



WACO, TEXAS

**COURSE SYLLABUS
AND
INSTRUCTOR PLAN**

GOVT 2305

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT- 2305 – D083/D084

JONATHAN R. BUCKSTEAD

NOTE: This is a 16-week online course.

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.

Additional notions to be addressed include: the position of the individual; political parties; administration, defense, and foreign policy.

Prerequisites and/or Corequisites:

Prerequisite: Must have passed the reading portion of the TSI Assessment or have credit for INRW 0402. Semester Hours 3 (3 lectures).

Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations:

The intention of this course is to provide the student with a "politically-correct" understanding and working knowledge of the American political system from its inception to the present day. All of us participate in some form or other, in the American political system. Our own political system determines our average political behavior and the variation in that behavior. In order for us to change our own or others' average political behavior and/or the variation in that behavior, with some reasonable likelihood of success via the efforts we undertake, we must understand the intricacies and subtleties of our own political system. We must have profound knowledge about the system, that is, sound theory about how it is created, maintained and changed, or designed and redesigned. To change the quality of our own lives and those of others around us, we must be ready, willing, and able to work constantly and forever for such change.

Instructor Information:

Instructor Name: Jonathan R. Buckstead

MCC Email: jbuckstead@mclennan.edu

Office Phone Number: 512-925-7469 (can leave voicemail)

Office Location: online

Office/Teacher Conference Hours: via phone (see table below)

Monday	7-7:30pm
Tuesday	7-7:30pm
Wednesday	

Thursday	
Friday	

Required Text & Materials:

Title: American Government: Institutions and Policies

Author: Wilson, James Q.

Edition: 17th enhanced

Publisher: Cengage

ISBN: 978-0-357-79472-2

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

Methods of Teaching and Learning:

This course will consist of the following learning objects:

- Textbook chapters
- Textbook resources (including chapter PowerPoints and key terms)
- Critical Thinking Essay
- Exams
- Weekly discussion board responses

Course Objectives and/or Competencies:

Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas. 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:

- Explain the origin and development of constitutional democracy in the United States
- Demonstrate knowledge of the federal system.
- Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government.
- Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the political system.
- Analyze the election process.
- Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens
- Analyze issues and policies in U.S. politics.

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.

Course Outline or Schedule:

SCHEDULE FOR GOVT 2305-D083/D084-FALL 2023 (8/21-12/6)

Homework for Week 1 (8/21-8/27)

- * Orientation and familiarization with BrightSpace software.
- * Read chapter 1: The Study of American Government
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 1".
- * Read chapter 2: The Constitution
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 2".

Homework for Week 2 (8/28-9/3)

- * Read chapter 3: Federalism
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 3".
- * **Examination 1 (Chapters 1-3)**
- * Read chapter 4: American Political Culture
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 4".

Homework for Week 3 (9/4-9/10)

- * Read chapter 5: Civil Liberties
- * Read chapter 6: Civil Rights
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapters 5/6".
- * **Examination 2 (Chapters 4-6)**

Homework for Week 4 (9/11-9/17)

- * Read chapter 7: Public Opinion
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 7".
- * Read chapter 8: Political Participation
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 8".

Homework for Week 5 (9/18-9/24)

- * Read chapter 9: Political Parties
- * **Examination 3 (Chapters 7-9)**

Homework for Week 6 (9/25-10/1)

- * Read chapter 10: Elections and Campaigns
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapters 9/10".

Homework for Week 7 (10/2-10/8)

- * Read chapter 11: Interest Groups
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 11".

Homework for Week 8 (10/9-10/15)

- * Read chapter 12: The Media
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 12".
- * **Examination 4 (Chapters 10-12)**

Homework for Week 9 (10/16-10/22)

- * Read chapter 13: Congress
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 13".

Homework for Week 10 (10/23-10/29)

- * Read chapter 14: The Presidency
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 14".

