

GOVT 2305: Federal Government



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Office Hours

Online Office Hours: Wednesday 12-2 p.m.

About Your Instructor: I obtained my PhD in Political Science at the University of California, Davis, with specialization in American Politics and Political Theory.

Preferred Method of Communication:

E-mail: sprice@odessa.edu

Please contact me through your **student email account only**, not from your personal, non-academic email accounts. If you contact me through these other accounts, it is 1) difficult to realize that it is one of my students, and 2) possible that it might get filtered into the spam folder. **When you do email me, please note the course and section number in the subject line of your email.** That way, I will get to your email sooner when wading through the vast number of messages a day that I receive. Putting this information in the subject line will help ensure that your message takes priority. Please refer to this syllabus prior to emailing me with a question about course policies.

Expectations for Engagement for Instructor:

As an instructor, I understand the importance of clear, timely communication with my students. In order to maintain sufficient communication, I will

- provide my contact information at the beginning of the syllabus;
- respond to all messages within 24 hours if received Monday through Thursday, and within 48 hours if received Friday through Sunday; and,
- notify students of any extended times that I will be unavailable and provide them with alternative contact information (for me or for my supervisor) in case of during the time I am unavailable.

As an instructor, I understand that my students will work to the best of their abilities to fulfill the course requirements. In order to help them in this area, I will

- provide clear information about grading policies and assignment requirements in the course syllabus, and
- communicate any changes to assignments and/or to the course calendar to students as quickly as possible.

As an instructor, I understand that I need to provide regular, timely feedback to students about their performance in the course. To keep students informed about their progress, I will

- post grades for discussion postings within one week of the discussion thread closing.
- provide grades for major assignments within 2 weeks of the due date or at least 3 days before the next major assignment is due, whichever comes first.

Textbook Information and Required Hardware/Software

Textbook:

The textbook for this course is AM GOV 2013-2014 by Losco and Baker.

ISBN: 0077409930



Hardware and Software:

*The online course content will work better the more up to date your computer is. Please try to do what you can to make these updates happen. Make sure that your system meets the requirements specified on Blackboard before signing up for an online course. A **functional computer** (whether your own, a library's, or a parent's) is **necessary for success in this course**, and you will need to use your computer quite frequently. If this is a problem, please consider taking the course in the traditional, campus-based manner. Again, remember that the Student Success Center (inside the LRC) provides computers, tutors, and a good environment to test in. If you run into a (technical) problem, there's someone to help right away. Call 432-335-6878 for additional information. Please also see the "Expectations for Students: Course Participation" section located in this document.*

Websites: <https://blackboard.odessa.edu/>

You will need to access Blackboard several times per week. Please make sure you can do this before enrolling in this course and keep track of your due dates for assignments.

Information About the Course: GOVT 2305

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.

Since this course is conducted entirely online, please make sure to read the section entitled "Student Course Participation" located in this document. If you cannot meet the requirements for an online learning environment, please do not enroll in this course.

Course Prerequisites:

Pass reading on TSIA.

Course Topics:

Unit One: The Constitution, Federalism, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties

Unit Two: Political Institutions- Congress, The Presidency, Courts, The Bureaucracy

Unit Three: Pol. Behavior- Public Opinion, Participation, Interest Groups, Campaigns

Unit Four: Mass Media and Public Policy

Course Tips Specific to Online Learning:

- 1) Do not go over the assigned time limit (120 minutes for the unit exams). **If you go beyond the allotted time, Blackboard will auto-submit your exam.**
- 2) Since you don't have to attend lecture and all of the exams are essentially "**open-book**" with more than ample time to complete them (if you are prepared), there is every opportunity for you to excel in this course. Read and prepare thoroughly. Consider outlining each chapter as you read it. Examine the headings, bold-faced words, and chapter summaries carefully. Use the online resources provided by the textbook publisher.
- 3) Also, please keep in mind that an internet/web course is, to a large extent, self-taught. In exchange for the convenience of not attending class, you'll have to depend heavily on your diligence in order to succeed. **Since there is no lecture component to this course, success is going to depend largely on your reading and comprehension skills.** If you have some doubt(s) about your abilities in this area, you might want to consider enrolling in one of the face-to-face classes instead.

