McLennan COMMUNITY COLLEGE

WACO, TEXAS

COURSE SYLLABUS

AND

INSTRUCTOR PLAN

Federal Government 2305: Federal Constitution and Topics

GOVT 2305 C93

Ariel Gonzalez

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.

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.

Prerequisites and/or Corequisites:

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

Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations:

Student Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe how the American political system works.
- Describe and explain the historical and philosophical roots of America's system of government and its Constitutional components.
- Understand the basic principles of American political thought through reading, debating, critically analyzing, and answering essay questions about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and the "three branches" of government.
- Develop a clear understanding of the function of government and how government affects them, and the importance of participation in a democracy.
- Understand the basic structures of U.S. government and be familiar with the functions and interrelationship between the "three branches."
- Explain the importance of civic responsibility in a participatory republic, including involvement in issue debates and elections.
- Read opinions of the U.S. Supreme Court on issues pertaining to the Bill of Rights and will be capable of forming and expressing ideas and opinions regarding Supreme Court decisions, as well as other issues relevant to the class.
- Understand how Public Opinion, Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Voting and Elections are an integral part of our political institutions in American Government and with the basic principles of American political thought.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how political participation, interest groups, elections and public opinion affect the operation of the political system in the United States. Students will gain this understanding through individual reading, debating, critically analyzing, and/or answering essay questions about political processes and public opinion.
- Formulate and defend logical arguments in discussing a variety of contemporary political questions, including those arising from cultural differences within the United States and from the evolving status of the United States within the global arena.
- Consider the ways that parties and interest groups are related and support the electoral process in the U.S.

Understand how citizens fit and relate to government.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the operation of the policy-making process, particularly with regards to civil rights and foreign policy
- Demonstrate well-developed analytical thinking, writing and oral communication skills as they describe the strengths and weaknesses of the American political system.
- Use computer technology to discover information relating to politics and government.
- Assess the accuracy, completeness and potential bias of sources of information pertaining to politics and government.
- Students will demonstrate their ability to comprehend and write analytically about both reading and lecture material.

Instructor Information:

Instructor Name: Ariel Gonzalez
MCC Email: agonzalez@mclennan.edu
Office Phone Number: 254-299-8918
Office Location: Online
Office/Teacher Conference Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 4:30 PM to 5:00 PM and by appointment

Required Text & Materials:

Title: *American Government: Institutions & Policies*
Author: James Q. Wilson, John J. Dilulio, Jr., Meena Bose, Matthew S. Levendusky
Edition: Seventeenth Edition
Publisher: Cengage
ISBN: 978-0-357-45965-2

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

Methods of Teaching and Learning:

This course will include classroom lectures, chapter readings, discussion groups, simulation exercises, learning assignments, Brightspace assignments, Brightspace quizzes, Brightspace discussion board posts and responses, and exams.

Course Objectives and/or Competencies:

In completing this course, the students will demonstrate the following core objectives:

- **Critical Thinking Skills** - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information;

- **Communication Skills** - to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
- **Personal Responsibility** - to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making;
- **Social Responsibility**: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Course Outline or Schedule:

(Please note, all dates are tentative and subject to change. Changes to the course schedule will be announced both in class and in Brightspace.)

Date	Topic	Chapter
Week 1 Week of Monday, August 22	Introduction, Class Syllabus, The Study of American Government and American Political Culture	Chapter 1, Chapter 4
Week 2 Week of Monday, August 29	The Constitution	Chapter 2
Week 3 Week of Tuesday, September 6	Federalism	Chapter 3
Week 4 Week of Monday, September 12	Civil Liberties	Chapter 5
Week 5 Week of Monday, September 19	Civil Rights **Exam #1**	Chapter 6
Week 6 Week of Monday, September 26	Public Opinion	Chapter 7

Week 7 Week of Monday, October 3	Political Participation	Chapter 8
Week 8 Week of Monday, October 10	Political Parties	Chapter 9
Week 9 Week of Monday, October 17	Elections and Campaigns	Chapter 10
Week 10 Week of Monday, October 24	Interest Groups and The Media **Exam #2**	Chapter 11, Chapter 12
Week 11 Week of Monday, October 31	Congress	Chapter 13
Week 12 Week of Monday, November 7	The Presidency	Chapter 14
Week 13 Week of Monday, November 14	The Judiciary	Chapter 16
Week 14 Week of Monday, November 21	The Bureaucracy **Exam #3**	Chapter 15
Week 15 Week of Monday, November 28	Domestic Policy and Economic Policy	Chapter 17, Chapter 18
Week 16 Week of Monday, December 5	Foreign and Military Policy and American Democracy, Then and Now **Final Exam**	Chapter 19, Chapter 20

Course Grading Information:

You will be evaluated on four (4) examinations, quizzes, assignments, Brightspace discussion board posts and responses, and a cumulative signature assignment that measures the various core objectives of this course,

These exams may consist of multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer questions based on the reading assignments and lecture materials. The exams are not cumulative; each exam will cover only the materials from the appropriate chapters. The only exception will be if there is material on which the class, as a whole, does not do well.

