

Government 2306

Syllabus **Blinn College – Bryan Campus**

Section(s): N1, N5 (Summer II)
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Government 2306 is a study of the organization, functions, and administration of the several branches and bureaucracy of the Texas state and local government, including a study of the numerous Texas constitutions. The primary factors considered relate to the three branches of government -- judicial, executive, legislative -- current Texas Constitution, events that shaped the state, and current events. Emphasis will be placed on the interaction of these subsystems. Three credit hours.

PREREQUISITES:

Appropriate score on the THEA test or alternative test or completion of READ 0306 with a grade of "C" or better.

CORE CURRICULUM COURSE:

This is a Core Course in the 42-Hour Core of Blinn College. As such, students will develop proficiency in the appropriate Intellectual Competencies, Exemplary Educational Objectives, and Perspectives. The URL for the Blinn College Core Curriculum web site is: www.blinn.edu/corecurriculum

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After successfully completing Government 2306, students should have a working knowledge of the organization, functions and administrations of the several branches and agencies of the national government, plus an understanding of the national constitution. These include:

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| Discuss the political culture and the economic, social, ethnic, and geographic diversity of the state |
| Trace the development of the current Texas Constitution |
| Examine local government, federalism, and intergovernmental relationships |
| Determine the role of ideology and political parties in Texas |
| Determine the role of interest groups and individual political participation in Texas |
| Explain the structure, roles and functions of the Texas executive branch, including state agencies |
| Identify the primary components of the Texas legislature, its major functions and its effectiveness |
| Analyze the structure, functions and effectiveness of the Texas court system |
| Evaluate policy formulation and implementation |
| Evaluate fiscal policy matters such as taxing, spending, and budgeting |

TEXTBOOKS, SUPPLIES, MATERIALS:

Textbook: Brown et al. Practicing Texas Politics, 13th Updated edition (2009)

ISBN: ISBN-13: 978-1-4240-7569-0 **OR** ISBN-13: 978-0-547-22763-4

Reader- No Reader. Any extra readings will be provided in eCampus. InfoTrac will not be needed.

USE OF ANOTHER EDITION/VERSION OF THE TEXTBOOK IS DONE AT YOUR OWN RISK!!!!

ALSO:

Reliable Internet Access (broadband is best)

Appropriate browser and required plug-ins

COURSE OUTLINE:

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|----------------|---|
| July 6: | First day of classes |
| July 6-13: | Section 1: Chapters 1-3 |
| July 13-20: | Section 2: Chapters 4-6 |
| July 20-27: | Section 3: Chapters 7,8, 9.1, 10.1-10.3 |
| July 27-Aug 3: | Section 4: Chapter 9.2-9.5, 10.4-10.6, 11 |
| Aug 4: | Final Exam in eCampus |

CIVILITY STATEMENT:

Members of the Blinn College community, which includes faculty, staff and students, are expected to act honestly and responsibly in all aspects of campus life. Blinn College holds all members accountable for their actions and words. Therefore, all members should commit themselves to behave in a manner that recognizes personal respect, and demonstrates concern for the personal dignity, rights, and freedoms of every member of the College community, including respect for College property and the physical and intellectual property of others.

CIVILITY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM:

If a student is asked to leave the classroom because of uncivil behavior, the student may not return to that class until he or she arranges a conference with the instructor; it is the student's responsibility to arrange for this conference.

Please note: This does apply to this Internet class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

There are no excuses to miss class. This is an Internet class and is available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If a situation arises that you feel will cause you to miss several deadlines and generally put you behind in class, PLEASE consider withdrawing from class as I do not grant extensions or exceptions to the classwork for any reason. Yes, the class is available on weekends and holidays.

-TESTS:

There will be 3 tests and a final exam. Each regular test is composed of 70 Multiple Choice and True-False questions. Not 70 of each, 70 total. The questions will come from the textbook (mainly) and from the course content on the website. Each test is worth 100 points. The first three tests will cover the material for only that section. These first three tests will be taken in the eCampus course- and once you take the test for that section, you are **DONE** with that section. These are worth 300 points total.

