



WACO, TEXAS

**COURSE SYLLABUS
AND
INSTRUCTOR PLAN**

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

GOVT 2305.025

LARRY G. SALAZAR

NOTE: This is a 16-week course.

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Course Description:

This course will cover the 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.

Prerequisites and/or Corequisites:

Prerequisite: Must have passed the reading portion of the TSI or credit for INRW 0402.

Recommended: Sophomore standing or completion of HIST 1301 and 1302 recommended.

Corequisite: May be taken before or after GOVT 2306 (or simultaneously).

Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations:

This course will be taught as indicated in the MCC Course Catalog. Therefore, you do not have to have any prior knowledge of government, but the course will be taught as if the student has successfully completed HIST 1301 and 1302. This will not be required, however. Also, students should have basic computer knowledge and skills in order to successfully navigate online.

Instructor Information:

Instructor Name: Larry G. Salazar

MCC E-mail: lsalazar@mclennan.edu

Office Phone Number: (254) 299-8958

Office Location: MAC 311

Office/Teacher Conference Hours: MTWR 7:00-8:00, F 7:00-11:00 (virtual), & by appointment

Other Instruction Information: <https://mclennan.zoom.us/j/2542998958>

Required Text & Materials:

Title: *American Democracy Now*

Authors: Harrison, Harris & Deardorff {hereinafter Harrison}

Edition: 8th

Publisher: McGraw Hill

ISBN: 978-1-264-55983-1 (MCC Custom Version) -OR- 978-1-264-39423-4 (Normal Version)

MCC Bookstore Website: <http://www.mclennan.edu/bookstore/>

Methods of Teaching and Learning:

Power Point presentations are given in class daily with a narrative from the instructor. Each week will end with some type of “assignment,” whether it be a discussion board posting, a quiz, or an examination. The discussion boards provide an opportunity for students to provide personal input into the subject matter discussed that week. Quizzes will cover only the current events covered during that particular section and are designed to assess learning. Examinations proctored by the instructor are required. All grades are based upon successful completion of the material within the required time limit.

Course Objectives and/or Competencies:

This course is designed to examine the key elements and components of the U.S. political system. We analyze the political and cultural milieu that surrounds the American political process and examine how that has an impact on subsequent policy outcomes. The framework for evaluating our unique federal and state structure considers the external players of the political game who have access and influence over the political decision-making process including: the media, interest groups, lobbyists, and political parties. We examine in detail the role of campaigns and elections in securing a representative government and question whether these external players subvert or enhance the policymaking process. Furthermore, we analyze the civil rights and civil liberties granted to individuals through the Constitution and Supreme Court.

Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states. Courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.

- **Critical Thinking Skills (CT):** “to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.”
- **Communication Skills (COMM):** “to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.”
- **Social Responsibility (SR):** “to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.”
- **Personal Responsibility (PR):** “to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.”

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the 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 in the political system.
6. Analyze the election process.
7. Describe the right and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

Technical Support:

For technical support, please do one of the following:

- contact the Information Systems and Services Help Desk at (254) 299-8077
- e-mail the Information Systems and Services Help Desk at helpdesk@mclennan.edu

Other Links of Possible Interest:

- MCC Library: <http://www.mclennan.edu/library>
- Student Support Services: <http://www.mclennan.edu/students/ssc>

Course Attendance/Participation Guidelines:

If a student is not in attendance in accordance with the policies/guidelines of the class as outlined in the course syllabus as of the course census date, faculty are required to drop students from their class roster prior to certifying the respective class roster. A student's financial aid will be re-evaluated accordingly and the student will only receive funding for those courses attended as of the course census date.

Before the 60% point of the semester, a student who is absent for 25% or more of a face-to-face or blended course or who miss 25% or more of assigned work for an online course will be withdrawn from the course with a grade of W. A student may also request to be withdrawn with a grade of W before the 60% point of the semester. After the 60% point of the semester, the student may request to be withdrawn if the student is passing, or be assigned the final grade earned at the end of the semester after grades have been updated to reflect missing work.