Grading

Type of Assignment	Percentage/Points	
Unit Exams	80% or 400 pts	
Written Assignment	20% or 100 pts	
	100% or 500 points	TOTAL

Assignments:

There will be four unit examinations and one written assignment. These will be found under the “Coursework” tab on the left hand side of Blackboard.

Exams: There will be four (4) unit exams, each worth 100 points. The unit exams will open at the beginning of the associated week. **You must complete the exam by Sunday evening.**

Once you begin the exam, you will have 120 minutes to complete it in one sitting (you cannot close it and come back to it.) However, the exam itself should only take you around 1.5 hours.

Written Assignment: There will be one written assignment worth 100 points, which will be between 2-4 pages and will cover a particular component of American political behavior or institutions and will require you to analyze, evaluate, and describe your chosen topic. I will give you specific expectations when I provide the course prompt.

Assignment Values: Each unit exam will be worth 100 points. The written assignment will be worth 100 points. To calculate your grade, divide the total number of points you have earned by 500 (e.g. 450 points earned on assignments/500 total possible points = 90%, or an A).

Grading Scale: Grades, once posted, are final.

“A” = 90-100, “B” = 80-89, “C” = 70-79, “D” = 60-69, “F” = 0-59

Expectations for Students: Course Participation

As a student, I understand that I am responsible for keeping up with the course. To help with this, I will

- identify alternative computer and internet access in case my primary computer crashes or my internet service is unavailable;
- recognize that the college provides free wi-fi and computer labs during regular campus hours to help me with accessing my course; and,
- understand that my instructor does not have to accept my technical issues as a legitimate reason for late or missing work if my equipment or service is unreliable.

As a student, I understand that it is my responsibility to communicate quickly with the instructor any issue or emergency that will impact my involvement with or performance in the class. This includes, but is not limited to

- getting “kicked off” of the system during tests or quizzes;
- having trouble submitting assignments; and
- dealing with a traumatic personal event.

As a student, I understand that it is my responsibility to understand course material and requirements and to keep up with the course calendar. While my instructor is available for help and clarification, I will

- seek out help from my instructor and/or from tutors;
- ask questions if I don’t understand; and
- access my course several times during the week to keep up with assignments and announcements.

Course Policies

Disclaimer

This syllabus is tentative and subject to change in any part at the discretion of the instructor. Any changes will be in accordance with Odessa College policies. Students will be notified of changes, if any, in timely manner.

Original Effort

The work submitted for this course must be original work prepared by the student enrolled in this course. Efforts will be recognized and graded in terms of individual participation and in terms of ability to collaborate with other students in this course.

Digital Protocol

The electronic recording of the time on Blackboard will be considered the time of assignment submission. Take necessary steps to ensure that your assignments are submitted on “Blackboard” time. Back-up and/or additional copies of all assignments

submitted is encouraged. Computers/printers are available to OC students in the LRC (301-303); therefore, not having access to a computer due to technical issues (crash; corrupted files) will not be considered as an acceptable reason for not completing assignments. If there is a loss of server connection with Odessa College due to maintenance, then an email will be sent to student with pertinent information and status reports.

Attendance Policy

Please keep in mind that this is not a self-paced or an open entry course. It is an internet course that is conducted in much the same way as an on-campus, face-to-face class with regard to deadlines, etc. You will need to be able to access the course daily (including holidays & weekends).

Grading Policy

Grading: All assignments will be graded immediately on Blackboard. When you finish an assignment, you should be able to see your grade then. If you see a problem, please report this to me ASAP. It is the responsibility of the individual taking this course to maintain accurate track of assignment submissions and grades.

Make-up Policy: No extensions will be given for any assignment or examination without a written medical excuse or prior approval from me. There are no make-ups for missed assignments.

General Course Requirements

1. Log-in to the course website several times per week.
2. Complete all reading and assignments by the due dates.
3. Submit assignments on time. Late work will not be accepted. Medical and/or family circumstances that warrant an extension on assignments need to be presented to the instructor. Extensions will be allowed at the instructor's discretion.

