



**NORTHEAST TEXAS**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## Federal Government - 2305

Course Syllabus: Fall 2019

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*"Northeast Texas Community College exists to provide responsible, exemplary learning opportunities."*

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Office Hours	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Online
	By Appointment	By Appointment	By Appointment	By Appointment		By Appointment

*The information contained in this syllabus is subject to change without notice. Students are expected to be aware of any additional course policies presented by the instructor during the course.*

**Course Description:** 3 credit hours.

Lecture/Lab/Clinical: Three hours of class each week.

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.

**Class Description:** This course is intended to introduce you to the basic theory, structure, and practices of American government. This course will not transform you into a political scientist; however, it will familiarize you with the context about which political scientist – and more importantly politicians – speak and write.

The course is designed to aid and help develop your understanding of the differences among political beliefs. Forming your own political opinion is essential at a time when the labels “liberal” and “conservative,” “left” and “right” are hurled about on a daily basis. Such terms can be baffling, and cause an unpleasant situation to transpire in coffee shops, barber shops, etc. It is important that you develop your own political ideology – the ideas people have about what government should or should not do and what kind of government they should have.

The objective of this course is not designed to make learners Democrats, Republicans, Independents, liberals or conservatives. They are knowledgeable of, and critical thinking about American politics and government. Additionally, to educate that promotes self-confidence in your abilities to participate in your national government. Knowledge leads to confidence and most likely will ensure your participation. If you don’t participate then you have no legitimate rights to complain about the activities of your national government.

You should gain the knowledge of the structure and processes taken by your national government to enact legislation which ultimately will lead to policies and programs that affect social, political and economic behavior. You should learn to think critically about what your government is or is not doing for you and the rest of society and what society can do to shape outcomes.

## Required Textbook(s):

This class will utilize free online textbooks from the following sites:

US History.org: <http://www.ushistory.org/gov/index.asp>

This Nation: <http://www.thisnation.com/textbook>

Links will also be available on the course Blackboard site with regards to assigned lesson materials.

You may also use these free online textbooks that are currently available via the Web:

Openstax by Rice University: <http://cnx.org/contents/W8wOWXNF@15.1:Y1CfqFju@8/Preface>

USHistory.org: <http://www.ushistory.org/gov/>

Florida.theorangegrove.org: [https://florida.theorangegrove.org/og/file/2e74506d-6095-0531-a2fb-b04504b885bd/1/9781616101633\\_LenzHolman.pdf](https://florida.theorangegrove.org/og/file/2e74506d-6095-0531-a2fb-b04504b885bd/1/9781616101633_LenzHolman.pdf)

**Recommended Reading(s):** Dallas Morning News, Wall Street Journal, other newspapers, political magazines, view FOX, CNN, Texas Observer, Politico or other television news programs and the internet.

Resource Material

<http://www.politico.com>

<http://www.drudgereport.com>

[www.realpolitics.com](http://www.realpolitics.com)

Twitter: @AmGovNTCC\_Smith

## Student Learning Outcomes:

The general objective of this course is to introduce American National government issues and to teach basic tools of analysis. More specifically, the goals of the course are listed below:

1. Analyze American National government.
2. Analyze the constitutional basis for your federal government.
3. Analyze and understand the processes of American National politics and government, and the institutions of American National politics and government.
4. To help you develop good methods in thinking about national public policy issues. This involves specific attention to the process of orderly problem solving by:
  - a. Carefully defining the issue.
  - b. Mapping out the main alternative ways of achieving the stated objectives.
  - c. Carefully analyzing the alternative approaches, and using the appropriate analytical concepts and principles to decide which alternatives or combination of alternatives best "solves" the problem.
  - d. Checking the "solution" reached, both for flaws in reasoning and, where feasible, against experience in comparable situations.
5. To help you learn to evaluate and use both qualitative and quantitative evidence when conflicting viewpoints and approaches are encountered.

## Course Objectives:

The purpose of the course is to acquaint the student with the American government. The student will be introduced to: (a) a framework for analyzing United States politics and government; (b) the constitutional basis for American government; (c) the processes of American politics and government; (d) the institutions of American politics and government; (e) policies of American government.

## Lessons, Lectures & Discussions:

### Topics of Discussion

Week of August 26 - 30	Intro & Expectations; American Political Culture; What is Politics? (Reading posted within Blackboard course site.)
Week of September 2-6	Constitutional Democracy; Federalism; Why Government; Civil Liberties (Reading posted within Blackboard course site.)
Week of September 9 - 13	Equal Rights; Participation; Political Parties; Media; Interest Groups (Reading posted within Blackboard course site.)
Week of September 16 - 20	Congress; Legislative Branch (Reading posted within Blackboard course site.)