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Course Outline or Schedule:

This course outline is subject to change. Instructor will notify students during class and will attempt to make an announcement on Brightspace upon any changes necessary during the course semester. Students are responsible for staying up-to-date with any changes made.

Brief Course Outline:

Exam# 1 (The American System: 50 Multiple-Choice Questions)

- Chapter 1: People, Politics, and Participation
- Chapter 2: The Constitution
- Chapter 3: Federalism
- Chapter 7: Interest Groups (Time Permitting*)
- Chapter 8: Political Parties (Time Permitting*)

Exam# 2 (Political Institutions and Civil Rights & Liberties: 50 Multiple-Choice Questions)

- Chapter 12: Congress
- Chapter 13: The Presidency
- Chapter 15: The Judiciary
- Chapter 4: Civil Liberties
- Chapter 5: Civil Rights (Time Permitting*)

Tentative Course Outline

Week / Class Cancellations	Reading(s) for the Week	Assignments, Quizzes, & Exams
August 21 – August 27	Syllabus / Meet Your Instructor Introduction to Politics	Log onto Brightspace / Introduce Yourself (Google Classroom)
August 28 – September 3	Introduction to Politics (cont.) & Harrison Chapter 1	
September 4 – September 10 MCC CLOSED: SEPTEMBER 4	Harrison Chapter 2	Quiz# 1: Thursday, September 7
September 11 – September 17	Harrison Chapter 3	
September 18 – September 24	Harrison Chapter 7	

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Week / Class Cancellations	Reading(s) for the Week	Assignments, Quizzes, & Exams
September 25 – October 1	Harrison Chapter 8	Quiz# 2: Tuesday, September 26
October 2 – October 8	Slack / Review for Exam# 1	
October 9 – October 15		Exam# 1: Tuesday, October 10 Chapters 1, 2, 3, 7*, & 8* of Harrison
October 16 – October 22	Harrison Chapter 12	Quiz# 3: Tuesday, October 19
October 23 – October 29	Harrison Chapter 13	
October 30 – November 5	Harrison Chapter 15	Quiz# 4: Thursday, November 2
November 6 – November 12 MCC CLOSED: APRIL 7	Harrison Chapter 4	
November 13 – November 19	Harrison Chapter 4 (cont.)	
November 20 – November 26	Harrison Chapter 4 (cont.)	Quiz# 5: Tuesday, November 21
November 27 – December 3	Harrison Chapter 5	Book Review Due: Thursday, Nov. 30 Make-up Exams (As Necessary) & Course Evaluations
December 4 – December 7	Review for Exam# 3	Final Exam: Thursday, Dec. 7 th (8:00 – 10:00) Chapters 4, 5*, 12, 13, & 15 of Harrison

Course Grading Information:

Exams: There will be two required exams (including the final) in this class. Both of the exams will be non-cumulative and comprised of fifty multiple-choice questions. Both in-class exams will be taken “electronically,” via Google Forms. Test questions will potentially come from the textbook, class lectures, and possibly from current events—be prepared for questions from all three areas. Each exam will be worth 250 points of your course grade, or effectively, they will combine for 500 points of your total course grade!

Quizzes: During the course of the semester, there will be five short “pop quizzes” of ten multiple-choice questions based off of current events discussed in class (typically in the form of

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relevant articles discussed within the *CNN* website) or relevant lecture material from the previous classes. At the beginning of each class, I will discuss any current events worth mentioning, from such websites as *CNN* and/or *Fox News*. I will include a link on Google Classroom to each article discussed in class. These are designed to get you to pay more attention to current events on a daily basis—which is a vital part to understanding how the national government operates on a national and global level. Based on these current events, the current events quizzes will be given at the *end* of each class that they will be given. {see *Tentative Course Outline*} These will also be taken “electronically,” via Quizizz. Each of these “pop quizzes” will be worth fifty points of your total course grade, or effectively, they will combine for 200 points of your total course grade, because your lowest quiz grade will be dropped!

