

South Plains College

GOVT 2305

SPRING 2026

## Federal Government

Online Course

Professor Drew Landry  
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Lubbock Downtown Center, Office 1016A

Office Phone Number: (806) 716 – 4032

Student Hours: MW: 2:30 – 4:30pm; TR: 12:30 – 1:30pm; F: 10am – 12pm (noon)

*\*No student hours during finals week*

### Common Course

**Department:** Social Sciences

**Discipline:** Government

**Course Number:** GOVT 2305

**Course Title:** Federal Government

**Credit:** 3 Lecture, 0 Lab

**This course partially satisfies a core curriculum requirement:** Government/Political Science Foundational Component Area (070)

**Available Formats:** Conventional (Fully Face-to-Face), Fully Online, Hybrid, ITV

**Campus:** Levelland, Downtown Center, Plainview, Dual Credit

**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:** 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.

**Course Objectives addressed:**

1. **critical thinking:** to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
2. **communication:** to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
3. **social responsibility:** to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
4. **personal responsibility:** to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

**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.

**Student Learning Outcomes Assessment:** A writing assignment rubric will be used to determine the extent of improvement that the students have gained during the semester.

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

**Attendance Policy:** Students must make every effort to attend face-to-face courses. Whenever absences become excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the instructor may recommend that the student withdraw from the course. Each instructor will have additional information about attendance on his/her course information sheet.

**Dropping a Course:** Students may drop courses through Texan Connect, the Admissions and Records Office, or Advising and Testing Center through the late registration period.

After late registration has closed, a student must complete the online [Student Initiated Drop Request](#) to drop a course. Students may also drop courses in person at any campus location by completing a Student Initiated Drop Form. Complete a [Student Initiated Drop Form](#) and return the signed form to the Levelland Admissions and Records Office, the Student Support Center at the Lubbock Downtown Center, the Lubbock Career and Technical Center, or Plainview Center. You must have a picture ID to complete the drop.

A mark of "W" will be given for student-initiated drops that occur prior to and through the last day to drop as indicated in the online Academic Calendar found here: <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/academiccalendar/index.php>.

**Syllabus Statements:** For information about Artificial Intelligence, Disabilities, Non-Discrimination, Intellectual Exchange, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) Team, Campus Concealed Carry, and COVID-19, please use this link: <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/>.

## **Course Description**

This course is a survey of the organizational 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 policies. This course satisfies the Legislative requirements for teacher certification.

## **Course Requirements/Expectations**

This is an online distance learning course. It takes a great deal of discipline, self-motivation, and effective time management to successfully complete an online course. Many students find it helpful to set aside specific times each week to work on the course.

While this course requires no prior knowledge of American politics, there is considerable reading related to a wide range of topics. It is essential that students complete the weekly readings before attempting to complete the assignments. We cover a great deal of material so it is critical that you take careful notes and keep abreast of the readings and assignments. If you feel you need extra help in managing the course materials, contact me and I will help you.

## **Required Textbook**

### **Comes as an E-Book with the Class**

Schmidt, S.W., Shelley, M.C., Bardes, B.A., & King, B.R. (2025). *American Government and Politics Today: Brief 12<sup>th</sup> Edition* Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

This course is part of your TexBook program, which means you don't need to purchase a textbook or access code for this course. TexBook is the required content (either an eBook or online Courseware) for your course, and is provided for you via the Bibliu platform from day one of class.

- Cost of TexBook: this required content is provided as part of a Program called 'Inclusive Access', which means that content is provided for you at the lowest price available from the publisher. The cost for this is included in your tuition.
- How to access your digital content via Bibliu: you can access your material via the Bibliu link inside your Blackboard Course, or directly via the Bibliu app. If you have issues with this, please contact your professor, the Bookstore Manager or Bibliu Support (see below).
- The Bibliu platform: you can use the Bibliu platform to enhance your learning experience, with features including: highlighting, notes and reading text aloud. For more details and support on how to use Bibliu, please visit the [BibliU support pages](#), or contact Bibliu support via the email: [support@bibliu.com](mailto:support@bibliu.com)
- Opting out: you can Opt-Out of the TexBook Program, up until the Opt-Out deadline, via the banner displayed when you open the Bibliu platform. Remember that Opt-Out deadlines vary by term, and if you choose to Opt-Out you will lose access to this low price option, and will need to purchase the content through a different method. If you opt-Out, the fee will be refunded to your account.