Homework for Week 11 (10/30-11/5)

- * Read chapter 15: The Bureaucracy
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 15".
- * **Examination 5 (Chapters 13-15)**

Homework for Week 12 (11/6-11/12)

- * Read chapter 16: The Judiciary
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 16"

Homework for Week 13 (11/13-11/19)

- * Read chapter 17: Domestic Policy
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 17".
- * **Critical Thinking Essay due (see "Course Documents" section for details).**

Homework for Week 14 (11/20-11/26)

- * Read chapter 18: Economic Policy
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 18".

Homework for Week 15 (11/27-12/6) *EXTENDED FINALS WEEK*****

- * Read chapter 19: Foreign and Military Policy
- * Post your answer to the "Discussion Board Question for Chapter 19".
- * **Examination 6 (Chapters 16-19)**

NOTE: ALL EXAMS AND ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED AND TURNED IN TO ME NO LATER THAN 12/6 IF CREDIT (if applicable) FOR THEM IS DESIRED. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE.

Course grading information:

WEEKLY HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS/DISCUSSION BOARD (required)

There will be one (1) question per chapter to think about as you read each of the chapters of the textbook and complete each study unit. After having read the appropriate chapter, your next step will be to answer the question for that chapter as you engage in a class discussion using the appropriate discussion board. You will be required to add one (1) original answer/comment per question, to the class discussions taking place on the appropriate discussion board. **In addition to your own original response, you will be required to respond to one other classmate's response.** The questions for each chapter are located in the "Discussion Board" section of the course homepage. (Of course, more than one answer/comment is encouraged - some of you will find that you have a lot of input to give - that's great!) **(Course maximum of 85 points for 17 postings).**

CRITICAL THINKING ESSAY

There will be one (1) critical thinking essay to be completed towards the end of the course. The length of the essay should be between 1/2-1 page (250-300 words). Check out the "Course Documents" section of the course homepage for a link to the critical thinking reading and essay prompts. **(Course maximum of up to 40 points for 1 essay).**

EXAMINATIONS

There will be a total of six (6) exams. Each exam will consist of 50 multiple-choice questions covering three (3) chapters from our text. Each exam will be worth up to 50 points. You will be able to take the same exam twice with your average score between the two attempts being recorded. There is a time limit of 60 minutes for each exam and each attempt. There will be no "mid-term" exam or comprehensive final exam. There will be no additional attempts, retakes of exams or make-up exams, except in the event of a confirmed technical issue (screen capture required) and/or serious emergency. Make every attempt to complete each exam no later than the date specified in the course schedule. **If you cannot complete an exam by the due date, be sure to let me know in advance.** You are certainly welcome to take them earlier if you feel prepared to do so. **(Course max. of up to 300 points for 6 exams).**

All exams will be taken online through the course on BrightSpace. After completing exams online, you will receive your score immediately.

EXAM PREPARATION

The best way to prepare for the exams is to be sure that you read the appropriate chapters carefully and then go through the "Study Aids" that are provided.

NOTE: Information regarding the aforementioned course requirements and their due dates can be found under the "homework schedule" link from the main course homepage.

LETTER GRADE BREAKDOWNS

Examinations (6)

Each examination will be worth up to 50 points. The following scale will be used to determine letter grades for each exam: A=45-50; B=39-44; C=33-38; D=27-32; F=21-26. **(300 total points possible).**

Critical Thinking Essay (1)

The essay will be worth up to 40 points. The following scale will be used to determine letter grades: A=36-40; B=32-35; C=28-31; D=24-27; F=0-23. (**40** total points possible).

Discussion board contributions (17)

Each contribution will be worth 5 points if submitted on time. If you submit your contribution after the due date, the appropriate late penalties (1 point deduction per day) will be applied and the lowered score will be reflected in your grade book. If a contribution is made which is 5 or more days late, you will receive 1 point for your contribution. Although submitting more than one contribution to any particular discussion board will not earn you additional points, you are encouraged to actively participate beyond the required minimum level. In order to receive up to the full 5 points, each of your postings should be at least five (5) sentences in length. (**85** total points possible).