Incomplete Policy

An 'Incomplete' grade may be given only if:

1. The student has passed all completed work
2. If he/she has completed a minimum of 75% of the required coursework. A grade of an "I" will only be assigned when the conditions for completions have been discussed and agreed upon by the instructor and the student.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Unit One: The Constitution, Federalism, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties

Week One (July 14-20): Read the following chapters:

Ch. 2- The Constitution, Ch. 3- Federalism, Ch. 4- Civil Liberties,

Ch. 5- Civil Rights

****** Take Exam One: opens July 14, due by end of day July 20******

Unit Two: Political Institutions- Congress, The Presidency, Courts, The Bureaucracy

Week Two (July 21-27): Read the following chapters:

Ch. 11- Congress, Ch. 12- The Presidency, Ch. 13- The Bureaucracy,

Ch. 14- The Courts

******Take Exam Two: opens July 21, due by end of day July 27******

Unit Three: Political Behavior- Public Opinion, Participation, Interest Groups, Campaigns

Week Three (July 28-August 3): Read the following chapters:

Ch. 6- Public Opinion, Ch. 7- Political Participation, Ch. 8- Interest Groups,

Ch. 9- Parties and Political Campaigns

******Take Exam Three: opens July 28, due by end of day August 3******

Unit Four: Mass Media and Public Policy

Week Four (August 4-10): Read the following chapters:

Ch. 10- Media, Ch. 15- Public Policy

******Take Exam Four: opens August 4, due by end of day on August 10******

Week Five (August 11-14): Complete the writing assignment

******Writing Assignment due August 12 by NOON******

Institutional Core Objectives (ICOs)

Description of Institutional Core Objectives (ICOs)

Given the rapid evolution of necessary knowledge and skills and the need to take into account global, national, state, and local cultures, the core curriculum must ensure that students will develop the essential knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college, in a career, in their communities, and in life. Therefore, with the assistance of the Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee, the Coordinating Board has approved guidelines for a core curriculum for all undergraduate students in Texas.

Through the application and assessment of objectives within the institution's core curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world; develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world; and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning. Appropriate Odessa College faculty periodically evaluates all of the courses listed in the descriptions on the pages of the catalog and keys them to Odessa College's Institutional Core Objectives (ICOs), as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). (Source: *Odessa College Catalog of Courses 2012-2013*, page 73)

Odessa College's Institutional Core Objectives (ICOs):

1. *Critical Thinking Skills* - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
2. *Communication Skills* - to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
3. *Empirical and Quantitative Skills* - to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
4. *Teamwork* - to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
5. *Personal Responsibility* - to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making
6. *Social Responsibility* - to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

GOVT 2305 is designed to cover ICOs 1, 2, and 6 at minimum.

Course Objectives: GOVT 2305

Since 1947, the Texas state legislature has required that public college and university students complete six semester-hours in American national, state, and local government. This survey course in Texas government is designed not only to meet that requirement but also to provide you with the basic knowledge and understanding of government activity at the state level. You may also benefit from taking a course such as this by not only learning how government affects your life but how you can affect public policy.

Course Outcomes: GOVT 2305

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- *Explain the origin and development of the American constitution.*
- *Demonstrate an understanding of American political systems and their relationship with state and local government.*
- *Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in the United States.*
- *Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of American government.*
- *Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in the United States.*
- *Analyze the election process.*
- *Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.*
- *Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of the United States.*

Odessa College Policies

Academic Policies

Note that the OC Student Handbook states (page 32) that “[i]n cases of academic dishonesty, the instructor has the authority to impose appropriate scholastic penalties. Complaints or appeals of disciplinary sanctions may be filed in accordance with the college due process procedure. Copies of the college due process procedure are available in the office of The Director of Student Life (CC104).”

For more information on your rights and responsibilities as a student at Odessa College, please refer to the following: *The 411 of OC: Student Handbook 2012-2013; Student Rights & Responsibilities* <http://www.odessa.edu/dept/studenthandbook/handbook.pdf>

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty shall constitute a violation of these rules and regulations and is punishable as prescribed by board policies. Scholastic dishonesty shall include, but not be limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism and collusion.

"Cheating on a test" shall include:

- Copying from another student's test paper
- Using test materials not authorized by the person administering the test.
- Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test without permission from the test administrator.
- Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing or soliciting, in whole or in part, the contents of an unadministered test.
- The unauthorized transporting or removal, in whole or in part, of the contents of the unadministered test.
- Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for one's self, to take a test.

