

Common Course Syllabus

Government 2305

Revised March 26, 2024

(As required by the Texas Legislature and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board)

Department: Social Sciences

Discipline: Government

Course Number: GOVT 2305

Course Title: Federal Government

Credit: 3 Lecture, 0 Lab

This course partially satisfies a core curriculum requirement: Government/Political Science Foundational Component Area (070)

Available Formats: Conventional (Fully Face-to-Face), Fully Online, Hybrid, ITV

Campus: Levelland, Downtown Center, Plainview, Dual Credit

Textbook: Varies according to instructor. Refer to each instructor's instructions for textbook requirements.

Course Specific Instructions: Each instructor will attach his/her course with specific instructions.

Course Description: Origin and development of the U.S. 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.

Course Objectives addressed:

1. **critical thinking:** to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
2. **communication:** to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
3. **social responsibility:** to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
4. **personal responsibility:** to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

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.

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: A writing assignment rubric will be used to determine the extent of improvement that the students have gained during the semester.

Course Evaluation: See the instructor's course information sheet for specific items used in evaluating student performance.

Attendance Policy: Students must make every effort to attend face-to-face courses. Whenever absences become excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the instructor may recommend that the student withdraw from the course. Each instructor will have additional information about attendance on his/her course information sheet.

Dropping a Course: Students may drop courses through Texan Connect, the Admissions and Records Office, or Advising and Testing Center through the late registration period.

After late registration has closed, a student must complete the online [Student Initiated Drop Request](#) to drop a course.

Students may also drop courses in person at any campus location by completing a Student Initiated Drop Form. Complete a [Student Initiated Drop Form](#) and return the signed form to the Levelland Admissions and Records Office, the Student Support Center at the Lubbock Downtown Center, the Lubbock Career and Technical Center, or Plainview Center. You must have a picture ID to complete the drop.

A mark of "W" will be given for student-initiated drops that occur prior to and through the last day to drop as indicated in the online Academic Calendar found here:
<https://www.southplainscollege.edu/academiccalendar/index.php>.

Syllabus Statements: For information about Artificial Intelligence, Disabilities, Non-Discrimination, Intellectual Exchange, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) Team, Campus Concealed Carry, and COVID-19, please use this link:
<https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/>.

Nelson Course Syllabus GOVT 2305
Federal Government (Federal Constitution and Topics)

Course Description

Origin and development of the U.S. 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.

Instructor

Ms. Be Nelson, M.A.

Email

hnelson@southplainscollege.edu

Office Location & Hours

Room AD132, *Levelland Campus*

(806) 716-2466 (office)

M/W 11AM – NOON

T/TH 2:20PM – 3:50PM

F 9AM – NOON

You may email to schedule a video conference

Course Resources:

O'Connor, Karen, and Larry J. Sabato, *American Government: Roots and Reform 2020 Presidential Election, 14th Edition*. New York (2020): Pearson

TexBook Syllabus Statement:

This course is part of your TexBook program, which means you don't need to purchase a textbook or access code for this course. TexBook is the required content (either an eBook or online Courseware) for your course and is provided for you via the Bibliu platform from Day 1 of class.

- Cost of TexBook: this required content is provided as part of a Program called 'Inclusive Access', which means that content is provided for you at the lowest price available from the publisher. The cost for this is included in your tuition.
- How to access your digital content via Bibliu: you can access your material via the Bibliu link inside your Blackboard Course, or directly via the Bibliu app. If you have issues with this, please contact your professor, the Bookstore Manager or Bibliu Support (see below).
- The Bibliu platform: you can use the Bibliu platform to enhance your learning experience, with features including: highlighting, notes and reading text aloud. For more details and support on how to use Bibliu, please visit the [BibliU support pages](#), or contact Bibliu support via the email: support@bibliu.com
- Opting out: you can Opt-Out of the TexBook Program, up until the Opt-Out deadline, via the banner displayed when you open the Bibliu platform. Remember that Opt-Out deadlines vary by term, and if you choose to Opt-Out you will lose access to this low-price option, and will need to purchase the content through a different method. If you opt-Out, the fee will be refunded to your account.