If you miss an exam, you may make it up only in case of severe, documented illness or family emergency. Makeup exams may involve an all essay format rather than the normal, in-class format. There will be a penalty of one letter grade for each class day that the student is late making up an exam. It is the responsibility of the student to immediately contact the instructor about any missed exams.

Each of the four exams will count for 10% of your total grade, which totals to **40%** of your total grade.

20% of your total grade will be for Brightspace discussion board participation. Each week, several discussion questions will be posted within the Brightspace discussion board. Each week will have a different set of discussion board questions. In order to successfully complete the Brightspace discussion board assignment, students will need to answer the discussion board question through relevant cited information from the appropriate chapters that cover the discussion board question. Students will then need to respond to two of their classmates by providing relevant feedback that also sources their responses to their classmates. Your first discussion board post must be at least 200 words in total length and must also be at least five sentences in length. Your two discussion board responses to your classmates must be at least 100 words in length and must also be at least five sentences in length.

10% of your total grade will be for Brightspace online quizzes that will cover the appropriate chapters.

10% of your total grade will be for Brightspace activities and assignments.

20% of your total grade will be for a participatory signature assignment in which the student will compose a mock letter that will be addressed to any current member of Congress who represents Texas. This "signature assignment" will serve as a capstone final project within the course, in which students will incorporate what they have learned throughout the course as the basis for completing the signature assignment in a satisfactory manner. The synopsis for this signature assignment as well as the rubric that will be used to evaluate the signature assignment will be available on Brightspace.

The total grade breakdown is as follows:

Grading Criteria for the Course	**Letter Grade**
Exam #1 – 10%	**A – 100% to 90%**
Exam #2 – 10%	**B – 89% to 80%**
Exam #3 – 10%	**C – 79% to 70%**
Exam #4 – 10%	**D – 69% to 60%**
Discussion Board Posts – 20%	**F – 59% and below**
Quizzes – 10%	
Assignments – 10%	
Signature Assignment Final Project – 20%	

Total = 100%

Late Work, Attendance, and Make Up Work Policies:

- There are no make-up assignments for quizzes or exams (except in extreme emergencies).
- If there is an emergency, contact must be made with the instructor by the end of the exam day unless physically unable.
- A zero grade is given for any quiz or exam missed if not made up.
- Arrangements must be made to take scheduled examinations prior to school-sponsored, official activities that will take one away from class.
- Any other assignment will be evaluated as needed.
- Students may turn in late papers assignments (when allowed to) at a cost of one (1) letter grade per day late (including weekends) unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor or a written medical excuse accompanies the request.
- No work will be accepted for course requirement or credit consideration following the completion of the final examination. This statement refers to late assignments, re-worked assignments, failure-to-submit-on-time assignments or any equivalent assignment.

Student Behavioral Expectations or Conduct Policy:

McLennan Community College is committed to academic excellence through honesty and integrity. To protect all students from the results of dishonest conduct, the College has adopted policies to address these issues. It is the responsibility of each student to become familiar with and to understand all academic policies and the consequences for failure to adhere to these policies. Please read and follow all policies listed in the General Conduct Policy within the Highlander Guide.

Students are expected to maintain classroom decorum that includes respect for other students and the instructor, prompt and regular attendance, and an attitude that seeks to take full advantage of the education opportunity.

Violations, including plagiarism, may result in grades of zero or removal from or failure of the course. For a thorough explanation of plagiarism, please see http://www.plagiarism.org/. Remember, you are responsible for your own work. If you share your work with another student for any reason, you will be held equally responsible for duplication of work in whole or in part.

Web, Blended or Hybrid Class Information Prerequisite Skills

Using the Brightspace Learning Management System (LMS), accessing Internet websites, using McLennan Community College library resources, and proficiency with creating and submitting files (e.g., .docx files, .pdf files) generated from commonly used programs, such as Microsoft Word.

Course Delivery

This is an online course that will be delivered via the Brightspace Learning Management System (LMS). The course site can be accessed at McLennan Community College's Brightspace Learning Management System.