Book Review: Each student will be responsible for **one** scholarly book review. In each unit, there will only be one option provided for students to select from this semester. In exchange, it will be due on the last day of class before the final exam. {see *Tentative Course Outline*} The book review is designed to give you access to additional outside material in order for you to broaden your understanding and interest in some aspect of the course. In the book review, you should be able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the work and how it relates to class. The instructions for the book review will be given on Google Classroom; please submit it there by the due date! The book review will encompass another 200 points (20%) of your total course grade.

Attendance & Participation: Your attendance and participation grade is calculated as a combined score worth the remaining 100 points (10%) of your total course grade. A portion of this will be based off of occasional discussion postings that will be given on Brightspace that will allow each student an opportunity to discuss his or her opinion more thoroughly. These postings might be from something in the lecture material or something entirely abstract that *relates* to the material being discussed. Information provided with sources will be highly encouraged and given potential bonus points. Otherwise, opinions will suffice for the most part, but please consider your answer carefully for each discussion posting. While these are designed to encourage discussion among classmates on a topic, they should **NOT** turn into an argument.

According to MCC policy, students may not miss more than 25% of the required classes. If this occurs, students may be administratively dropped from the course for “non-attendance.” Meanwhile, your attendance grade is calculated as the percentage of the classes that you have attended. That means if you only come to half of the classes, you receive a 50% for that portion of the grade. But, I will always reward hard work, so... students that miss no more than one class will receive an additional thirty (30) bonus points on their *entire course grade*.

Grade Breakdown:

Exam 1 (Midterm):	250	A = 900-1000+
Exam 2 (Final):	250	B = 800-899
Quizzes (Top 4 @ 50):	200	C = 700-799
Book Review:	200	D = 600-699
<u>Attendance & Participation:</u>	<u>100</u>	F = 599 or less
Total Points:	1000	W or I = as appropriate

THE FIRST TIME YOU RECEIVE A GRADE THAT YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH – GET IN TO SEE ME IMMEDIATELY!

Too frequently, students wait until the end of the semester to try to rectify poor grades received throughout the term. I am here to help, so utilize me. However, once all the grades are said and done there is not much that I can do. But if you get with me earlier in the semester, chances are that grades can be rectified. Remember, there is no stupid question!

Late Work, Attendance, and Make-Up Work Policies:

Late quizzes will not be allowed for any reason. However, as previously mentioned, you will be allowed to drop your lowest quiz grade. You can only take exams early if you have an approved absence in advance. Early exams will be given at an agreed upon date, time, and location between the instructor and student. You cannot take an exam after the exam day unless it is approved by me in advance in writing (email). In the event that this occurs, you must have a copy of an email granting you permission to do so before you will be given the exam. If you cannot take the exam while it is given to the entire class, you will have to take a Make-Up Exam on your own time during the week before finals week at an agreed upon date, time, and location between the instructor and student. You may **NOT** have more than one make-up exam. All make-up exams will be comprised of two *essay questions* from the section you missed. So, please don't miss a scheduled examination!

Student Behavioral Expectations or Conduct Policy:

Attendance: We will cover a great deal of information in each class lecture, and I use the lectures to emphasize key areas that you should study. Attendance will be taken 10 - 15 minutes after class starts each day. Those students who have not arrived in class and signed the attendance sheet by the time the sheets go out are counted absent for the day. Beginning the second week of class, I will start to send around attendance sheets. It is YOUR responsibility to sign the attendance sheet next to your assigned seat. Everyone must sign up for a seat because it helps me

"find you" during class, it is used for attendance, and it is used for returning your graded assignments. Please "scope out" where you would like to sit within the first two days of class. This will comprise ten percent of your total average. Furthermore, given that much of the material for tests is drawn from the lectures, your attendance is essential to do well in this class. Additionally, I will not excuse ANY absence unless it is a university excused absence.

Finally, it is in your best interest to attend class. Why? It's simple:

There is a strong correlation with low semester grades and high absenteeism.