### September 17, 2019 MID-TERM EXAM

Week of September 23 - 27	Presidency; Executive Branch; Federal Bureaucracy (Reading posted within Blackboard course site.)
Week of Sept. 30 – Oct. 4	Judicial Branch (Reading posted within Blackboard course site.)
Week of October 7 - 11	Judicial Branch; Economic & Environmental Public Policy (Reading posted within Blackboard course site.)
Week of October 14 - 15	Welfare, Education, Foreign and Defense Public Policy (Reading posted within Blackboard course site.)

### October 15, 2019 FINAL EXAM

## Evaluation/Grading Policy:

Quizzes (5x20 points each)	100 points
Political Position Assignments (4x25 points each)	100 points
Mid-Term Exam	150 points
Final Exam	<u>150 points</u>
Total Points	500 points

**448 - 500 points = A**  
**398 - 447 points = B**  
**348 - 397 points = C**  
**298 - 347 points = D**  
**000 - 297 points = F**

## Late Assignment Penalties

Past Due 5 Days:	Deduct 50 points from assignment
More than 5 Days:	Zero points for assignment

## Attendance

You are urged to attend class each day. A significant portion of each examination is drawn from the classroom material. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain the information missed and see that your assignments are submitted by due dates. If you decide to attend class you must attend the entire class period, unless other arrangements are made prior to class with the instructor. Students who simply arrive in class to hand in an assignment and then leave class will receive a zero on the assignment. Attendance is part of the participation grade.

Missing more than two class meetings will reduce your grade in the course by a full letter grade (i.e. A to B, B to C, C to D, and D to F).

## **Tests/Exams:**

Exams – Two

Mid-Term Exam and Final Exam.

[Make-Up Examinations]

All students are expected to take the examinations on the scheduled dates and times. Only University approved excuses will be an acceptable reason for a student missing an exam. A student who misses an examination without notifying the instructor prior to the examination and receiving my permission to miss the exam will be assigned a grade of zero.

## **Assignments:**

### **Course Requirements**

A. Class Discussion and Participation – Each student has the responsibility to prepare for each class by reading the assigned material and completing all assignments. All students should be prepared to participate in class discussions of the assigned material. You will be exposed to a variety of opinions that may differ from your own. Respect those opinions and use them to help you reflect on why people hold different views. Class attendance is a part of class participation (if you do not attend you cannot participate).

FYI: Attendance is noted without a required roll call.

B. Political Position Research Assignments – The assignment involves researching assigned political position topics and preparing a Power Point or Policy Paper presentation (Instructor will assign in class).

- The presentation will contain no more than 20 slides per issue (Power Point assignment) and no more than three pages (Policy Paper essay assignment) with proper APA, MLA, etc. format research citations. The final slide will contain your research sources and citations that support your position, views, and opinions. Policy Paper assignments will have a bibliography which is not one of the three pages. The assignment will have a minimum of eight (8) research sources (Wikipedia is not an acceptable source), and be coherently written. The slides or policy paper should be written using correct grammar and punctuation. Format: Typed with a 12 pt. font and double spaced.

- Students are expected to follow the standard format for references and citations. In addition, the student should be aware that plagiarism will not be tolerated.

- Additional information and topics are provided under Political Position Assignment.

C. Quizzes – Five (5) random quizzes throughout the term with each worth 10 points (5 X 20 = 100 points). NO MAKEUP QUIZ WILL BE ADMINISTERED IF ONE IS MISSED.

D. Exams – Two

Mid-Term Exam and Final Exam.

[Make-Up Examinations]

All students are expected to take the examinations on the scheduled dates and times. Only University approved excuses will be an acceptable reason for a student missing an exam. A student who misses an examination without notifying the instructor prior to the examination and receiving my permission to miss the exam will be assigned a grade of zero.

## **Student Responsibilities/Expectations:**

### **Class Attendance**

You are urged to attend class each day. A significant portion of each examination is drawn from the classroom material. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain the information missed and see that your assignments are submitted by due dates. If you decide to attend class you must attend the entire class period, unless other arrangements are made prior to class with the instructor. Students who simply arrive in class to hand in an assignment and then leave class will receive a zero on the assignment. Attendance is part of the participation grade.

