

**Statement of the SPC Social Science Department's  
Government/Political Science Division for GOVT 2305  
Common Course Syllabus**

*(As required by the Texas Legislature and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and  
approved by Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and SPC)*

Department: Social Sciences

Discipline: Government

Course Number: GOVERNMENT 2305

Course Title: Federal Government (Federal Constitution and Topics)

Credit: 3 Lecture, 0 Lab

Satisfies a core curriculum requirement? Yes, Social Science and ALL Undergraduate Degrees

Prerequisites: TSI compliance in Reading

Available Formats: Conventional, INET, ITV

Campus: Levelland, Reese, ATC, Plainview Textbook:

Varies according to instructor.

Course Specific Instructions: Each instructor will attach his/her course with specific instructions.

Course Description: This course is a survey of fundamental principles of political science, including the American system of government and the origins and development of the constitutions of the United States. This course satisfies the Legislative requirements for teacher certification.

Course Purpose: Government 2305, as taught at South Plains College, is a reading intensive course designed to acquaint the learner with the origin and development of the US 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. This course meets the statutory requirements as set forth by the State of Texas.

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Course Requirements: To maximize a student's potential to complete this course, he/she should attend all class meetings, complete all homework assignments and examinations in a timely manner, and complete all other projects or papers as assigned in the instructor's specific instructions.

Course Evaluation: See the instructor's course information sheet for specific items used in evaluating student performance.

Attendance Policy: Whenever absences become excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn

from the course. Each instructor will have additional information about attendance on his/her course information sheet.

#### Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):

Students who have completed this course will be expected to:

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

#### Fundamental Component Areas (FCA):

Students will be expected to perform satisfactorily in four FCA.

1. Critical Thinking Skills – to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information by:
  - a. Generating and communicating ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information,
  - b. Gathering and assessing information relevant to a question,
  - c. Analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information.
2. Communication – to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral or visual communication by:

Developing, interpreting, and expressing ideas through written, oral, or visual communication.
3. Social Responsibility Skills – to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities by:
  - a. Demonstrating intercultural competence,
  - b. Identifying civic responsibility,
  - c. Engaging in regional, national, and global communities.
4. Personal Responsibility – to include the ability to connect choices, action, and consequences to ethical decision-making by:
  - a. Reading, understanding and affirming agreement and acceptance of principles, guidelines and requirements set forth in the “Statement of Personal Responsibility of Students” (Attached)
  - b. Evaluating choices and actions and relating consequences to personal decision-making
  - c. Accepting personal responsibility for decisions and actions taken or not taken

## Nelson Course Syllabus GOVT 2305 Federal Government (Federal Constitution and Topics)

### 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.

### Instructor

Ms. Be Nelson, M.A.

### Email

[hnelson@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:hnelson@southplainscollege.edu)

### Office Location & Hours

By appointment only

### Course Resources:

***Textbook: O'Connor, Karen, and Larry J. Sabato, American Government: Roots and Reform, 2016 Edition. New York: Pearson***

**Additional Reading Materials:** Instructor will provide additional readings from a variety of sources including current event articles. Readings will be made available to students electronically when possible.

**Course Structure:** This course will include lecture, discussion, assigned readings, multiple case-briefs. Reading handouts and assignments will be available on Blackboard.

**Attendance:** Regular attendance is mandatory; attendance will be taken. It is in **your best interest** to attend class regularly and on time. Material that will be covered in class goes well beyond the assigned reading, i.e. many questions that will be on exams come exclusively from lectures rather than the book. If you DO miss a class, **you and you alone** are responsible for finding out what you missed from a classmate. I do not repeat lectures in office hours. Any student who misses more than five class sessions shall be dropped with a grade of "X" if the student has a passing grade average at that time. An absence is defined as failing to attend class, missing 15 or more minutes of class, or leaving class without the instructor's approval. Additionally, a student accrues an absence each time he or she accumulates a total of three late arrivals (i.e. 5+ minutes late). Whenever feasible, students should let the instructor know about expected absences as soon as possible.

Students who have approved absences for athletic or other school approved activities should provide a schedule within the first two weeks. Students who miss classes or exams due to verifiable circumstances such as medical emergencies should provide the documentation to the professor or facilitator as soon as they return to classes.

**Student Performance:** You must maintain your standards throughout the duration of the semester. There will be no extra credit and there will be little time for playing "catch-up." **If you fail three (3) consecutive "in-class" or reading quizzes, you will be dropped from the class with a failing grade with no further warning.** If you fail to submit required work on time, you may be dropped from the class at the discretion of the instructor.

