

**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excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn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**

Room AD1320  
(806) 716-2466  
M-F 10am – 11am  
M, W 2:20pm – 3:20pm  
T-R 11am – Noon or schedule a remote meeting via zoom.

**Course Resources:**

***Textbook: O'Connor, Karen, and Larry J. Sabato, American Government: Roots and Reform, 2016 Presidential Election 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:** You must have a consistent, functioning internet connection to take this course. As this is an online-only course, you are required to have access to the internet. It is your responsibility to ensure that your computer and connection are functioning properly. Technical problems are never an excuse for failed or incomplete work. If you experience a technical or internet issue that affects your graded work, contact me immediately. Always maintain professional and respectful language, both in emails and in your online coursework. Any disruptive or disrespectful behavior will result in a loss of credit for the assignment and possibly a referral to the Office of Student Conduct. Racism, sexism, homophobia, or any other forms of bigotry are not acceptable in this class. You are responsible for all information and announcements made in the course. Prepare to log onto Blackboard every day to check for updates, changes, or new information. Read the course home page thoroughly and check announcements daily. Course rules and expectations are subject to change. Late work will not be accepted for any reason. Students may not print, save, photograph, or make any record of graded content in this course.

**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 ONLINE:** Students are expected to be considerate of one another as well as of the instructor. If you need guidance, heed the words of the late Justice Antonin Scalia, “I attack ideas. I don’t attack people. And some very good people have some very bad ideas. And if you can’t separate the two, you gotta get another day job.” Conduct that interferes with other students’ right to learn will not be tolerated.
- ❖ **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 kind **the earlier you ask for help, the easier the solution to your problem will be.** I cannot help if I am unaware.
- ❖ **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.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

***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.**

## FACE MASKS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO COVID-19

**It is the policy of South Plains College for the Fall 2020 semester that as a condition of on-campus enrollment, all students are required to engage in safe behaviors to avoid the spread of COVID-19 in the SPC community. Such behaviors specifically include the requirement that all students properly wear CDC-compliant face coverings while in SPC buildings including classrooms, labs, hallways, and restrooms. Failure to comply with this policy may result in dismissal from the current class session. If the student refuses to leave the classroom or lab after being dismissed, the student may be referred to the Dean of Students on the Levelland campus or the Dean/Director of external centers for Student Code of Conduct Violation.**

***Diversity Statement:*** In this class, the instructor will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences as well as 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.

***Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations:*** 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 the Director of Health and Wellness at 806-716-2362 or email [cgilster@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:cgilster@southplainscollege.edu) for assistance.

**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 to the Disability Services Office. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at Levelland (Student Health & Wellness Office) 806-716-2577, Reese Center (Building 8) 806-716-4675, or Plainview Center (Main Office) 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611.

I will accommodate students who have the appropriate documentation of disability. Documented or not; however, see me during the first week of class to discuss our plan of action.

**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.**

**Evaluation Method:**

<b>8-10 Chapter Reading Quizzes</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>2 Midterm Exams/Final Exam</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Assignments</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>8-10 Discussion Threads</b>	<b>20%</b>

**Grading: The grading scale will be as follows:**

<b>90-100 = A</b>	<b>80-89 = B</b>	<b>70-79 = C</b>	<b>60-69 = D</b>	<b>59 or below = F</b>
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**You earn your grade; I enter that grade.**

**Quizzes:** The instructor will administer 8-10 reading quizzes and reaction papers. Should a student miss a reading quiz they will be required to submit outlined reading noted for the chapters.

**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.

**Exams:** There will be two midterm exams and a final exam. **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.**

## 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."	
10	The Judiciary	Ch. 9 Federalist 78 Judicial Activism and Judicial Restraint perspectives handout	
11	Public Opinion and Political Socialization	Ch. 10	
12	Political Parties	Ch. 11	Isidewith.com
13	Elections and Voting & Campaigns The News Media	Ch. 12 & 13 "The Responsible Electorate." "The Misplaced Obsession with PACs."	Elections and Voting & Campaigns "Fake News"
14	Interest Groups	IGs	Research Paper Interest Groups
15	Social and Economic Policy  Foreign and Defense Policy	Chapter 15  Chapter 16	Entitlement Programs War Powers and the Balance of Power
16	Finals Week		