



WACO, TEXAS

**COURSE SYLLABUS
AND
INSTRUCTOR PLAN**

**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
GOVT 2305.93**

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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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 & Larry Sabato {hereinafter O'Sabato}

Edition: 14th (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:

Information from the instructor will be provided each week that we will be covering a chapter online through the weekly learning units. Learning units will be comprised of instructor's information of text along with various web links that students may examine for further information. 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 chapter covered for that particular week and are designed to assess learning. Examinations will be administered online through Brightspace's testing center.

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 Objectives:

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/ss>

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: (By chapter)

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

Exam# 2 (People and Politics: 50 Multiple-Choice Questions)

- Chapter 10: Public Opinion and Political Socialization
- Chapter 14: Interest Groups
- Chapter 11: Political Parties
- Chapter 12: Campaigns, Elections, and Voting
- Chapter 13: The News Media

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Exam# 3 (Political Institutions: 50 Multiple-Choice Questions)

- Chapter 6: Congress
- Chapter 7: The Presidency
- Chapter 9: The Judiciary

Exam# 4 (Civil Rights and Liberties: 50 Multiple-Choice Questions)

- Chapter 4: Civil Liberties
- Chapter 5: Civil Rights

Tentative Course Outline:

This is a *tentative* weekly outline of what can be expected in this particular course, including all assignments and their respective due dates. We will cover roughly one assignment per week.

Week / Class Cancellations	Reading(s) for the Week	Discussion Boards, Quizzes, & Exams
January 10 – January 16	Syllabus / Course Overview O'Sabato Chapter 1	Log onto Brightspace / Introduce Yourself
January 17 – January 23 MCC CLOSED: JANUARY 17	O'Sabato Chapter 2	Quiz# 1
January 24 – January 30	O'Sabato Chapter 3	Discussion Board# 1
January 31 – February 6	Review for Exam# 1	Exam# 1 Chapters 1, 2, & 3 of O'Sabato
February 7 – February 13	O'Sabato Chapter 10	Quiz# 2
February 14 – February 20	O'Sabato Chapter 14 & O'Sabato Chapter 11	Quiz# 3
February 21 – February 27	O'Sabato Chapter 12 & O'Sabato Chapter 13	Discussion Board# 2
February 28 – March 6 MCC CLOSED: MARCH 7-11	Review for Exam# 2	Exam# 2 Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13, & 14 of O'Sabato
March 14 – March 20	O'Sabato Chapter 6	Discussion Board# 3
March 21 – March 27	O'Sabato Chapter 7 & O'Sabato Chapter 8	Quiz# 4

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Week / Class Cancellations	Reading(s) for the Week	Discussion Boards, Quizzes, & Exams
March 28 – April 3	O'Sabato Chapter 9	Discussion Board# 4
April 4 – April 10	Review for Exam# 3	Exam# 3 Chapters 6, 7, 8, & 9 of O'Sabato
April 11 – April 17 MCC CLOSED: APRIL 15 (TAX DAY!)	O'Sabato Chapter 4 (in part)	Quiz# 5
April 18 – April 24	O'Sabato Chapter 4 (in part)	Discussion Board# 5
April 25 – May 1	O'Sabato Chapter 5	Make-up Exams (As Necessary) & Course Evaluations
May 2 – May 5	Review for Exam# 4	Final Exam: Due Thursday, May 5th Chapters 4 & 5 of O'Sabato

Course Grading Information:

Exams: There will be four required exams in this class (including the final exam). All exams are non-cumulative, covering only the material presented in that section. Each exam will be comprised of fifty (50) multiple choice questions, chosen at random by the test. Test questions will come from the textbook and the learning units—so you need to be familiar with both. Each exam will be worth 150 points of your final course grade, or collectively, worth 600 points of your total course grade. You will have approximately two hours to complete each exam.

Quizzes: During the course of the semester, there will be five (5) short chapter quizzes each comprised of five multiple-choice questions based off of the relevant material from the weekly learning unit. These are designed to get you to make sure that you comprehend the content — which is a vital part to ensuring your success on the exams. The quizzes will be at the end of the respective learning units when they are to be assigned {see *tentative* course outline}. Each of these chapter quizzes will be worth thirty (30) points of your total course grade, or effectively, all of them will be worth another 150 points of your total grade in this course. You will have approximately fifteen (15) minutes to complete each chapter quiz.

