

**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.

Approval Number: 45.1002.51 25

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excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course.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 AD132

(806) 716-2466 (office)

**Monday, Wednesday, & Friday:**

**10:00AM - NOON**

**Tuesday & Thursday:**

**11:00AM – NOON**

\*\*\*You may schedule a remote meeting via zoom by emailing for an appointment time\*\*\*

**Course Resources:**

**O'Connor, Karen, and Larry J. Sabato, *American Government: Roots and Reform 2020 Presidential Election, 14<sup>th</sup> Edition*. New York (2020): Pearson**

**TexBook Program: *This course is in the SPC TexBook program, so you do not need to purchase a textbook or access code for this course.***

- **What is TexBook?** The required textbook/digital content for this course is available to you in Blackboard from the first day of class. The charge for the textbook/digital content is the lowest price available from the publisher and bookstore and is included in your tuition.
- **How do I access my TexBook?** Your course material is in your Blackboard course from the first day of class. Access to your course material is provided either by VitalSource or other links inside your Blackboard course. VitalSource (and many publisher's) eBook features include the ability to hear the text read aloud, highlight, take notes, create flash cards, see word definitions, build study guides, print select pages, and download 100% of the book for offline access.
- **Help with TexBook issues and support:** check with your professor or visit: <https://support.vitalsource.com/hc/en-us/requests/new> (available 24/7 via chat, email, phone, and text)
- **Opting out of TexBook:** Participating in TexBook is not mandatory, and you can choose to opt out. However, by opting out you will lose access to the course textbook/digital content and competitive pricing, and you will need to purchase the required course material on your own. If you drop the class or opt-out before the opt-out deadline, the TexBook fee will be automatically refunded to your SPC account. The opt-out deadline for Fall and Spring is the twelfth class day. The opt-out deadline for shorter terms varies between the second and third class day.

*\*Please consult with your professor before deciding to opt-out.* If you still feel that you should purchase the course textbook/materials on your own, send an **opt-out email** to [pwells@texasbook.com](mailto:pwells@texasbook.com). Include your first name, last name, student ID number, and the course you are opting out of. Once you have been opted-out, you will receive a confirmation email. If you need assistance with the process, contact the SPC Bookstore:

**Email:** [pwells@texasbook.com](mailto:pwells@texasbook.com) / **Phone:** 806-716-2097

**Email:** [agamble@texasbook.com](mailto:agamble@texasbook.com) / **Phone:** 806-716-4610

**Additional Reading Materials:** Instructor will provide additional readings from a variety of sources including current event articles.

**Course Structure:** This online, or hybrid, course will include videos, assigned supplemental readings, assignments, and tests. All materials, including the class required textbook, may be found or accessed via Blackboard.

**Attendance:** **You must have a consistent, functioning internet connection to take this course.** As this may be 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. **If you are in the hybrid class, you are expected to have excellent attendance (we only meet once a week face-to-face).** 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 content page thoroughly and check announcements/emails daily.** Course rules and expectations are subject to change. 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 assignments or quizzes, you will be dropped from the class with a failing grade with no further warning.** If you repeatedly fail to submit required work on time, you may be dropped from the class at the discretion of the instructor. **You must complete Quiz 1 by the census date or you will be automatically dropped.**

## **GENERAL POLICIES**

- ❖ **Behavior:** 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 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. When emailing, please be sure to include your full name, the course number, and section number in the subject line of your email. Ex. GOVT 2305-152; the course number is 2305, the section number is 152. Ex. GOVT 2305-604; the course number is 2305, the section number is 604.
- ❖ **Academic Honesty:** Honesty is the expected standard. **Plagiarism, using AI (artificial intelligence) technology to generate answers, and cheating (copying answers from an outside source or another student) 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

For information regarding Intellectual Exchange, Disabilities, Non-Discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) Team, and Campus Concealed Carry, please use the following link: [Syllabus Statements \(southplainscollege.edu\)](https://southplainscollege.edu/syllabus-statements).

### **REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO COVID-19:**

If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms, please do not attend class and either seek medical attention or test for COVID-19.

- Cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- Fever or chills
- Muscles or body aches
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- New loss of taste and smell

Please also notify **DeEtte Edens**, BSN, RN, Associate Director of Health & Wellness, at [dedens@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:dedens@southplainscollege.edu) or 806-716-2376. Proof of a positive test is required. A home test is sufficient but students must submit a photo of the positive result. The date of test must be written on the test result and an ID included in the photo. If tested elsewhere (clinic, pharmacy, etc.), please submit a copy of the doctor's note or email notification. Results may be emailed to DeEtte Edens, BSN, RN at [dedens@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:dedens@southplainscollege.edu).