Again, once you take the test for a section, you are finished with that section. If you did not do any quizzes or written work in that section, you will not get to. They will be recorded as zeros.

The final exam will cover the material since the third test AND material from the previous three tests- it will be comprehensive in other words. The Final Exam will be 75 questions and worth 150 points. All classwork **MUST** be completed before the final is taken. The exception to this is at the end of the semester when the final will be made available to everyone, regardless of what you have or have not done in class. The final is also taken in eCampus and may be taken after all previous tests and quizzes are completed. However, once the final exam has been taken (whenever that is), access to the class **WILL BE DENIED! Be sure you are done with the class BEFORE you take the final! This includes submitting all essay assignments and Homework Posts! When you take the Final, you are telling me you are FINISHED with the class.**

Here are the Chapters the Tests cover:

- Test 1: Chapters 1, 2 and 3
- Test 2: Chapters 4, 5 and 6
- Test 3: Chapters 7-10 (mostly)
- Final: Chapters 9 & 10 (partly), Chapter 11 plus previous materials.

-QUIZZES:

There are two types of quizzes in class- each type has MC & TF questions. The first type is over the textbook. Some chapters cover more than one topic, so there may be multiple quizzes out of the same chapter. The second type is a lecture quiz. This quiz covers the "lecture" parts of the class. There are a total of 5 quizzes for each section and all quizzes count. Each quiz is worth 5 points, so you can earn 100 points for the quizzes.

Note that all quizzes are grouped by test- you will find the quizzes for Chapter 3 in "Section 1" of the class, for example. Remember to take all the quizzes before you take the test for that section!

Your computer problems are NOT an excuse to miss class.

-ESSAYS:

You will be assigned one short essay to write. This is worth 50 points.

The actual assignment will be given in a "dropbox" essay assignment in eCampus. It will be available for the duration of the semester and must be completed by the date shown on the calendar. Late essays are not accepted.

While this is *not* an English class, I expect you to follow all the directions for writing and formatting these essays. There are substantial penalties for not following the basic directions.

-HOMEWORK POSTS:

These are done using the Discussion tool in eCampus. There will be three homework "discussion posts" in each section. Each homework assignment is worth 10 points each. The highest 10 of the 12 will count for this category. The total for the homework category is 100 points.

You will have the time the section is opened (see the calendar) to post to the discussion topic. Due to the amount of grading involved, the homework assignments will "expire" at various times. Each section will indicate the schedule.

Each topic has the full directions of what is required, but basically you will take a position and post your answer. Some of these topics will be based on "boxed features" in the textbook, others may be based on a linked or posted article, and some may be based on videos or other multimedia resource.

While spelling is not strictly enforced, it will lower your grade if there are several spelling errors.

Again, once you take the test for a section, you will not be allowed to do any more work in that section. So be sure you have done your posting and reply before you take the test.

CALENDAR OF MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS:

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| July 6: | First day of classes |
| July 13: | End of Section 1 @ 11:55 PM |
| July 20: | End of Section 2 @ 11:55 PM |
| July 27: | End of Section 3 @ 11:55 PM |
| Aug 3: | End of Section 4, and Essay due @ 11:55 PM |
| Aug 4: | End of Section 4: Final Exam in eCampus |

CRITERIA FOR GRADING:

Your grade will be calculated as follows: I will total the points earned on all the assignments and compare them to the table below- there is a maximum of 700 points available (excluding bonuses):

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|----------------------|---|
| 630 points and over- | grade of "A" and four (4) grade points. |
| 560-629 points- | grade of "B" and three (3) grade points |
| 490-559 points- | grade of "C" and two (2) grade points. |
| 420-489 points- | grade of "D" and one (1) grade point. |
| 419 and below- | grade of "F" and zero (0) grade points. |

If there are extenuating, documented circumstances, a grade of "I" may be assigned, following current Blinn policies. If a student withdraws (drops) from class a grade of "W", "WP", or "WF" will be given, depending on the date of the student's withdrawal and their current grade. **Note:** There may be occasions when points will be added to a student's grade to reward actions above expectations. Points will never be taken away.