Useful contacts:

1. Bookstore Manager: Christian Bruno - christian.bruno@bibliu.com
2. Bookstore Text Coordinator: Trish Wells - patricia.wells@bibliu.com
3. Bibliu Support: email support@bibliu.com

Additional Materials: Instructor will provide additional materials from a variety of sources including current event articles.

Course Structure: This online course will include video assignments, readings and reading quizzes, and tests. All materials, including the class required textbook, may be found on or accessed via Blackboard.

Attendance: A consistent and functional internet connection is required for this online-only course. Students are responsible for ensuring that their computers (desktop or laptop) and internet connections operate properly. Technical difficulties do not excuse incomplete or failed assignments. In the event of technical or internet issues affecting graded work, contact the instructor promptly. Tablets or iPads may have limited functionality; access to a desktop or laptop is necessary.

Communication should remain professional and respectful in emails and coursework. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior may result in loss of credit for assignments and referral to the Office of Student Conduct. Instances of racism, sexism, homophobia, or other forms of discrimination are not permitted in this class.

Students are accountable for all information and announcements provided in the course. Logging into Blackboard daily is recommended to check for updates, changes, or new information. The course homepage and announcements should be reviewed regularly. School email should also be checked daily to ensure receipt of communications from the instructor. Course rules and expectations may change. Students are not permitted to print, save, photograph, or otherwise record graded content from this course.

Student Performance: Maintain consistent standards all semester because extra credit is not available, and late catch-up time is limited. **Failure on three consecutive assignments or quizzes may result in being dropped with a failing grade without further notice.** Repeated late submissions can also lead to being dropped at the instructor's discretion. **Quiz 1 and the Ice Breaker Discussion must be completed by September 10, 2025 (census date) or you will be automatically dropped.**

GENERAL POLICIES

- ❖ **Behavior:** Students are expected to be considerate of one another as well as of the instructor. If you need guidance, heed the words of the late Justice Antonin Scalia, "I attack ideas. I don't attack people. And some very good people have some very bad ideas. And if you can't separate the two, you gotta get another day job." Conduct that interferes with other students' right to learn will not be tolerated.
- ❖ **Getting help:** Come see me or email me if you have a problem with readings, lecture, or assignments. If you are having difficulty of any kind **the earlier you ask for help, the easier the solution to your problem will be.** I cannot help if I am unaware. When emailing, please be sure to include your full name, the course number, and section number in the subject line of your email. **Ex. GOVT 2305-152; the course number is 2305, the section number is 152.**
- ❖ **Academic Honesty:** Honesty is the expected standard. **Plagiarism, using AI (artificial intelligence) technology to generate answers, and cheating (copying answers from an outside source or another student) will not be tolerated and can be grounds for dismissal from South Plains College.** Incidents of cheating on examinations will result in failure of the course and potential consequences such as dismissal from South Plains College. If AI use is suspected, the instructor will notify the student via email.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

South Plains College policies concerning Disabilities, Non-discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation), Intellectual Exchange, Campus Concealed Carry, COVID-19, and AI (Artificial Intelligence) can be found here: [Syllabus Statements \(southplainscollege.edu\)](https://southplainscollege.edu).

Student Absence for Observation of Religious Holy Days: A student who is absent from classes for the observation of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence **if, not later than the fifteenth day after the first day of the semester, the student had notified the instructor of each scheduled class that the student would be absent for a religious holy day.**

If you have a disability, please contact me in the first week to discuss accommodations, regardless of whether you have official documentation. If you have any concerns, reach out so we can make a plan together.

Evaluation Method:

Chapter Reading/Pop Quizzes	20%
3 Exams	40%
Video Assignments/Assignments	30%
Discussions (with responses)	10%

Grading: The grading scale will be as follows:

90-100 = A	80-89 = B	70-79 = C	60-69 = D	59 or below = F
------------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------------

You earn your grade; that grade is entered. Grades are updated bi-weekly (sometimes sooner if there is less reading involved).