- Bribing another person to obtain an unadministered test or information about an unadministered test.
- "Plagiarism" shall be defined as the appropriating, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own written work.
- "Collusion" shall be defined as the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of course requirements. (Source: Odessa College Student Handbook 2012-2013, page 29-30)

Special Populations/Disability Services/Learning Assistance

Odessa College complies with Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you have any special needs or issues pertaining to your access to and participation in this or any other class at Odessa College, please feel free to contact me to discuss your concerns. You may also call the Office of Disability services at 432-335-6861 to request assistance and accommodations. Odessa College affirms that it will provide access to programs, services and activities to qualified individuals with known disabilities as required by **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)**, unless doing so poses an undue hardship or fundamentally alters the nature of the program or activity. Disabilities may include hearing, mobility or visual impairments as well as hidden disabilities such as chronic medical conditions (arthritis, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disorders, lupus, seizure disorders, etc.), learning disabilities or psychiatric or emotional disabilities. A student who comes to Odessa College with diagnosed disabilities which may interfere with learning may receive accommodations when the student requests them and submits proper documentation of the diagnosis. A Request for Accommodations form and guidelines for beginning the request process are available in the OC Help Center or on the Odessa College web site at <http://www.odessa.edu/dept/counseling/disabilities/index.htm>. The college strives to provide a complete and appropriate range of services for students with disabilities such as assistance with testing, registration, information on adaptive and assistive equipment, tutoring, assistance with access and accommodations for the classroom where appropriate. For information regarding services, students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services in the OC Help Center located in Room 204 of the Student Union Building or call 432-335-6433. (Source: Odessa College Catalog of Courses 2012-2013, page 52)

Dropping a Course or Withdrawing from College

Students wishing to drop a non-developmental course may do so online using WebAdvisor, at the Wrangler Express, or Registrar's Office. A student wishing to drop a developmental course or withdraw from college should obtain a drop or withdrawal form from the Wrangler Express or the Registrar's Office. Students are encouraged to consult with instructors prior to dropping a class. Students may not completely withdraw from the college by use of the Web. Students must drop a class or withdraw from college before the official withdrawal date stated in the class schedule. Students who are part of the Armed Forces Reserves may withdraw with a full refund if the withdrawal is due to their being ordered into active duty. A copy of the student's orders must be presented to the Registrar's Office at the time of the withdrawal. For details, please contact the Office of the Registrar. **No longer attending class does not automatically constitute withdrawal from that class, nor does a student's notification to an instructor that the student wishes to be dropped. Failure of a student to complete the drop/withdrawal process will result in a grade of "F."** (Source: Odessa College Catalog of Courses 2012-2013, page 36)

Student Support Services and Technical Support

Blackboard Support

I can't log into my Blackboard Course, whom do I contact?

Contact the Student Success Center: 432-335-6673 or online at

https://www.odessa.edu/dept/ssc/helpdesk_form.htm. The SSC can provide you with your Blackboard login name. If you are not sure what your password is, they can reset your password.

I'm having a problem in my Blackboard Course, whom do I contact?

For any problem that you have in your online course, always contact your Instructor first. Refer to the Instructor's Contact Information area of the Syllabus for their preferred method of contact and the expected response time.

Additional Blackboard Help Resources:

Service	Assistance Provided	Available
Blackboard Help for Students	Website with a searchable list of topics on how to navigate and use Blackboard for online courses.	Online Click here.
Blackboard On Demand Learning Center for Students	This website provides an extensive list of short tutorial videos for student activities performed in Blackboard.	Online Click here.
Blackboard Collaborate: First Time Users	If you have never used Blackboard Collaborate before, this website provides a system requirements check, configuration instructions, and training and resources area.	Online Click here.
Blackboard Collaborate: Essentials for Participants	This website provides essential information for Participants of Collaborate sessions. Any Collaborate user, whether first-time or experienced, would benefit from reviewing the information here.	Online Click here.

Student E-mail Support

How do I set up, access, or update my Odessa College Student E-mail account?

Go to this website and follow the directions on the page: <http://www.odessa.edu/gmail/>.

I can't access my student email! I forgot my password!