Classroom Behavior: There are several classroom policies regarding classroom behavior in order to provide the most learning conducive environment possible. If you are late to class, please take your seat as quietly as possible, regardless of where you sit. If you must leave early please clear it through me at the beginning of class to get that approved. If you simply get up and leave during class without prior approval, you will be counted absent for that day. The use of cell-phones, pagers, and other "noise-making" devices will NOT be tolerated. Please turn them off, switch them to "silent" or "vibrate" mode, as applicable, before entering class, or simply leave them at home. Contrarily, students MAY use laptop computers or audiotapes during lectures. However, I reserve the right to revoke the privilege of using the previous devices if it interferes with the classroom environment or if it is disruptive. Finally, if you must sleep during class, please do so quietly. Students who have complaints about others' disruptive behavior should first talk to me about the problem, then, if necessary, the classmate who is causing trouble. The potential sanctions for persons who disrupt class or their neighbors include moving you to a different seat, asking you to leave the class for the day, dropping you from the course entirely, to giving you an "F" for the course. So, please don't interrupt class.

Technology Requirement: Everyone must use e-mail, the Internet, Google Classroom, and Brightspace in this course, for a variety of reasons. I have found that this encourages students to communicate with me regarding class materials. You will need your MCC login and password in order to access the course on Brightspace. All students registered for the class have been added. You are responsible for any announcement, assignments, or other information that I distribute on Brightspace. Additionally, I will post your grades on Brightspace so that you can keep track of them easier. Check these regularly (*i.e.*, at least once a week) to help ensure sure that all of your grades are accurate. It is much easier to fix a problem early on than at the end of the semester.

* [Click Here for the MCC Attendance/Absences Policy](https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html)

([**https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html**](https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html))

Click on the link above for the college policies on attendance and absences. Your instructor may have guidelines specific to this course.

* *You will need to access each link separately through your Web browser (for example: Mozilla Firefox, Chrome, Microsoft Edge, or Safari) to print each link's information.*

Updated 07/18/2023



ACADEMIC RESOURCES/POLICIES

Accommodations/ADA Statement:

Any student who is a qualified individual with a disability may request reasonable accommodations to assist with providing equal access to educational opportunities. Students should contact the Accommodations Coordinator as soon as possible to provide documentation and make necessary arrangements. Once that process is completed, appropriate verification will be provided to the student and instructor. Please note that instructors are not required to provide classroom accommodations to students until appropriate verification has been provided by the Accommodations Coordinator. For additional information, please visit www.mclennan.edu/disability.

Students with questions or who require assistance with disabilities involving physical, classroom, or testing accommodations should contact:

disabilities@mclennan.edu 2542998122 Room
319, Student Services Center

Title IX:

We care about your safety, and value an environment where students and instructors can successfully teach and learn together. If you or someone you know experiences unwelcomed behavior, we are here to help. Individuals who would like to report an incident of sexual misconduct are encouraged to immediately contact the acting Title IX Coordinator at titleix@mclennan.edu or by calling, Dr. Claudette Jackson, (Accommodations/Title IX) at (254) 299-8465. MCC employees are mandatory reporters and must report incidents immediately to the Title IX Coordinator. Individuals may also contact the MCC Police Department at (254) 299-8911 or the MCC Student Counseling Center at (254) 299-8210. The MCC Student Counseling Center is a

confidential resource for students. Any student or employee may report sexual harassment anonymously by visiting <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/mclennan/>. Go to McLennan's Title IX webpage at www.mclennan.edu/titleix/. It contains more information about definitions, reporting, confidentiality, resources, and what to do if you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct, gender-based violence or the crimes of rape, acquaintance rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, dating violence, or domestic violence.