Technology Requirements

To participate in one of McLennan Community College's distance education programs, you will need the following technology:

A computer capable of running Windows 7 or later, or Mac OSX 10.8 or later
The latest version of one of these web browsers: internet Explorer, Firefox, or Safari
Microsoft Office Suite or a compatible Open Office Suite
Adobe Acrobat Reader
High Speed Internet Access
Ethernet adapter cable required (wireless connections can drop during tests and Collaborate sessions)
Webcam

Netiquette

Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online. Your instructor and fellow students wish to foster a safe online learning environment. All opinions and experiences, no matter how different or controversial they may be perceived, must be respected in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse. You are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an idea but you are not to attack an individual. Working as a community of learners, we can build a polite and respectful course community. Everyone is expected to follow the rules listed below in our online environment.

Behind every name, there is a person. Respect one another. Something that is inappropriate in a traditional class is also inappropriate in an online class. Be careful with humor and sarcasm. Both can be misunderstood.
Always be aware that this is a college academic course and not a 'fast message or content' area.
Avoid all texting and slang word content.
Do not write in all CAPS; this is considered yelling or screaming online.
Write in proper English and follow spelling, punctuation, and grammar rules. Writing for an online class is the same as writing for a regular traditional course.
Do not dominate any discussion.
Give other students the opportunity to join in the discussion.
Do not use offensive language. Present ideas appropriately.
Be cautious in using Internet language. For example, do not capitalize all letters since this suggests shouting.
Popular emoticons such as ☺ or / can be helpful to convey your tone but do not overdo or overuse them.
Avoid using vernacular and/or slang language. This could possibly lead to misinterpretation.
Never make fun of someone's ability to read or write.
Share tips with other students.

Keep an "open-mind" and be willing to express even your minority opinion. Minority opinions have to be respected.
Think and edit before you push the "Send" button.
Do not hesitate to ask for feedback.
Using humor is acceptable
Properly write emails or messages by beginning with a proper address, stating the name of the person (i.e.: Assistant Professor Sanchez). Finish the message with the sender's full name. Always complete the subject area. Last, plan the communication intent and express it in the most concise way possible.

Attendance

There is a mandatory class attendance policy.

- Students are expected to attend and be on time for all classes.
- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of all classes.
- Students are allowed three (3) unexcused absences.
- If the student is absent beyond the allowable period or is requesting that absence be excused, there must be a doctor's note presented or verifiable documentation, such as an obituary when attending a funeral or a copy of a jury duty summons.
- All other absences are to be discussed with the instructor and evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- The instructor must be notified prior to any school-sponsored, official activities that will take a student away from class.
- Roll is only taken once, so students should be on time for class as a tardy is considered an absence.
- Anyone leaving class before dismissal without prior notification to the instructor will be counted absent for the entire class period.
- If you have more than three (3) unexcused absences you can be dropped from the class.

Attendance is critical to the learning process. The College requires that roll be taken for each class meeting. Students are personally responsible for material missed when absent. Each student is responsible for all the information conveyed in each class period regarding lecture topics, class discussions, assignments, and schedules for class activities. Lack of knowledge due to absence from class will not be grounds for waiving any student's course obligations.

Each student is expected to be present at every class meeting prepared for discussion of the assigned readings. Students are also expected to give special attention to news items relevant to the subject matter of the course.

This attendance policy will be strictly adhered to and plays an important role in the calculation of any final or borderline grades.

Classroom participation:

- Students are expected to participate in classroom discussions with thoughtful, reflective and informed questions, answers or concerns.
- Before asking questions, answering, or commenting, students are required to raise their hands and be called on by the instructor.
- Since attending with interest is essential to learning – reading, talking, whispering, sleeping, eating or other disruptive activities are unacceptable classroom behavior.
- If students persist in disrupting class, the instructor may separate them and place them in assigned seats of his choosing, or he may remove them from class.
- This class, as indeed all classes, requires full attention to events taking place in the room.
- Everyone should make restroom stops before class in order to avoid disturbing the class with untimely exits and entrances.
- Everyone must switch off personal communication equipment before entering the classroom (pagers, cell phones, etc.). The ringing or buzzing of these devices presents an impolite and unwarranted distraction in the classroom. These devices should be stored away and out of sight so as not to distract.
- If the instructor sees students using such a device in any way during class, he may take the device away from the student until the end of class, and classroom participation grading will be lowered accordingly.
- Students must remove all listening devices from their ears upon entering the classroom.
- The use of other electronic devices (such as laptops, tablets, PDAs, recording devices, etc.) for learning purposes is permitted provided they do not disrupt the learning environment or create an academic integrity issue.
- Laptops and tablets are allowed in class for note-taking ONLY.
- If any student is found to be using a laptop or tablet for any other purpose, the student will be asked to put the electronic device away and classroom participation grading will be lowered accordingly.
- Should laptop or tablet use become a problem in the instructor's assessment, laptops and tablets will be banned from the classroom.