Useful contacts:

1. Bibliu Support: email [support@bibliu.com](mailto:support@bibliu.com)
2. Bookstore Manager: Christian Bruno - [christian.bruno@bibliu.com](mailto:christian.bruno@bibliu.com)
3. Bookstore Text Coordinator: Trish Wells - [patricia.wells@bibliu.com](mailto:patricia.wells@bibliu.com)

### **Syllabus Agreement**

Every student has four (4) days to examine the syllabus. By remaining in this course beyond that point, the student indicates his/her acceptance of the syllabus. Any student who remains in the class beyond the first week, agrees to comply with the rules expressed or implied in this syllabus.

### **Grading Policy**

All quizzes, exams, and essays have specific due dates and are given in every assignment. All assignments are due by a precise time in the Central Time Zone (either Standard or Daylight Saving). It is up to the student to keep track time differences should she/he leave Central Time and enter another. The last assignment is due Friday, May 1, 2026, at 5pm (CDT).

#### **Quizzes**

This course will be fairly straightforward. You will read one chapter a week and then take its corresponding quiz. Quizzes will consist of multiple-choice questions, true/false statements, or matching exercises worth one point apiece and cover various subjects throughout the chapter. Because every quiz is part of a chapter and has a different number of questions, the final tally of points per quiz varies.

Students may work ahead but not backwards on the quizzes. Every unit has a specific due date and they are made known to students; however, only a doctor's note will allow students to work on an essay or quiz once the due date expires. To put plainly and explicitly, late work is not accepted. Once students complete all of the assignments, they have successfully finished the course.

You have two opportunities to complete each quiz but your last attempt will be recorded, **not** your highest grade. This is done to measure your judgment on how well you know the content.

### Exams

There are three exams in this course. Two are worth 110 points and one is worth 100 points. They cover the institutions and will appear towards the end of the semester.

### Essay

Essays will appear throughout the semester. The purpose of this is to test students' ability to analyze information, make connections to the chapters, and write proficiently at the collegiate level.

Students may use outside sources on the essays but must cite the source in-text (using the source in your essay) and in the bibliography. Students must cite sources in APA format.

Failure to cite a source when the student's submission is not his/her own idea is considered plagiarism and will not be tolerated. Please see the plagiarism section for more information.

Emailed and/or late essays will not be accepted nor graded.

### Grading Essays

Essays are graded upon how well students address the prompt, the clarity of the answer, sources are used, and students followed the directions. That is not an exhaustive list but is generally how the grading goes. Please remember, grading essays is a qualitative effort that takes time, and notes are given to students for constructive improvement. Also remember, not all feedback is negative so do not construe given notes as something damaging to the essay.

One other note about grading essays is plagiarism and AI use. After your essay is submitted through TurnItIn/SafeAssign, I immediately check for AI use. If your paper returns a high percentage of such, you will fail the assignment and no attempts to redo will be granted. With that in mind, do not use programs like Grammarly, Chegg, ChatGPT, Google's Gemini, or even Microsoft Word's CoPilot and/or text predictor (or any AI program) to aid you in these assignments. Use of such will be detected as AI and punishments that are set in the syllabus will be enforced. Remember, it is easier to do the assignment honestly than it is to cheat.

Finally, no rubric will be given because this is not a high school class nor should you be confined to a specific standard when addressing complex political issues.

### Journal Entries

There will be a few journal entries during the semester. The links to the available discussion board will be located in the appropriate module.

The entry may concern a topic in your reading or an outside article that coincides with the chapter topic. Your entries are essential as each one is worth fifty (50) points.

