

Information for Early College Start Government Classes

High school students taking government courses through Austin Community College need to be aware that expectations for U.S. Government (GOVT 2305) and Texas and State and Local Government (GOVT 2306) may be different than those for high school courses that they may be taking. Below is a summary of some of the expectations which are typical for a Government course at Austin Community College. It is our hope that by providing this information, students will be better able to evaluate their readiness for enrolling in such a course.

1. The college level government courses presume that the student has had a basic government course during the past two years or so which emphasized basic concepts of American Government. These concepts include, federalism, division of powers, separation of powers, checks and balances, and the Constitution. Students who do not have this prior experience with or exposure to these and other basic concepts may find the course very challenging, especially at the beginning.
2. This course includes a substantial reading assignment before each class meeting. Students are expected to be familiar with the material to be covered in each class and to have read the appropriate sections of the text PRIOR to the class period.
3. In most classes, some type of writing assignment is a requirement for successfully completing the course. Most classes include essay questions on each exam. In addition, many classes require research papers, reaction papers, book reports, and/or investigative reports as a substantial element of the course grade.
4. The normal mode of delivery is lecture. While many classes include class discussions as well as class activities, the predominant mode of delivery is lecture. The student has a responsibility to read the assignments prior to class and to be able to take notes based on the reading assignment and class presentation.
5. Each instructor has attendance policies and class behavior policies which a student must adhere to. This includes attending class regularly, arriving on time and staying for the entire class, regardless of other school activities and responsibilities.
6. Because college courses usually meet only two times per week (in some cases only once each week), the pace of each class may be much faster than high school students are accustomed to.
7. These are college courses and all students enrolled in such courses will be treated as college students regardless of the location at which the class meets. Students are protected by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. In compliance with this Act, instructors will not discuss student grades, academic progress, or class attendance and participation with a student's parents, unless the student is present.

In conclusion, a college-level course comes with certain expectations and requirements. Much of the work for each class must be done outside of class. Students must be prepared, current in their assignments, and full participants in each class.

Our instructors are dedicated, trained teachers and are excited about the subject matter and the opportunity to share it with their students. They are eager to participate in a collaborative learning experience with their students which results in greater subject matter knowledge and understanding as well as improvements in reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. In addition, students who complete their government courses are far better prepared to assume the responsibilities of citizenship in a participatory democracy. All this, in addition to getting a head start in earning college credit. This can be a challenging and very rewarding experience. We look forward to traveling this path with you.