**A student is clear to return to class without further assessment from DeEtte Edens, BSN, RN if they have completed the 5-day isolation period, symptoms have improved, and they are without fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Students must communicate with DeEtte Edens, BSN, RN prior to their return date if still symptomatic at the end of the 5-day isolation. Please note that day 0 is the date of positive test. Day 1 begins the first full day after the date of positive result.**

***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.**

\*\*\*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.\*\*\*

**Evaluation Method:**

<b>14 Quizzes</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>3 Exams (including Final Exam)</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>10 Assignments/Video Assignments</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>3 Discussions with responses</b>	<b>10%</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 14 quizzes over materials. Should a student miss a reading quiz deadline they will not be allowed to make-up the quiz without instructor approval. You will be allowed up to **TWO** attempts for each quiz for the **average grade** of your attempts (you do not have to take quizzes twice, but this will prevent those who might wish to “preview” questions rather than properly preparing).

**Assignments:** There will be a significant amount of assignments in this class (not all will require the same amount of effort). These assignments are designed to expand student understanding and knowledge. Late assignments will receive deductions of **10 points each day late** and **will not be accepted after 5 days**. Remember that individual assignments will have a greater impact on your grade than missing a single quiz or a single discussion thread. It would always be best to complete all assignments rather than attempt to offset a zero in this category of evaluation. Please be advised, depending on the length of an assignment, it may take between 1-2 weeks to grade. If you have any questions, please just send an email to me.

**Discussion Threads:** Every semester I create a discussion thread to discuss current events related to government. Carefully read the handout (on blackboard) detailing discussions and how to receive full credit. Discussions consist of an initial post of 500 words (including at least two outside sources) as well as two fully developed 150-word responses to two different classmates. As with assignments, an automatic deduction of 10 points will be assessed each day late and will not be accepted after 5 days.

**Exams:** There will be three exams including the final exam. Exams will consist of both multiple-choice, and short answer questions or identifications. **“Make-up” exams** will be allowed **with prior notification**, but may require documentation. Students wishing to take a make-up exam must apply to the instructor via email. **There will be no “make-ups” for the FINAL EXAM due to time constraints.**

## Tentative Course Schedule for Pacing

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this schedule including adding readings and assignments. The instructor will endeavor to give you as much advanced notice as possible for any changes. It is best practice to read at least one chapter a week. Reading is required and essential for success in this class.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Exercises/Activities</b>
<b>1</b>	Roots of American Government	Ch. 1 Declaration of Independence, Locke's "Second Treatise"	
<b>2-3</b>	The Constitution	Ch. 2 The U.S. Constitution Federalist 10, 51	Quizzes 1-3 Assignment 1-2 Discussion 1
<b>4</b>	The Federal System	Ch. 3	<b>EXAM 1 (Ch. 1-3)</b>
<b>5</b>	Congress	Ch. 6 Excerpts from Fenno's, <i>Homestyle</i>	
<b>6</b>	The Presidency	Ch. 7 Federalist 70 Neustadt's, "Presidential Power."	
<b>7</b>	The Bureaucracy	Ch. 8	
<b>8</b>	The Judiciary	Ch. 9 Federalist 78 Judicial Activism and Judicial	
<b>9-10</b>	Civil Liberties	Ch. 4	Quizzes 4-9 Assignments 3-8 Discussion 2
<b>11</b>	Civil Rights	Ch. 5	<b>EXAM 2 (Ch. 4-9)</b>
<b>12</b>	Public Opinion, Political Socialization	Ch. 10	
<b>13-14</b>	Political Parties Interest Groups	Ch. 11 Ch. 14	
<b>15</b>	Campaigns and Elections The News Media	Ch. 12 Ch. 13	Quizzes 10-14 Assignments 9-10 Discussion 3
<b>***</b>	Social and Economic Policy	Chapter 15	
<b>***</b>	Foreign and Defense Policy	Chapter 16	
<b>16</b>	<b>Finals Week</b>	<b>Will not be cumulative</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM (Ch. 10-14)</b>

\*\*\* There are times that these chapters are addressed with the Legislature, the Presidency, and the Bureaucracy. Please follow instructor announcements\*\*\*

### **SPC Tutors**

Tutoring is FREE for all currently enrolled students. Make an appointment or drop-in for help at any SPC location or online! Visit the link below to learn more about how to book an appointment, view the tutoring schedule, and view tutoring locations.

<http://www.southplainscollege.edu/exploreprograms/artsandsciences/teacheredtutoring.php>

### **Tutor.com**

You also have 180 FREE minutes of tutoring with Tutor.com each week, and your hours reset every Monday morning. Log into Blackboard, click on the tools option from the left-hand menu bar. Click on the Tutor.com link and you will automatically be logged in for free tutoring. You may access tutor.com tutors during the following times:

Monday – Thursday: 8pm-8am, Friday: 6pm – 8am Monday morning.

**For questions regarding tutoring, please email [tutoring@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:tutoring@southplainscollege.edu) or call 806-716-2538.**