

**South Plains College**  
**GOVT 2305**  
**Section 154**  
**Fall 2017**  
**Federal Government**

**Online Course**

**Name:** Professor Britt Bearden

**Biography:** BA Texas Tech University; MA Texas Tech University; Additional Courses: South Plains College and George Mason University. Congressional Intern: Office of Congressman Pete Gallego, Summer 2013; Field Representative: Texas Democratic Party, 2014.

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**Office:** Reese Center, Building 3, Room 316E

**Office Hours:** Monday - Thursday: 12:45pm-2:15pm, Friday: 12:15pm-2:15pm. Professor is unavailable from noon on Friday till 7AM on Monday as well as on college holidays.

**Common Course**

**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, Lubbock

**Textbook:** Varies according to instructor, Refer to each instructor's instructions for textbook requirements.

**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:

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 I 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

**INSTRUCTOR SYLLABUS**

**Course Description :** This course is a survey of the fundamental principles of political science, including, and more emphasis of, the American system of government and the origins and development of the Constitution of the United States. Its emphasis is placed on constitutional

backgrounds and the organization and functions of the executive, legislative, and judicial segments of the national government, civil liberties and civil rights, public opinion, media, bureaucracies, and domestic and foreign policy. 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.

**Required Textbook:**

Ginsberg, Benjamin, Theodore Lowi, Caroline Tolbert, Margaret Weir. 2016. *We the People: Eleventh Edition*. W.W. Norton & Company.

Other Readings will be posted on Blackboard.

**Course Grade:** Your grade is determined by your performance on the four parts of this course: Attendance, Discussion Postings, Quizzes, and Exams:

Grading Scale

100 – 90% A

89 – 80% B

79 – 70% C

69 – 60% D

59% and below F

Note: Calculating Your Grade: "My Grades" shows the grades you receive throughout the course. Your professor will not calculate your grade for you. You will NOT have the opportunity to earn extra credit points during the course.

## **Coursework:**

### Assignment Overview:

- 30% Discussions (4)
- 30% Quizzes (5)
- 40% Exams (3)

(1) Discussion Postings: Four times throughout the semester you will write a discussion post which will be your reaction to an article related to U.S. government. Each week these posts are assigned, 5 articles will be posted on Blackboard that Monday by 12pm CST, it is the student's choice of which article they which to write about. These discussions are due Sunday of that week at 12am CST. This portion of the course accounts for 25% of your grade.

- Your posting must begin with the title of the article. These original posts must be at least 400 words in length. The first paragraph must be a brief overview telling about the contents of the article and then the second paragraph must be an extensive reaction (your thoughts about the topic).
- More information will be provided about these assignments when they are assigned.

(2) Quizzes: Five times through out the semester there will be a quiz posted on Blackboard. These quizzes will be posted on Mondays before 12pm CST and due by Friday of that week by 12am CST. Quizzes will be short and consist of 10 or more multiple choice questions regarding current topics from both readings and lectures. These will be timed quizzes, and students will be given 12 minutes to take these quizzes. This portion of the course will account for 25% of your grade.

(3) Exams: Three times throughout the semester students will take an exam posted on Blackboard. This includes your final exam. Exams will be posted on Mondays before 12pm CST and due by Friday of that week by 12am CST. These exams will consist of 40 multiple choice and you will have 50 minutes to complete these once you have started. These exams will account for 40% of your grade.

## **Course Requirements, Expectations, and Policies**

**Make-up and Late Work Policy:** Only one major exam (not the final) can be made-up. For make-ups you will be required to be in Reese on a Saturday morning to take an extensive comprehensive essay exam covering the entire course. No late work will be accepted for any other component of the course.

**Drop Policy:** If you miss 6 TT/MW class meetings or 9 MWF class meetings, you will be dropped from the course. Otherwise, it is your responsibility to drop the course. Since this is an online course this works a bit differently. If you have not completed an assignment before the first Exam you will be dropped. Likewise if you miss more than four assignments (not including finals) you will be dropped.

**Technology Problems:** If you have an unreliable server or computer, please go to a public computer to do your work. If for some reason the professor of the Blackboard server has made a mistake, you will not be penalized. Be aware that when something only happens to you, it is your problem. The professor is not responsible for natural events or acts of terrorism. Please always start early on assignments and finish early to avoid problems.

### **SPC Standard Disability Statement**

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) & Lubbock Center 806-716-4675, or Plainview Center (Main Office) 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611.

### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

South Plains College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Vice President for Student Affairs, South Plains College -1401 College Avenue, Box 5, Levelland, TX 79336, 806-894-9611

**Saving Your Answers:** When taking an exam, make sure that you SAVE your answers, wait a minute or two, then submit your exam. Make sure you accomplish this before your time expires for the exam. If you do not follow this procedure, I will receive no response from you and you will receive a zero for that assessment.

**Calculating Your Grade:** "My Grades" shows the grades you receive throughout the course. If you wish to calculate your current grade: Divide your current points to date by the number of possible points you could have made to this point. Your professor will not calculate your grade for you.

**Release of Grades:** Your discussion and exam grades will be released after the period to complete the assignment has ended. Normally that will be at the end of the next day. If there is a delay, your professor will let you know.

**Disruption of Classroom Environment:** Your professor will not tolerate any disruption of the classroom environment. This includes any problems your facilitator encounters with you AND hateful/disrespectful remarks made in the classroom, on discussion postings, mail, or chat. I will drop you with an F for violation of this policy. If you are habitually late to class I will drop you from the class with an X. If you are using your cell or your cell "rings" in class, you will be dropped from the class. Silence or turn off your phone during my class.

**Cheating/Dishonesty:** Cheating or dishonesty of any type in this course will result in the student being dropped from this course with an "F."

**Chatting in Discussion Postings:** Discussion postings are not a format to chat with fellow students. You will receive a zero for the entire posting assignment if you violate this policy.

**Academic English:** South Plains College requires all students to become proficient in "academic English," a form of English that is typically used in academic, professional, and business contexts. While slang, regional idioms, and informal kinds of self-expression are appropriate in some contexts, they are out of place in academic writing. Writing instructors and professors in courses across the campus expect all students to demonstrate proficiency in using the conventions of academic English in their written work, whether it is in-class exams or take-home essays.

## **Course Schedule and Readings**

### **Week 1: Introduction - The Founding**

- The Declaration of Independence
- Constitution
- Textbook Chapter 2

### **Week 2: The Founding and Federalism**

- Textbook Chapter 2 continued
- Textbook Chapter 3
- **Quiz 1**

### **Week 3: Branches of Government and Separation of Powers**

- **Discussion Due 9/17 @ 12am Midnight**
- Textbook Chapter 3

### **Week 4: Branches of Government and Separation of Powers, Continued**

- Textbook Chapter 4
- Textbook Chapter 5
- Bill of Rights (First 10 Amendments of the Constitution)
- Textbook Chapter 12
- **Quiz 2**



**Week 5: Branches of Government and Separation of Powers, Continued**  
**Discussion Due 10/1 @ 12am Midnight**

- Textbook Chapter 13
- **Exam 1**

**Week 6: Public Opinion and American Political Culture**

- Textbook Chapter 1
- Textbook Chapter 6
- **Quiz 3**

**Week 7: Media**

- Textbook Chapter 7

**Week 8: Participation and Voting**

- Textbook Chapter 8

**Week 9: Political Parties**

**Discussion Due 10/29 @ 12am Midnight**

- Textbook Chapter 9
- Federalist Papers No. 10

**Week 10: Campaigns and Elections**

- Textbook Chapter 10
- Federal Papers No. 50
- **Quiz 4**

**Week 11: Groups and Interests**

- Textbook Chapter 11
- **Exam 2**

**Week 12: Government and the Economy**

- Textbook Chapter 14
- Textbook Chapter 15

- **Quiz 5**

### **Week 13: Social Policy**

- Textbook Chapter 15

### **Week 14: Social Policy Continued**

#### **Discussion Due 12/3 @ 12am Midnight**

- Textbook Chapter 16
- Textbook Chapter 17

### **Week 15: Foreign Policy and Democracy**

- Textbook Chapter 17
- Textbook Chapter 18

### **Week 16: Finals Week**

- **Exam 3**

#### **Key Assignment Dates:**

- September 8th: Due Quiz 1
- September 17th: Discussion 1 Due
- September 22nd: Due Quiz 2
- September 29th: Due Exam 1
- October 1st: Discussion 2 Due
- October 6th: Due Quiz 3
- October 29th: Discussion 3 Due
- November 3rd: Due Quiz 4
- November 10th: Due Exam 2
- November 17th: Due Quiz 5
- December 3rd: Discussion 4 Due
- Final Exam TBA