Quizzes: The instructor will administer quizzes over materials. Should a student miss a chapter reading quiz deadline they will not be allowed to make-up the quiz without instructor approval. You will be allowed up to **TWO** attempts for each quiz for the **average grade** of your attempts (you do not have to take quizzes twice, but this will prevent “peeking” at questions rather than properly preparing).

Assignments: You will receive a manageable number of assignments to deepen your understanding. Late work loses **10 points per day** and will not be accepted **after 5 days** (contact me in special cases). Individual assignments affect your grade more than quizzes, so completing all work is best. Some assignments may take over a week to grade. Expect detailed feedback early on. For questions, email me.

Discussion Threads: Each semester, I post government-related current events discussions. Your initial post should be 500 words and include two cited sources outside class materials. Respond to two classmates with separate 150-word replies. Late work loses **10 points per day** and is not accepted **after 5 days**. Initial posts are usually due before responses so check your deadlines.

Exams: There will be three exams including your final exam. Exams will consist of both multiple-choice questions and short answers. The final will not include short answers, but will have a fill-in-the-blank section for expediency (grades must be turned in quickly at the end of the session). **“Make-up” exams** will be allowed **with prior notification**, but may require documentation. Students wishing to take a make-up exam must apply to the instructor via email. **There will be no “make-ups” for the FINAL EXAM due to time constraints.** However, please contact me in the case of an emergency.

AI (artificial intelligence): If I suspect a student has used AI-generated work, you will receive a zero, be shown evidence, and asked to schedule a video meeting. Your grade will only change if you can explain your answers during the conference. Although artificial intelligence has practical applications, relying on it in place of active class participation does not support meaningful learning objectives.

GETTING ADDITIONAL HELP

SPC Tutors: Tutoring is FREE for all currently enrolled students. Make an appointment or drop-in for help at any SPC location or online! Visit the link below to learn more about how to book an appointment, view the tutoring schedule, and view tutoring locations.

<http://www.southplainscollege.edu/exploreprograms/artsandsciences/teacheredtutoring.php>

Brainfuse:

You also have 180 FREE minutes of tutoring with Brainfuse each week, and your hours reset every Monday morning. Log into Blackboard and click on the tools option from the left-hand menu bar. Click on the Brainfuse link and you will automatically be logged in for free tutoring.

You may access Brainfuse tutors during the following times:

Monday – Thursday: 8PM - 8AM

Friday – Monday morning: 6PM - 8AM

For questions regarding tutoring, please email tutoring@southplainscollege.edu or call 806-716-2241



Tentative Course Schedule for Pacing

The course runs for 16 weeks, with content organized by week for clarity. You can work ahead on assignments and quizzes, but exams will occur during set windows. The schedule may be adjusted as needed.

WK	Topic	Reading	
1	Roots of American Government	Ch. 1 Declaration of Independence	
2-3	The Constitution (Bill of Rights)	Ch. 2 Federalist 10, 51 The U.S. Constitution	
4	The Federal System	Ch. 3	Chapter Quizzes 1-5 ASSIGNMENTS 1-3 DISCUSSION 1-2
5	Civil Liberties	Ch. 4	
6	Civil Rights	Ch. 5	
7	Congress	Ch. 6 Excerpts from Fenno's, <i>Homestyle</i>	EXAM 1
8	The Presidency	Ch. 7 Federalist 70 Neustadt's, "Presidential Power."	
9	The Bureaucracy	Ch. 8 "Constitutional Democracy and Bureaucratic Power."	
11	The Judiciary	Ch. 9 Federalist 78	
11	Public Opinion and Political Socialization	Ch. 10	Chapter Quizzes 6-9 ASSIGNMENTS 4-6 DISCUSSION 3 EXAM 2
12	Political Parties/Interest Groups	Ch. 11/Ch. 14	
13	Campaigns, Elections, & Voting	Ch. 12	
14	The News Media	Ch. 13	
15	Review Week		
16	Finals Week	Will not be cumulative	FINAL (EXAM 3) WEEK OF DECEMBER 8TH

**Please pay attention to due dates. Do not assume they will follow a pattern.*