### Grading Entries

Students are expected to meet the given criteria on every journal entry. These are opinion driven entries so students must, first, directly address the prompt by giving a thesis, second, support your thesis with evidence, and third conclude your thoughts. Should a student inadequately perform these tasks, grade deductions will take place.

Finally, there will be no extra credit or bonus available for students.

### Rounding

On the issue of “rounding up” on grades, I have a strict but fair policy. I do not “round up” for any border line student unless that student has at least a “.9.” If a student has not attained a “.9,” then he/she’s grade will not be “rounded up.”

### Calculating Grades

In calculating final grades, I keep it simple. I divide the points a student accumulates over the semester by the total points possible, then multiply that answer by one hundred (100). The result of the calculations will be the student’s percentage for the semester.

### Grading Scale

100 – 90%	A
89 – 80%	B
79 – 70%	C
69 – 60%	D
59% and below	F

### Grade Breakdown

4 Journal Entries(4 worth 50 points each)= 200 points

15 Quizzes (all vary in points) = 102 points

3 Exams (2 worth 110, 1 worth 100) = 320 points

2 Essays (each worth 120 points) = 240 points

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Total Points Possible: 862

At the end of the semester, I will not respond to any student who wishes to plead for a grade change. Students need to keep track of their grades throughout the semester.

### Communications

There are many methods to contact me. The top of the syllabus has my email if a quick explanation will suffice your question; and my office number if you need an over the phone conversation. I am dedicated to one business day response to any correspondence from you. Odds are in favor of me getting back to you sooner than that. If there is an emergency – which is defined as a test failing on you via a Blackboard failure – then you should email me – at my SPC email – immediately.

Do NOT send me any messages through Blackboard as that medium will not be checked.

**When sending me an email, please put the class you are enrolled in the subject line. That will immediately help me find your information and help you.**

Please note that I do not use exclamation points, gifs, memes, emojis, etc., in my email correspondence with students. The fact that I write declarative sentences ending with periods gives students the impression that I am rude. I promise that I am not being rude when I write or respond to emails. Please read them in a robotic, informative manner because that is how they are written and delivered.

Also understand sending me several emails in a short amount of time does not help the situation. Please, only send me one email concerning whatever the issue is. Several, short emails do not motivate me to assist you any faster than if you sent me one. Please bear that in mind. If you emailed me using the correct email address, you will receive an automatic email informing you that I got your email and will respond accordingly.

## **Attendance Policy**

Regulating attendance in an online course is tricky. With that being stated, students will be considered “no longer attending” after two (2) consecutive incomplete essay assignments *and* not informing me the reason for such inaction. This is the fairest action for all students. The point of this is twofold: do not miss any assignments and notify me immediately if you will miss.

For more information concerning the attendance policy, please see the South Plains College [Student Guide](#).

## **Academic Integrity**

It is the aim of the faculty of South Plains College to foster a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own any work which he or she has not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a most serious offense and renders the offender liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension.

**Cheating:** Dishonesty of any kind on examinations or on written assignments, illegal possession of examinations, the use of unauthorized notes during an examination, obtaining information during an examination from the textbook or from the examination paper of another student, assisting others to cheat, alteration of grade records, use of A.I. software, illegal entry, or unauthorized presence in an office are examples of cheating.

Complete honesty is required of the student in the presentation of any and all phases of course work. This applies to quizzes of whatever length, as well as to final examinations, to daily reports and to term papers.

**Plagiarism:** Offering the work of another as one’s own, without proper acknowledgment, is plagiarism; therefore, any student who fails to give credit for quotations or essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines and other reference works, or from the themes, reports or other writings of fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism.

### *Punishment for Plagiarism*

Any student who commits plagiarism and is caught in doing so will be punished on the first offense with a zero (0) for the grade. If a student commits and is caught on a second offense of plagiarism, the professor will seek the removal of the student from the course with an F for the grade, report the student to the Dean of Students, and may suggest the student’s expulsion from the college. For more information concerning this policy, please consult the [SPC Student Guide](#).

## **Academic English**

South Plains College requires all students to become proficient in “academic English,” a form of English 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. Professors expect all students to demonstrate proficiency in using the conventions of academic English in all their written work, whether it is in – class exams or take-home essays.