Remember, participation is an essential part of the course and will help to determine the final grade, especially in any borderline grade scenarios. Thus, staying current with the reading is also vital to this process, as there may be random quizzes on assigned readings.

Instructor Responsibilities

As your instructor at McLennan Community College, I pledge to provide the highest level of service possible to all students at all times.

To this end, it is reasonable for you to expect that I will:

- Provide you with a syllabus that outlines the content and objectives of the course, spells out the grading and attendance policies, and provides office hour information and other means of communication to students, including phone number and e-mail address.

- Start class on time, be prepared, and use time-tested and innovative teaching strategies and learning activities intended to promote learning of the subject material.
- Make effective use of class time. Although some topics may not seem important or interesting to you, the objectives of the course may dictate the topics. I will endeavor to be enthusiastic and to help you to perceive the central material of each topic.
- Strive to create a positive environment that will challenge thinking and enhance learning. Each student's need to understand the subject will be respected and each student will be treated with courtesy.
- Be accessible and approachable. As your instructor, I am a key resource provided by the college to help you to succeed as a student.
- Design, organize and schedule the subject topics and assignments.
- Provide regular and informative feedback on assignments in order to ensure that you understand your strengths and deficiencies on any given lesson.
- Return graded assignments and assessments within one to two weeks.
- Return e-mails and phone call messages in a timely manner (keep in mind that I may not check messages over the weekends or on holidays).
- Be a professional who will treat you fairly and honestly. Grading will be impartially based upon the quality and quantity of your work.
- Preserve the academic integrity of the course. The basic content of college courses must meet the established expectations of transfer institutions, accrediting agencies, and employers.
- Be dedicated to service to McLennan Community College and the surrounding community.

I have experienced many of the challenges, frustrations, stresses, and triumphs you are experiencing or will experience as a student. I will attempt to create an educational setting in which you are encouraged to realize your potential for learning for the purpose of succeeding in this course and for future endeavors.

Student Responsibilities:

At the same time, I have the expectation that each student will also take responsible action to fulfill his or her duties and responsibilities in their academic program and in each class.

Therefore, I believe it is reasonable for faculty to assume that students will:

- Treat the classroom as a professional environment. All who enter and act like professionals will be treated accordingly.
- Those who disrupt a class will be asked to leave.
- Class start-times and end-times are prescribed and not negotiable.
- When someone has the floor, let him or her speak.
- Side conversations are forbidden when anyone is addressing the class.
- Never plagiarize. You only cheat yourself and this risk is NOT worth the possible reward.
- Hand in all work on time.
- When in class, silence all cell phones.

- When the class takes a break, make sure you return to your seat 1 minute before the break is over.
- When working in groups, remember that compromise is the key to success.
- When working in groups, always be accountable for your actions to your group members.
- Take ownership of your performance - academic and behavioral.
- Do not bully anyone.
- Use common sense.

I believe fulfillment of these expectations will create and maintain a positive and high performance environment for everyone.

Students are responsible for knowing (and following) the contents of your course syllabus. Read it carefully to avoid misunderstandings. If after reading the syllabus, you find that one or more of the items are unclear, ask me to explain the procedures regarding that information.

Policy on Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated and will lead to a failing grade. Please make certain that all assignments and examinations are completed individually.

Changes to the Syllabus:

Although I will do my best to keep to the schedule, changes in the syllabus and/or schedule may be made at any time during the term. A revised syllabus may be issued at my discretion. Readings should be completed for the day listed. **If I suspect that students are not prepared for class on any given day, surprise quizzes may be administered to the class.**

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 additional guidelines specific to this course.

Updated 06/08/2022

McLennan COMMUNITY 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 https://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 https://www.lighthouse-services.com/mclennan/incidentLandingPageV2-MCC.asp.

Go to McLennan's Title IX webpage at https://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 https://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 regarding college email, which can be found at https://www.mclennan.edu/employees/policy-manual/docs/E-XXXI-B.pdf. 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 https://www.mclennan.edu/student-email/.

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.