Student Support/Resources:

MCC provides a variety of services to support student success in the classroom and in your academic pursuits to include counseling, tutors, technology help desk, advising, financial aid, etc. A listing of these and the many other services available to our students is available at <http://www.mclennan.edu/campus-resource-guide/>

Academic Support and Tutoring is here to help students with all their course-related needs. Specializing in one-on-one tutoring, developing study skills, and effectively writing essays. Academic Support and Tutoring can be found in the Library and main floor of the Learning Commons. This service is available to students in person or through Zoom. You can contact the Academic Support and Tutoring team via Zoom or email (ast@mclennan.edu) by going to our website (<https://www.mclennan.edu/academic-support-and-tutoring/>).

College personnel recognize that food, housing, and transportation are essential for student success. If you are having trouble securing these resources or want to explore strategies for balancing life and school, we encourage you to contact either MCC CREW – Campus Resources Education Web by calling (254) 299-8561 or by emailing crew@mclennan.edu or a Success Coach by calling (254) 299-8226 or emailing SuccessCoach@mclennan.edu. Both are located in the Completion Center located on the second floor of the Student Services Center (SSC) which is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) provides free food by appointment to students, faculty and staff. To schedule an appointment, go to https://mclennan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_07byXd7eB8iTqJg. Both the Completion Center and Paulanne's Pantry are located on the second floor of the Student Services Center (SSC).

MCC Foundation Emergency Grant Fund:

Unanticipated expenses, such as car repairs, medical bills, housing, or job loss can affect us all. Should an unexpected expense arise, the MCC Foundation has an emergency grant fund that may be able to assist you. Please go to

<https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/scholarships-and-resources/emergencygrant.html>

to find out more about the emergency grant. The application can be found at

https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/docs/Emergency_Grant_Application.pdf.

MCC Academic Integrity Statement:

Go to www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity for information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating. The unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI) for classwork can be a violation of the College's General Conduct Policy. Whether AI is authorized in a course and the parameters in which AI can be used in a course will be outlined by each instructor.

Minimum System Requirements to Utilize MCC's D2L|Brightspace:

Go to <https://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teachingandlearning/FacultyandStaffCommons/requirements.html> for information on the minimum system requirements needed to reliably access your courses in MCC's D2L|Brightspace learning management system.

Minimum Technical Skills:

Students should have basic computer skills, knowledge of word processing software, and a basic understanding of how to use search engines and common web browsers.

Backup Plan for Technology:

In the event MCC's technology systems are down, you will be notified via your MCC student email address. Please note that all assignments and activities will be due on the date specified in the Instructor Plan, unless otherwise noted by the instructor.

Email Policy:

McLennan Community College would like to remind you of the policy (<http://www.mclennan.edu/employees/policy-manual/docs/E-XXXI-B.pdf>) regarding college email. All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to use their McLennan email addresses when conducting college business.

A student's McLennan email address is the preferred email address that college employees should use for official college information or business. Students are

expected to read and, if needed, respond in a timely manner to college emails. For more information about your student email account, go to www.mclennan.edu/studentemail.

Instructional Uses of Email:

Faculty members can determine classroom use of email or electronic communications. Faculty should expect and encourage students to check the college email on a regular basis. Faculty should inform students in the course syllabus if another communication method is to be used and of any special or unusual expectations for electronic communications.

If a faculty member prefers not to communicate by email with their students, it should be reflected in the course syllabus and information should be provided for the preferred form of communication.

Email on Mobile Devices:

The College recommends that you set up your mobile device to receive McLennan emails. If you need assistance with set-up, you may email Helpdesk@mclennan.edu for help.

You can find help on the McLennan website about connecting your McLennan email account to your mobile device:

- [Email Setup for iPhones and iPads](#)
- [Email Setup for Androids](#)

Forwarding Emails:

You may forward emails that come to your McLennan address to alternate email addresses; however, the College will not be held responsible for emails forwarded to an alternate address that may be lost or placed in junk or spam filters.

For more helpful information about technology at MCC, go to [MCC's Tech Support Cheat Sheet](#) or email helpdesk@mclennan.edu.

Disclaimer:

The resources and policies listed above are merely for informational purposes and are subject to change without notice or obligation. The College reserves the right to change policies and other requirements in compliance with State and Federal laws. The provisions of this document do not constitute a contract.