**Statements on Intellectual Exchange, Disabilities, Nondiscrimination, Title IX, C.A.R.E., COVID, and Campus Carry**

Please visit <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/> for the aforementioned information.

**Computer Issues**

Having access to a properly functioning and updated computer is absolutely necessary for this course. Students may arrange to visit the SPC computer lab, library, your local library, or someone else's computer, but using the excuse of a crashed computer will not be accepted for failing to complete tests or assignments. If a student does not have access to a functional computer, then do not take this course. Computer problems of any kind will not be excused. That is the nature of this computer course. If any student finds that unacceptable, then do not take the course.

**Technical Support**

Email [blackboard@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:blackboard@southplainscollege.edu) or call 806-716-2180 for any and all technical problems with the Blackboard software (they are much better than me at solving computer problems).

**South Plains College Libraries and Computer Labs**

South Plains College has many library and computer lab locations. Feel free to find them and their hours of operation by clicking on the link below.

<http://www.southplainscollege.edu/information-for/current-spc-students/library.php>

**Student Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the student to make sure all tests have been completed by their due date. Any test not completed by the due date automatically receives a zero (0). Computer problems or mechanical failures are not considered acceptable excuses for late tests or assignments. You are highly encouraged not to wait until the last minute to complete tests. Technical and personal problems are not considered acceptable excuses for late tests.

**Financial Aid and Advising Assistance**

If you need assistance with financial aid or your course schedule you can contact the following:

Financial Aid:  
806-894-9611 Ext. 3800  
[finaid@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:finaid@southplainscollege.edu)

Advising:  
806-716-2368 or 806-716-2366

**Amendments**

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus at any time. Students will be notified of such change(s) with appropriate time to adapt.

## **Illness related Absences**

### **Tests and Assignments**

If you are unable to access the class for an extended period of time due to personal illness or COVID-19 related quarantine, we can plan for you to make up any missed work. A doctor's note stating such must be emailed to me when receiving one.

### **Makeup of assignment(s) and exam(s)**

If a student misses an assignment(s) and/or exam(s) due to an illness, a doctor's note will be required in order to make up the assignment and/or exam. The note must cover the dates you missed, which must coincide with your missing assignment(s) and/or exam(s).

## **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>

## **Brainfuse**

You also have 180 free minutes of tutoring with Brainfuse each week, and your hours reset every Monday morning. Log into Blackboard, and click on the tools option from the left-hand menu bar. Click on the Brainfuse link and you will automatically be logged in for free tutoring. You may access Brainfuse tutors during the following times: Monday – Thursday: 8 pm-8 am; 6pm Friday – 8am Monday.

**For questions regarding tutoring, please email [tutoring@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:tutoring@southplainscollege.edu) or call 806-716-224**

## Schedule

Week	Assignment	Due Date (in CS/DT)	Location
1	Module Work #1	Sunday, January 18, 5pm	Unit One Module
2	Module Work #2	Friday, January 23 5pm	Unit One Module
3	Module Work #3	Friday, January 30, 5pm	Unit One Module
4	Module Work #4	Friday, February 6, 5pm	Unit One Module
5	Module Work #5	Friday, February 13, 5pm	Unit Two Module
6	Module Work #6	Friday, February 20, 5pm	Unit Two Module
7	Module Work #7	Friday, February 27, 5pm	Unit Two Module
8	Module Work #8	Friday, March 6, 5pm	Unit Two Module
9	Module Work #9	Friday, March 13, 5pm	Unit Two Module
10	Module Work #10	Friday, March 27, 5pm	Unit Three Module
12	Module Work #11	Friday, April 10, 5pm	Unit Three Module
15	Module Work #12	Friday, May 1, 5pm	Unit Three Module

## Confirmation

Upon completion of reading the syllabus, please email me at [dlandry@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:dlandry@southplainscollege.edu) with the subject heading “Read the Syllabus” and state one thing you learned from the “Grading Policy” section. Please complete this task no later than 5pm Friday, January 16.