faculty in the Government Department offer course work that ensures that students learn, in both general and specific ways, the material included in the Department’s general learning outcomes for GOVT2306, listed below.

1. Context of Texas Politics
* Analyze the context of Texas Politics
1. Constitutional Foundations
* Analyze separation of powers in Texas government
* Describe the legacy of the Texas Constitution
* Describe the nature and characteristics of the 1876 Constitution.
* Discuss the nature of the relationship between national and state government.
1. Linkage Institutions
* Analyze the political and policymaking impact of the media in Texas
* Analyze the political and policymaking impact of interest groups in Texas.
* Analyze the political and policymaking impact of political parties in Texas.
* Analyze the process and impact of elections and campaigns in Texas.
1. Political Learning
* Evaluate how political values, attitudes, and behaviors are learned.
1. Campaigns and Elections
* Describe elections and voting in Texas Government.
1. Institutions of State Government
* Analyze the functions and operations of the legislative branch and its role in policy making today.
* Analyze the functions and operations of the executive branch and its role in policy making today.
* Analyze the functions and operations of the judicial branch and its role in policy making today.
1. Institutions of Local Government
* Analyze the structure, functions, and operations of local government.
1. Public Policy in Texas
* Describe education policy in Texas.
* Describe health and human services policy implementation in Texas.
* Describe environmental policy implementation in Texas.
* Describe criminal justice policy in Texas.
* Describe emergency management and border security policy implementation in Texas.
1. Fiscal Policy in Texas
* Describe fiscal policy in Texas Government
* Describe how budgets are developed and managed in Texas government.

**Grading System**

The grading system used depends on the individual instructor.

**Course Policies**

Policies on attendance, withdrawals, make-ups and/or retests, incompletes and use of the Testing Center vary by instructor. However, the entire department adheres to the following policies.

**Scholastic Dishonesty:** Act prohibited by the College for which discipline may be administered includes scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating on an exam or quiz, plagiarism (using another author’s words or arguments without attribution), and collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of any course requirement).

Academic work submitted by students shall be the result of their thought, research, or self-expression. Academic work is defined as, but not limited to, tests, quizzes (whether taken electronically or on paper), projects (either individual or group), classroom presentations, papers, and homework. If a student commits any of the above actions, the instructor will seek disciplinary action in the form of an academic penalty (which will include a zero on the academic work in question and may include a course grade of “F”). Such disciplinary action will be at the discretion of the instructor following College procedures outlined in the Student Handbook.

**Academic Freedom:** Each student is strongly encouraged to participate in class discussions. In any classroom situation that includes discussion and critical thinking, particularly about political ideas, there are bound to be many differing viewpoints. Students may not only disagree with each other at times, but the students and instructor may also find that they have disparate views on sensitive and volatile topics. It is the instructor’s hope that these differences will enhance class discussion and create an atmosphere where students and instructor alike will be encouraged to think and learn from each other. Therefore, be assured that the students’ grades will not be adversely affected by any beliefs or ideas expressed in class or in assignments. Rather, we will all respect the views of others when expressed in classroom discussions.

**Office for Students with Disabilities**

Each ACC campus offers support services for students with documented physical, cognitive, or psychological disabilities. Students with disabilities must meet request reasonable accommodations through the Office for Students with Disabilities on the campus where they expect to take the majority of their classes. Students are encouraged to do this three week before the start of the semester.