### GENERAL POLICIES

- ❖ **BEHAVIOR IN CLASS:** Students are expected to be considerate of one another as well as of the instructor. Conduct that interferes with other students' right to learn will not be tolerated. **TURN OFF CELL PHONES BEFORE CLASS.**
- ❖ **GETTING HELP:** Come see me after class or email me if you have a problem with readings, lecture, or assignments. If you are having difficulty of any sort, **the sooner you ask for help, the easier the solution to your problem will be.**

- ❖ **HONESTY:** Honesty is the expected standard. **Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated and can be grounds for dismissal from South Plains College.** Incidents of cheating on examinations will result in failure of the course and potential consequences such as dismissal from South Plains College. **A cell phone turned on during an examination is grounds for an automatic failing grade on that examination.**

***Diversity Statement:*** In this class, the instructor will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves. By promoting diversity and intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

**Campus Concealed Carry - Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.)** authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in South Plains College buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and South Plains College policy, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the SPC policy at: ([http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human\\_resources/policy\\_procedure/hhc.php](http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human_resources/policy_procedure/hhc.php)) Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all South Plains College campuses. Report violations to the College Police Department at 806-716-2396 or 9-1-1.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:** I will accommodate students who have the appropriate documentation of disability. Document or not, however, see me during the **first week** of class. Whatever the problem, we will work together to find a solution.

**Student Absence for Observation of Religious Holy Days:** A student who is absent from classes for the observation of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence **if, not later than the fifteenth day after the first day of the semester, the student had notified the instructor of each scheduled class that the student would be absent for a religious holy day.**

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. **In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability.** For more information, call or visit the Disability Services office in the Student Health & Wellness Office, 806-716-2577.

If you are pregnant, or have given birth within six months, Under Title IX you have a right to reasonable accommodations to help continue your education. To activate accommodations you must submit a Title IX pregnancy accommodations request, along with specific medical documentation, to the Director of Health and Wellness. Once approved, notification will be sent to the student and instructors. It is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor to arrange accommodations. Contact Chris Straface, Director of Health and Wellness at 806-716-2362 or email [cstrafac@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:cstrafac@southplainscollege.edu) for assistance.

## Tentative Course Schedule

**The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this schedule including adding readings and assignments. I will endeavor to give you as much advanced notice as possible for any changes.**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Exercises</b>
1-2	Roots of American Government	Ch. 1 Declaration of Independence, Locke's "Second Treatise of Civil Government."	
3	The Constitution	Ch. 2 The U.S. Constitution Federalist 10, 51	Constitutional Scavenger Hunt
4	The Federal System	Ch. 3	
5	Civil Liberties	Ch. 4	Case Briefings
6	Civil Rights	Ch. 5	
7	Congress	Ch. 6 Excerpts from Fenno's, <i>Homestyle</i>	
8	The Presidency	Ch. 7 Federalist 70 Neustadt's, "Presidential Power."	
9	The Bureaucracy	Ch. 8 "Constitutional Democracy and Bureaucratic Power."	The Bureaucracy of Pizza
10	The Judiciary	Ch. 9 Federalist 78 Judicial Activism and Judicial Restraint perspectives handout	
11	Domestic Policy	Ch. 16	
12	Economic and Defense Policy	Ch. 17 & 18	
13	Political Parties	Ch. 11	Isidewith.com
14	Elections and Voting & Campaigns	Ch. 12 & 13 "The Responsible Electorate." "The Misplaced Obsession with PACs."	
15	Media and Interest Groups	Ch. 14 & 15 Mayhew, "Divided We Govern." <i>The Economist</i> , <i>Politico</i> , <i>NPR</i> , etc.	Fake News Activity
16	Finals Week		

**Evaluation Method:**

<b>Reading Quizzes or Reaction Papers</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>2 Midterm Exams/Final Exam</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Case Brief and Presentation</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Interest Group Paper Assignment</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Participation</b>	<b>10%</b>

**Grading:** The grading scale will be as follows: 90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; and 59 or below = F. You earn your grade, I simply enter that grade.

**Quizzes/Reaction Papers:** The instructor will alternate between quizzes and reaction papers (following the rubric handed out to students). Should a student miss a reading quiz they will be required to submit a reaction paper in lieu of the quiz.

**Homework:** There will be a limited amount of homework assignments in this class. These assignments are designed to expand student understanding and knowledge. I will not accept late assignments because I require students to submit their assignments via email.

**Exams:** There will be two midterm exams and a final exam. Each exam will be worth 100 points and the final is cumulative.

**Make-up Exam Policy:** Make-up exams will be allowed with prior notification and may require documentation. Students wishing to take a make-up exam must apply to the instructor via email. **There are no make-ups for the FINAL EXAM.**

**Case Brief:** Each student will prepare a PowerPoint (or other similar media Prezi) presentation over a case they sign up for and must present this to the class.

**Interest Group Paper:** Each student will complete a paper on an assigned interest group (a rubric will be provided to students at the start of the semester).