Discussion Boards: A portion of your grade will be based off of five (5) 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

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will suffice for the most part, but please consider your answer carefully for each discussion posting. While only one posting will be required to satisfy the requirement for the grade, multiple posts throughout the week are highly encouraged. While these are designed to encourage discussion among classmates, they should **NOT** turn into an argument. The discussion boards will be worth thirty (30) points each, combining for 150 points of your total course grade.

Attendance & Participation: Your attendance and participation grade is calculated as the remaining 100 points of your course grade. Essentially, your weekly —participation on each assignment will contribute to this score. There are a total of fifteen assignments throughout the semester. But there are only fourteen graded assignments, so this will be, how many out of the fourteen assignments that you did, entered numerically. (*i.e.*, 14/14 is a 100, 13/14 is a 93, *etc.*) This is an easy part of your grade to earn—it is also an easy part of your grade to lose!

Reading Assignments: The chapters that you are to read in your textbook are listed on the *tentative* course outline {see last page}. You will have the entire week to read the material, familiarize yourself with the relevant chapters in the textbook, and learn the material accordingly. The purpose of assigning reading in the textbook is to help you to better follow the learning units and allow you a way to ask questions on aspects that you are unsure about along the way. While they are not a direct part of your grade, they are a strong indirect part of it!

Grade Breakdown:

Exam 1:	150	A = 900-1000
Exam 2:	150	B = 800-899
Exam 3:	150	C = 700-799
Exam 4:	150	D = 600-699
Quizzes (5 @ 30):	150	F = 599 or less
Discussion Board (5 @ 30):	150	W = as appropriate
Attendance/Participation:	100	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 and exams will not be allowed for any reason. However, your lowest exam grade will be dropped automatically by Brightspace. 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 learning unit has expired 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. Therefore, if you cannot take and complete the exam when 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. You will need to contact the instructor to receive a password to access the Make-Up Exams. You may **NOT** have more than one make-up exam. Finally, all make-up exams will be comprised of two *essay questions* from the respective section that you missed. So, please don't miss an exam!

Student Behavioral Expectations or Conduct Policy:

Attendance: We will cover a great deal of information in each of the respective learning units. These are lectures that would be similar to what you would hear if this course met in a face-to-face section. I use the learning units to emphasize key areas that you should study for both quizzes and exams. Each week will also have some form of assignment due (i.e. discussion posting, quiz, or exam). As a result, students that will not be able to regularly sign in to this course should contact the instructor immediately, so we can make alternate arrangements more suitable for your needs. Since there are fifteen (15) learning units, students that do not complete ***any* four (4)** of these assignments will effectively miss 25% of the total course and will be dropped administratively. Attendance will comprise a portion of ten percent of your total average. Furthermore, given that much of the material for tests is drawn from the learning units, your "attendance" is essential to do well. Finally, it is in your best interest to attend class. Why?

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

Netiquette: There are several classroom policies regarding behavior in an online course that students should be aware of before proceeding with the class. First, all students should treat the instructor as well as other students with respect, just as they would in a face-to-face section. This might be more important here because it can be hard for others to understand your intent and meaning online. Secondly, students should use complete sentences when using the discussion board. Building proper writing is one of the skills that students should constantly be undertaking in any academic course. As a result, students should not use slang, abbreviations, etc. when writing. On a similar note, students should not write with "text message" styles of writing either. For example, do not use "u" when you mean "you" and the like. Similarly, students should not

use all lower case letter or all capital letters. Write as you would if this were an essay for an English class. Finally, students who have complaints about others' disruptive behavior should first talk to me about the problem. I will then speak with the disruptive student privately. Then, if the problem(s) still persist, the classmate who is being disrupted may contact the disruptive student with my permission. If this does not solve the problem, the Division Director of Social Sciences will be contacted immediately. The potential sanctions for persons who disrupt class or their fellow students include (but are not limited to) moving you to a different section, dropping you from the course entirely, to giving you an "F" for the course, at the instructor's discretion. So, please don't interrupt others!

* **[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.

* *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

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

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 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/. 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. 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.

MCC Academic Integrity Statement:

Go to 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 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.