



WACO, TEXAS

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**COURSE SYLLABUS  
AND  
INSTRUCTOR PLAN**

**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT  
GOVT 2305.14**

**LARRY G. SALAZAR**

**NOTE: This is a 16-week course.**

**COVID-19 Notice:**

McLennan Community College is committed to providing you with every resource you need to reach your academic goals, including your safety. We will continue to monitor the evolving situation with COVID-19 and adjust our safety guidelines to make sure we offer a safe environment for you and our faculty. Please make sure to consult your faculty and the MCC website at <https://www.mclennan.edu/crisis-management/coronavirus-updates/index.html> on any changes to these guidelines.

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### GOVT 2305.11

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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 Government: Roots and Reform*

Authors: Karen O'Connor and Larry J. Sabato {hereinafter O'Sabato}

Edition: 14<sup>th</sup> (2020 Presidential Election Edition)

Publisher: Pearson

ISBN: 978-0-136-90039-9

**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](mailto:helpdesk@mclennan.edu)

**Other Links of Possible Interest:**

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

**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: American Government: Roots, Context, and Culture
- Chapter 2: The Constitution
- Chapter 3: The Federal System
- Chapter 11: Political Parties
- Chapter 14: Interest Groups

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

- Chapter 6: Congress
- Chapter 7: The Presidency
- Chapter 9: The Judiciary
- Chapter 4: Civil Liberties
- Chapter 5: Civil Rights

## Tentative Course Outline

Week / Class Cancellations	Reading(s) for the Week	Assignments, Quizzes, & Exams
January 10 – January 16	Syllabus / Meet Your Instructor Introduction to Politics	Log onto Brightspace / Introduce Yourself (Google Classroom)
January 17 – January 23 <b>MCC CLOSED: JANUARY 17</b>	O'Sabato Chapter 1	
January 24 – January 30	O'Sabato Chapter 2	<b>Quiz# 1:</b> Thursday, January 27
January 31 – February 6	O'Sabato Chapter 3	
February 7 – February 13	O'Sabato Chapter 11	
February 14 – February 20	O'Sabato Chapter 14	<b>Quiz# 2:</b> Tuesday, February 15
February 21 – February 27	Slack / Review for Exam# 1	
February 28 – March 6 <b>MCC CLOSED: MARCH 7-11</b>		<b>Exam# 1: Tuesday, March 1</b> Chapters 1, 2, 3, 11, & 14 of O'Sabato
March 14 – March 20	O'Sabato Chapter 6	<b>Quiz# 3:</b> Tuesday, March 15
March 21 – March 27	O'Sabato Chapter 7	
March 28 – April 3	O'Sabato Chapter 9	<b>Quiz# 4:</b> Thursday, March 31
April 4 – April 10	O'Sabato Chapter 4	

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Week / Class Cancellations	Reading(s) for the Week	Assignments, Quizzes, & Exams
April 11 – April 17 <b>MCC CLOSED: APRIL 15 (TAX DAY!)</b>	O'Sabato Chapter 4 (cont.)	
April 18 – April 24	O'Sabato Chapter 4 (cont.)	<b>Quiz# 5:</b> Tuesday, April 19
April 25 – May 1	O'Sabato Chapter 5	<b><u>Book Review Due: Thursday, April 28</u></b>  Make-up Exams (As Necessary) & Course Evaluations
May 2 – May 5	Review for Exam# 3	<b><u>Final Exam:</u></b> Thursday, May 5 <sup>th</sup> (8:00 – 10:00) Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, & 9 of O'Sabato

### **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 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!

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*Book Review:* Each student will be responsible for one scholarly book review. There will be *only* 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 of your course grade.

*Attendance & Participation:* Your attendance and participation grade is calculated as a combined score worth the remaining 100 points 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 will 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 &amp; Participation:</u>	100	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>)

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.*

# McLennan

C O M M U N I T Y

## COLLEGE

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## 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](http://www.mclennan.edu/disability).

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

[disabilities@mclennan.edu](mailto:disabilities@mclennan.edu)

254-299-8122

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 Title IX Coordinator at [titleix@mclennan.edu](mailto:titleix@mclennan.edu) or by calling Dr. Drew Canham (Chief of Staff for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/Title IX) at (254) 299-8645. Individuals also may contact the MCC Police Department at 299-8911 or the MCC Student Counseling Center at MCC 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/](http://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/>

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 a Success Coach by calling (254) 299-8226 or emailing [SuccessCoach@mclennan.edu](mailto:SuccessCoach@mclennan.edu). Students may visit the Completion Center Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. to schedule a meeting with a Success Coach and receive additional resources and support to help reach academic and personal goals. Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) provides free food by appointment to students, faculty and staff based on household size. Text (254) 870-7573 to schedule a pantry appointment. The Completion Center and 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](https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/docs/Emergency_Grant_Application.pdf).

**MCC Academic Integrity Statement:**

Go to [www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity](http://www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity) for information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating.

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

Go to <https://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/Faculty-and-Staff-Commons/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.

**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](mailto:Helpdesk@mclennan.edu) for help.

**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.

**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.