Since the lecture-discussion method will be employed in this class, regular attendance is highly encouraged. Students who discontinue attending class will be given an "F" unless they officially withdraw from the course.

Missing more than three class meetings will reduce your grade in the course by a full letter grade (i.e. A to B, B to C, C to D, and D to F).

### **TWO KEYS**

1. **Completing the assigned readings, problems and turning in the assignments in a professional manner on time.**
2. **"Believing in yourself and never entertaining the thought of giving up or being unsuccessful." The ability to stick with it, to persevere, to never quit will put you in a position to be successful.**

### **Cell Phones**

All phones should be OFF/Vibrate while classroom instruction is taking place. If a phone rings while attending class an automatic 10 points will be deducted from the overall final grade total. If the same student phone rings twice during the term there will be a 50-point deduction from the overall final grade total. Each additional time will be a 100-point deduction from the overall final grade total. The same applies to text messaging. **BOTTOM LINE – PHONES OFF. TEXTING IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.**

### **NTCC Academic Honesty Statement:**

"Students are expected to complete course work in an honest manner, using their intellects and resources designated as allowable by the course instructor. Students are responsible for addressing questions about allowable resources with the course instructor. NTCC upholds the highest standards of academic integrity. This course will follow the NTCC Academic Honesty policy stated in the Student Handbook."

### **Academic Ethics:**

The college expects all students to engage in academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuit. Academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, and collusion is unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action. Refer to the student handbook for more information on this subject.

### **ADA Statement:**

It is the policy of NTCC to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals who are students with disabilities. This College will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required affording equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations. An appointment can be made with Katherine Belew, Academic Advisor/Coordinator of Special Populations located in the Student Services. She can be reached at 903-434-8218. For more information and to obtain a copy of the Request for Accommodations, please refer to the [NTCC website - Special Populations](#).

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's educational records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are considered "eligible students." In essence, a parent has no legal right to obtain information concerning the child's college records without the written consent of the student. In compliance with FERPA, information classified as "directory information" may be released to the general public without the written consent of the student unless the student makes a request in writing. Directory information is defined as: the student's name, permanent address and/or local address, telephone listing, dates of attendance, most recent previous educational institution attended, other information including major, the field of study, degrees, awards received, and participation in officially recognized activities/sports.

## **KEY DATES**

Weekly	Outside Reading and Discussion Assignments (Check Blackboard Class Site); Weekly Written Lesson Assignments
September 17, 2019	Mid-Term Exam
As Assigned	Political Position Assignments
October 15, 2019	Final Exam

## **PET PEEVES**

Everyone has one or two pet peeves, and instructors are no exception. Author Marjorie Hansen Shaevitiz lists these annoyances specific to dealing with students - avoid doing them, not just because it's the right thing to do but because you don't want to be that guy or girl. Pet Peeves include:

- 1) Not having read the assigned reading prior to class and, therefore, not being able to respond appropriately when called upon by an instructor.
- 2) Talking in class or being otherwise interruptive.
- 3) Playing games or surfing the Web on any electronic device.
- 4) A cell phone ringing.
- 5) Asking inappropriate or self-serving questions. Examples: "What do I need to know to get an A on this test?" or "Is this going to be on the exam?" Or even worse, earning poor grades and then saying, "I really need to have a good grade in this class; would you change it?"

## **POLITICAL POSITION ASSIGNMENT**

Purpose: The purpose of the Political Position Assignment is threefold: to give the student an opportunity to explore issues in American government, to give the student experience in preparing an annotated bibliography and organizing a compare and contrast Power Point or Political Position presentation, and to assist the student in developing his or her research, analytical, and presentation skills. Unlike a novel, history book, or scientific publication, essays provide you with the versatility to express all the various facets that make you YOU. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, essays have served as a means of connection: a way to persuade others to a certain perspective, a medium to tell a story, convey a point and a written record of individual and national histories. Everything we prepare is a learning experience, and we teach ourselves as we explain things to others.

For more information:

<http://uwf.edu/writelab/handouts/comparisoncontrast/>  
<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/comparing-and-contrasting/>  
<http://researchpaperwriting.info/archives/compare-and-contrast-ideas-for-research-paper-writing/>  
[http://www.wju.edu/arc/handouts/compare\\_contr.pdf](http://www.wju.edu/arc/handouts/compare_contr.pdf)

TOPICS: Assigned by Instructor.

**Deadlines: Political Position Assignments are due per instructor instructions as assigned (Power Point or Political Position paper).**