Contact the Student Success Center: 432-335-6673 or online at

https://www.odessa.edu/dept/ssc/helpdesk_form.htm. They can provide you with assistance in accessing your student email (created by OC) and can also assist with resetting your student email password. Make sure to have your student ID number available!

Your Blackboard login name is associated with your OC created student email account. All Correspondence for this course will be submitted using your Odessa College student email address.

Support for Students with Disabilities

How do I contact the Office of Special Populations?

Main Number	432-335-6861
Campus Location	SUB 204N in the Student Union Building
Email	Becky Rivera-Weiss - brivera@odessa.edu
Website	To find out more about services provided by the Special Populations office, please visit: http://www.odessa.edu/dept/counseling/disabilities/index.htm

Learning Resources Center (LRC; Library)

How do I contact the Learning Resource Center?

Main Number	432-335-6640
FAQ Service	LibAnswers: http://libanswers.odessa.edu
Contact a Specific OC Librarian	Pat Quintero at 432/335-6350 or pquintero@odessa.edu Donna Clark at 432/335-6645 or dclark@odessa.edu Carolyn Petersen at 432/335-6641 or cpetersen@odessa.edu
LRC Services and Guidelines Website	https://www.odessa.edu/dept/library/services/index.htm

Equipment and Services Provided:

The Murry H. Fly Learning Resources Center (LRC) supports the college's curriculum resulting in a primary emphasis on each student's individual study and research needs. The faculty and staff work with the LRC's Technical Services and Public Services Departments in choosing materials to support all college programs. More than 59,000 books, 50,000 electronic books, 350 current periodicals, 6,700 media holdings, eight newspapers, and 60 databases are available to enhance the educational process.

Equipment/Services Available	Used For	Available
Books, videos, CDs	Research	On Campus and Online
Specialized databases not available online for free	Research	On Campus and Online
Magazines, newspapers, & scholarly journals	Research	On Campus and Online
Computers	Research & word processing	On Campus
Selected textbooks for short-term use	Course work	On Campus
Trained staff	Answer "where do I find?"	On Campus and Online
Tutorials	Tips for research strategies	On Campus and Online
Photocopiers, VHS/DVD players, FAX service	For course work	On Campus
Quiet study areas	For course work	On Campus

Student Success Center (SSC)

How do I contact the Student Success Center?

Appointments are preferred, but walk-ins will be served as soon as possible.

Main Number	432-335-6673
Campus Location	1st floor of the Library
Website with Additional Help and Information	http://www.odessa.edu/dept/ssc/
Live Online Assistance / Chat	<u>Click Here</u> <i>(If no one is currently available, please put your email and question(s) in the appropriate areas of the form and hit 'send.' Your question(s) will be addressed as soon as an SSC staff member becomes available.)</i>

Equipment and Services Provided:

The purpose of the Odessa College Student Success Center is to provide assistance to students in meeting their academic and career goals. The SSC strives to continually provide new and updated resources that will empower all Odessa College students to succeed at OC and beyond.

Equipment/Services Available	Used For	Available
Tutoring by CRLA & Avid trained tutors	Understanding course work and motivation	On Campus and Online Click here for more information.
Student Information Seminars (SIS)	Demo email, Blackboard and SSC resources	On Campus and Online Click here for more information.
Study Skills	Tools needed to succeed	On Campus and Online Click here for more information.
Basic Technology	To navigate classes, email, etc.	On Campus and Online
Plato Web	Practice for TEAS test and basic math, science, etc.	On Campus and Online Click here for more information.
Project T.I.E.	Practice for GED/COMPASS	On Campus and Online Click here for more information.
Student Orientation/Tour	Show individual students where their classes will be. SIS presentation	On Campus
M.O.R.E. Mentoring Program	Networking, tips to navigate college life successfully	On Campus Click here for more information.
Smart thinking	Online tutoring service. Connect with an e-structor and interact with a live tutor.	Online Click here for more information.

Veterans Support

How do I contact the office for Veteran's Outreach?

Main Number	432-335-6833
Campus Location	204M (Help Center) in the Student Union Building
Email	Gloria Rangel - grangel@odessa.edu
Website	To find out more about services provided by the Veteran's Outreach office, please visit: http://www.odessa.edu/dept/counseling/veterans/index.htm