

**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](mailto:hnelson@southplainscollege.edu)

**Office Location & Hours**

Room AD132, Levelland Campus  
(806) 716-2466 (office)

M/W 11AM – NOON

T/TH 2:20PM – 4:20 PM

F 9AM – 11AM

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, 14<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto:christian.bruno@bibliu.com)
2. Bookstore Text Coordinator: Trish Wells - [patricia.wells@bibliu.com](mailto:patricia.wells@bibliu.com)
3. Bibliu Support: email [support@bibliu.com](mailto: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:** You must have a consistent, functioning internet connection to take this course. As this is an online-only course, you are required to have access to the internet. It is your responsibility to ensure that your computer (desktop or laptop) and connection are functioning properly. Technical problems are never an excuse for failed or incomplete work. If you experience a technical or internet issue that affects your graded work, contact me immediately.

Always maintain professional and respectful language, both in emails and in your online coursework. Any disruptive or disrespectful behavior will result in a loss of credit for the assignment and possibly a referral to the Office of Student Conduct. Racism, sexism, homophobia, or any other forms of bigotry are not acceptable in this class.

You are responsible for all information and announcements made in the course. Prepare to log onto Blackboard every day to check for updates, changes, or new information. Read the course home page thoroughly and check announcements daily. Also, be sure that you check your school email daily so that you do not miss any communication from the instructor. Course rules and expectations are subject to change. Students may not print, save, photograph, or make any record of graded content in this course.

**Student Performance:** You must maintain your standards throughout the duration of the semester. There will be no extra credit and there will be little time for playing “catch-up.” **If you fail three (3) consecutive assignments or reading quizzes, you may be dropped from the class with a failing grade with no further warning.** If you repeatedly fail to submit required work on time, you may be dropped from the class at the discretion of the instructor. **You must complete Quiz 1 and the Ice Breaker Discussion by January 29th, 2025, the census date, or you will be automatically dropped from the course.**

## **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 2305-151; the course number is 2305, the section number is 151.**
- ❖ **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

For information regarding Intellectual Exchange, Disabilities, Non-Discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) Team, and Campus Concealed Carry, please use the following link: [Syllabus Statements \(southplainscollege.edu\)](http://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.**

**\*\*\*I will accommodate students who have the appropriate documentation of disability. Documented or not; however, contact me during the first week of class to discuss our plan of action.\*\*\***

### Evaluation Method:

Chapter Reading Quizzes	20%
3 Exams	35%
Video Assignments/Assignments	30%
Discussions (with responses)	15%

### Grading: The grading scale will be as follows:

90-100 = A	80-89 = B	70-79 = C	60-69 = D	59 or below = F
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**You earn your grade; I enter that grade.**

**Quizzes:** The instructor will administer quizzes over materials. Should a student miss a 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 those from trying to “preview” questions rather than properly preparing).

**Assignments:** There will be a reasonable amount of assignments in this class (not all will require the same amount of effort). These assignments are designed to expand student understanding and knowledge. Late assignments will receive deductions of **10 points each day late** and **will not be accepted after 5 days (always contact me if there are extenuating circumstances)**. Remember that individual assignments/discussions will have a greater impact on your grade than missing a single quiz. It would always be best to complete all assignments rather than attempt to offset a zero in these categories of evaluation. Please be advised, depending on the length of an assignment, it may take me more than a week to grade certain assignments. Feedback starts out heavier in the beginning of this course. If you have any questions or concerns, please just send an email to me.

**Discussion Threads:** Every semester I create a discussion thread to discuss current events related to government. Carefully read the handout (on blackboard with your first discussion) detailing discussions and how to receive full credit. Discussions consist of an initial post of 500 words and must include at least two outside sources of information (outside of class materials...that’s right, research a little). You must also complete two fully developed 150-word responses to two different classmates. As with assignments, an automatic deduction of **10 points will be assessed each day late and will not be accepted after 5 days**. Initial posts will typically be due a couple of days before the responses. Pay attention to due dates.

**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 that a student has submitted artificially generated discussions, assignments, or test answers, you will receive a zero for your work, evidence of AI detection, and a notice requesting a conference. Whether you attend class in-person or online, you will be required to meet with me via video conference. If you fail to set up a meeting, your grade will remain a zero. You will be given the opportunity to verbally respond to questions. If you can explain your answers, I will update your grade. While AI is useful, it is silly to attend a class where you have no intention of learning.

## **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>

### **Tutor.com**

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

Monday – Thursday: 8pm-8am, Friday: 6pm – 8am Monday morning.

**For questions regarding tutoring, please email [tutoring@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:tutoring@southplainscollege.edu) or call 806-716-2538.**



### Tentative Course Schedule for Pacing

This course takes place across 16 weeks. I will separate your course content by weeks to help you stay organized. You may jump ahead on assignments and quizzes, but exams will have a scheduled window. Please be advised that this is tentative meaning that I may adjust this schedule as needed.

<b>WK</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	
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	<b>Quizzes 1-5</b> <b>ASSIGNMENTS 1-3</b> <b>DISCUSSION 1-2</b> <b>EXAM 1</b>
5	Civil Liberties	Ch. 4	
6	Civil Rights	Ch. 5	
7	Congress	Ch. 6 Excerpts from Fenno's, <i>Homestyle</i>	
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	<b>Quizzes 6-9</b> <b>ASSIGNMENTS 4-6</b> <b>DISCUSSION 3</b> <b>EXAM 2</b>
11	Public Opinion and Political Socialization	Ch. 10	
12	Political Parties/Interest Groups	Ch. 11/Ch. 14	
13	Campaigns, Elections, & Voting	Ch. 12	<b>Quizzes 10-14</b> <b>ASSIGNMENT 7</b> <b>DISCUSSION 4</b>
14	The News Media	Ch. 13	
15	<b>Dead Week</b>		<b>FINAL (EXAM 3)</b> <b>WEEK OF MAY 5TH</b>
16	<b>Finals Week</b>	<b>Will not be cumulative</b>	

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