

**GOVERNMENT 2301
American Government I**

**Western Texas College
Department of Social Sciences**

- I. Basic Course Information
 - A. Course description - Introductory course in the theory and practice of government and politics in America at the national, state, and local levels, with special emphases on Texas. Topics include: United States and Texas constitutions; federalism; civil liberties and rights; political socialization and public opinion; political parties; interest groups; political participation, including voting; electoral processes; the media. Note: GOVT 2301 will complete the Texas requirement in government for those who already have three semester hours in U.S. Government and need three additional semester hours that include the government, history and constitution of Texas.
 - B. Prerequisites - Student should have a proficiency in reading and writing.
- II. Student Learning Outcomes
 - A. The student will evaluate political essays for argument, purpose, point of view, reasoning, and reliability by completing a minimum score of 70 on a departmental issued article evaluation exercise.
 - B. The student will analyze contemporary political events by completing a minimum score of 70 in a written essay of 300 words or more.
- III. Major Course Requirements
 - A. Exams: There will be three to four major exams spaced throughout the semester. Exam questions may include any combination of the following: True/false, multiple choice, fill in the blanks, short answer, and essay.
 - B. Writing Assignments: There will be multiple writing assignments spaced throughout the semester.
 - C. Collaborative Exercises: There will be multiple collaborative exercises spaced throughout the semester. Each of these assignments will require you to work with your peers analyzing documents, articles, and other information relating to the study of government.
 - D. Forum/Discussion Participation: There will be several discussion forums spaced throughout the semester. Each discussion will take place on-line, making use of the College's on-line platform—*Moodle*.
- IV. Information on Books and Other Course Materials

TITLE	FIRST AUHOR LISTED	ISBN	EDITION
American Government and Politics Today 2011-2012 Edition	Steffen W. Schmidt	9780495910664	15th Edition
Texas Politics Today, 2011-2012 Edition,	William Earl Maxwell	9780495909484	15th Edition
Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Political Issues	George McKenna, Stanley Feingold	9780078050329	18th Edition

- V.
- VI. Other Policies: Please refer to the WTC Course [Catalog](#) for the following:

- A. Campus Calendar
- B. Final Exam schedule
- C. How to drop a class
- D. Withdrawal information
- E. Student Conduct/Academic Integrity
- F. Students with disabilities.

VII. Course Organization & Tentative Schedule*

Week	Topics	Reading Assignments
Week 1	Course Introduction	
Week 2-3	Introduction to Government & Democracy	<i>Schmidt, Chapter 1 Taking Sides Issue</i>
Week 4-5	Historic Foundations: National & State Constitutions	<i>Schmidt, Chapter 2 & 19 Taking Sides Issue</i>
Week 6	Federalism	<i>Schmidt, Chapter 3 Taking Sides Issue</i>
Week 7	Political Ideology & Political Socialization	<i>Schmidt, Chapter 6 Taking Sides Issue</i>
Week 8	Political Parties	<i>Schmidt, Chapters 8 & 21 Taking Sides Issue</i>
Week 9	Campaigns and Elections	<i>Schmidt, Chapters 9 & 22 Taking Sides Issue</i>
Week 10	Interest Group Activities	<i>Schmidt, Chapters 7 & 20 Taking Sides Issue</i>
Week 11	Public Opinion & the Mass Media	<i>Schmidt, Chapter 6 & 10 Taking Sides Issue</i>
Week 12	Civil Liberties	<i>Schmidt, Chapter 4 Taking Sides Issue</i>
Week 13-14	Civil Rights	<i>Schmidt, Chapter 5 Taking Sides Issue</i>
Week 15	Review	
Week 16	Final Exam	

*The above schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change.

Last Modified: August 18, 2015