OTHER POLICIES:

1. No food or drinks in the classroom.
2. Blinn College does not tolerate cheating, plagiarism or collusion. Procedures for dealing with these acts are outlined in the Scholastic Dishonesty Policy.
3. The right and responsibility to determine the appropriateness of the dress of a particular student lies with the classroom instructor or when the student is outside the classroom, with the immediate supervisor of the building or grounds the student is utilizing. An instructor may require specific, appropriate dress when students are to give classroom presentations or speeches of any type or when representing the College outside the classroom. When an instructor or supervisor informs a student that the clothing s/he is wearing is not appropriate, the student must leave the classroom or other facility until the student changes the clothing or agrees not to wear such clothing again, as the instructor or supervisor directs.
4. All the functions of personal electronic devices designed for communication and/or entertainment (cell phones, pagers, beepers, iPods, and similar devices) must be turned off and kept out of sight in all Blinn College classrooms and associated laboratories. Any noncompliance with this policy will be addressed in accordance with the Blinn College civility policy (Administrative Policy). Additionally, any communication understood by the instructor to be in the nature of cheating will have consequences in accordance with this Blinn College policy section regarding academic dishonesty [FLB (Local)]. Students exempted from this policy section include, active members of firefighting organizations, emergency medical services organizations, commissioned police officers, on-call employees of any political subdivision of the state of Texas, or agencies of the federal government. Exempted students are expected to set the emergency-use devices on silent or vibrate mode only.

Please note: As this is a computer-based Internet class, only the section on cheating (#2 above) applies.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

The College District believes that class attendance is essential for student success; therefore, students are required to promptly and regularly attend all their classes. Each class meeting builds the foundation for subsequent class meetings. Without full participation and regular class attendance, students shall find themselves at a severe disadvantage for achieving success in college. Class participation shall constitute at least ten percent of the final course grade. It is the responsibility of each faculty member, in consultation with the division chair, to determine how participation is achieved in his or her class. Faculty will require students to regularly attend class and will keep a record of attendance from the first day of class and/or the first day the student's name appears on the roster through final examinations. If a student has one week's worth of absences during the semester, he/she will be sent an e-mail by the College requiring the student to contact his/her instructor and schedule a conference immediately to discuss his/her attendance issues. If the student accumulates two weeks worth of absences, he/she will be administratively withdrawn from class.

Absences in this class are counted as follows:

You must complete at least one item per section. This can be a quiz, a test, submitting an essay, or doing the discussion post. You do not have to earn points; you must only complete an item in that section. A "week" in this class is the period a section is open. So, failure to do anything in a section will result in an absence and you will be dropped from the class.

Please note, it is NOT enough to just log in to class, substantive work must be completed or submitted for you to be counted as attending class. Reading the lectures does not count. E-mail does not count. Discussion postings other than the assigned Discussion Posts do not count.

In short, Blinn College is "employing" you in the job of education. As in real life, if you do not show up for work, you can be dismissed for cause. This Blinn College policy allows me to "fire" you when you do not show up for class.

ADA STATEMENT:

Information regarding procedures for documenting disabilities can be obtained from the Counseling Office. Reasonable accommodations will be made for documented disabilities. Students must present documentation as soon as possible for the instructor to arrange accommodation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

There **may** be some extra credit that can be attempted during the semester. More information about these opportunities will be in eCampus.

If I need to revise this document, I'll alert you that it has changed.

Final note, your decisions have consequences. Make positive decisions that have positive results.