FINAL CUMULATIVE GRADE

Your final grade will be based on accumulation of points as follows:

Total points possible = 425

A=382-425; B=340-381; C=297-339; D=255-296; F=0-254

Note: Final point totals may be "curved" if deemed appropriate

Late Work, Attendance, and Make Up Work Policies:

Missed exams and activities cannot be made-up nor will late work be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made between you and the instructor.

Student Behavioral Expectations or Conduct Policy:

HOW THIS CYBER CLASSROOM WILL WORK COMMUNICATION

Communication between the instructor and individual students will occur largely through email. I promise you a quick turnaround time - never longer than two days (or three on weekends.) You should also feel free to leave me a voicemail message.

You will also be engaging in discussions with your fellow classmates on the web. We will be using the discussion board accessory via BrightSpace.

Submission of assignments will take place largely through email directly to me. When you submit your assignments via direct email to me, include them in the body of your email message, not as an attachment. I will return graded material (including website critique, discussion board contributions, exams, etc...) through your grade book (located under the "My Grades" link in the "Student Tools" section of the course homepage). You can also send your work to me through the regular mail; however, it must be postmarked one day before the assignment is due. My home address is:

7015 Avignon Drive
Round Rock, TX 78681-5331

PACE OF THE CLASS

Most of the work required for this class will be done at your own pace when it is convenient for you. YOU will determine when to do the reading during the week, and when you feel ready to enter the class discussion online. However, you must complete and submit all discussion board postings by **Sunday** of each week unless another date is provided. The dates for all study unit work to be completed are included in the "homework schedule" section of the course homepage. The due dates for other class assignments are also indicated in the "homework schedule" section. The key is not to fall behind. **Any discussion board postings that are submitted late (those submitted any time after Sunday of the week that they are due) will be assessed a late penalty: (1 point per day for each day late, unless prior arrangements have been made).**

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

Taking a course over the web requires patience, an interest in learning more about technology, and personal discipline. You will be the one responsible for keeping up with the material, and using the technology available for research and communication. I will certainly be here to help you, and you will be able to communicate with other members of the class - but ultimately the responsibility lies with YOU to seek the help you need, and commit the time necessary. The rewards will be great. Not only will you be pursuing important and interesting questions about American government, you will be honing your communication skills, your writing skills, your thinking skills and your computer skills at the same time.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

A web course is, in a few key respects, very different from a traditional classroom. For one thing, there is more responsibility put on the student to interact with the teacher. If you do not understand something, I cannot read that in your face, or call on you in class to determine how well the idea is comprehended. You must communicate with me and

with your fellow classmates through the computer - either through email or through our discussion program. If you do not make the effort to communicate - you cannot truly benefit from interaction with the instructor and with the classroom. If you are confused or need more guidance, you have to let me know.

I am hoping that one benefit of this web delivery is that I will actually get to know many of you better than I would if you were sitting in my class. I usually get to know some students out of every class because they come to see me, but many students are too shy, too busy or unmotivated. However, with the ease and greater flexibility created by computer communication, I am hoping that many more of you will communicate with me to ask questions, give feedback or offer YOUR insights. Also, I think that we can have really interesting discussions as a class since you will have time to think about and compose your ideas and responses, and will not have to deal with the heart stopping fear of speaking up in class. I eagerly look forward to getting to know many of you over the coming weeks.

[Click Here for the MCC Attendance/Absences Policy](#)

[\(https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html\)](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 additional guidelines specific to this course.

LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW

All students are responsible for making satisfactory progress in the course. If satisfactory progress is not being made, I will not initiate any withdrawals myself. Each student is responsible for withdrawing him or herself from the course, if so desired. If you have any concerns about withdrawing from this course, please feel free to consult with me at any time before the last day to withdraw: **10-23-23**.

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.