COURSE DESCRIPTION: GOVT 2305 UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
This course is an introduction to United States national government. The course includes a framework for understanding United States government and politics and the constitutional basis for the processes, the institutions, and the policies of United States government and politics. However, students do not attend scheduled classes, but study a textbook and use web-based resources to complete assignments. Students must complete an online orientation during the first week of classes, take all exams in ACC testing centers, and maintain satisfactory progress in the course to remain enrolled.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The student will understand the foundations, development, and features of the U.S. Constitution. The student will also understand how mass media, public opinion, interest groups, political parties, voting, campaigns, and elections function with respect to American Government. The student will also understand the structure, functions, and operations of the institutions (or branches) of U.S. government. The student will also understand how civil liberties and civil rights protect both the individual and categories of people. Moreover, the student will understand the development and implementation of both foreign and domestic policies. As a student of government, you will acquire the skills to interpret contemporary political events.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
• Complete the required online orientation within the first week of the semester for a total of five (5) possible points. These will become bonus points for you noted within Blackboard.

• The four (4) exams will consist of objective questions, including a combination of both multiple-choice and true/false questions. Each unit examination will consist of fifty (50) questions that will cover the objectives for the assigned chapters. Each question will be worth one (1) point. A student may earn a maximum of 200 points on the four examinations. It is imperative that you click on the link entitled Exams to get the full details. This link is to be used as an extension of the syllabus to further explain these policies in order to avoid any ambiguity.

• The five (5) discussion forums will allow students to demonstrate their understanding of textbook material and to share their opinions on contemporary issues about US Government. There will be five (5) forums during the semester worth a total of twenty (20) points each. Students are expected to participate in all of the forums. If not, as noted on the Discussion Forum Page, three (3) points will be deducted for each forum for non-participation. In addition, as you will note on the link regarding discussion forums, you must participate twice in
each given forum to receive any points. Students may earn a maximum of 100 points for participation in the forums. It is imperative that you click on the link entitled Discussion Forums to get the full details. This link is to be used as an extension of the syllabus to further explain these policies in order to avoid any ambiguity. The total number of points accumulated during the semester will determine a student's grade for the course:

- 300 - 265 A
- 264 - 235 B
- 234 - 205 C
- 204 - 175 D
- 174 - 000 F

**EXTRA CREDIT:** There is no "extra credit" work. In fact, there is already a five point curve built into the point scale and you are also able to earn five points for completing the orientation. Thus, the aforementioned grading scale will be strictly adhered to. The grades are neither “rounded” nor “curved” at the end.

**SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY:** As described in the ACC Student Handbook, scholastic dishonesty includes a violation of college rules and regulations as punishable according to the procedures listed in the Handbook. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an exam (either providing answers or stealing answers from another student), plagiarism (using another author’s words or argument without attribution), and collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of any course requirement). The instructor may seek disciplinary action if a student commits any of the above actions. This will include either granting a grade of zero (0) for that specific assignment or an overall course grade of “F” following an assessment of academic penalty. In the case of this course, this means that you should not cut and paste off the internet and attempt to pass it along as your own research or wording.

**ACADEMIC FREEDOM:** As described in Austin Community College Policy V-72, academic freedom protects professors and students in their search for both truth and free expression. Thus, professors and students alike share a responsibility to be respectful of the opinions of one another in order to maintain an affable learning environment. It is my hope that differing opinions will only create an atmosphere where everyone will be encouraged to think and learn when participating in the forums. Therefore, rest assured that your grades will not be adversely affected by any beliefs or ideas expressed in class. Rather, everyone in class is expected to respect the views of others when expressed in discussion forums. Just as in a real class, manners and diplomacy are important. There will be no room for disrespectful comments, insulting, or the like.

**ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWALS:** Your attendance consists of your participation in the discussion forums. A student may withdraw anytime during the semester until June 27th with no academic penalty. This means that after filling out the required form with Admissions & Records you will receive a ‘W’ at the end of the semester. This responsibility rests entirely in the hands of the student. I will not withdraw any student from the course even if you quit "coming to class," which in this instance means not participating in discussion forums and not taking the exams by the required deadlines. If you quit "coming to class" and do not officially withdraw from the course, you will receive a performance grade (A, B, C, D, or F) at the end of the semester.

**INCOMPLETES:** Please note that students may receive a temporary grade of ‘I’ (Incomplete) if the following steps are followed: the student has a valid / substantiated reason and has successfully completed the first three exams (that is, the student has scored at least a seventy or above on all three exams); if the student has successfully participated in the first three forums (that is, the student has offered two postings per forum at the minimum versus simply offering one response per forum or no posts at all); if the student has come in person to complete the required form in my office prior to the last week of class; and if the student agrees to complete the course by the deadline established on the Report of Incomplete Grade form. Otherwise, no incomplete status will be granted.

**STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES:** Each ACC campus offers support services for students with
documented physical, cognitive, or psychological disabilities. Students with disabilities must 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 weeks before the start of the semester. The following is an informative link regarding services for students with disabilities: Student Accessibility Services