

**South Plains College**  
**GOVT 2305**  
**Section 252**  
**Fall 2017**  
**Federal Government**

**Traditional 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.

**Email:** bbearden@southplainscollege.edu

**Room:** Texas Tech University, Education 370

**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 , TTU

**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:

- 10% Attendance
- 25% Discussions (4)
- 25% Quizzes (5)
- 40% Exams (3)

(1) Attendance: Attendance and participation in this course is crucial. This portion of the course for 10% of your grade. You must be in your seat at the scheduled start of class and remain in the room till the end of class to receive credit. Also, I will interact with several students each day by asking questions. If you refuse to participate, then you will be counted absent. It is in your best interest to be prepared for class by reading the appropriate materials before you come to class. This will help you discuss material and create a better learning environment.

(2) 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.

(3) Quizzes: Five times throughout the semester you will be given an in-class quiz. These will be distributed during the last 10-15 minutes of class. Quizzes will be short and consist of 10 multiple choice questions regarding current topics from both readings and lectures. Since ample time is given to answer these questions, students will not be allowed to stay after class to finish these quizzes. If a student is absent, they will not be allowed to make-up their quiz (see Policies). This portion of the course will account for 25% of your grade.

(4) Exams: Three times throughout the semester students will be given an in-class exam. This includes your final exam. These exams will consist of 25 multiple choice questions, three short answer questions, and one short essay. Further instruction and question weight will be given when exams are distributed. These exams will account for 40% of your grade.

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

**Attendance Policy:** Students are expected to attend class regularly and prepared. This means fully completing the weekly readings and homework before arriving to class. No late work will be accepted without a note from a medical doctor.

**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.

- TTAP policy allows you five absences before you are dropped from the TTAP program. You may be able to stay in the course if you wish.

**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 asked to leave the class. Silence or turn off your phone during my class.

**Technology:** Please no cell phone, pager, iPod, etc. usage during class. Please be respectful of others and power down your cellular devices, pagers, iPods, etc.

Texting will not be tolerated in the classroom. It is obvious when a student is texting and if/when a student is spotted, he/she will be asked to stow it away. If a student is caught a second time, they will be asked to leave.

Students may use a laptop computer during class but are not permitted to instant message others, check social network updates, email, etc. The usage of the laptop computers is meant for taking notes and considered a privilege, not a right, given to you by me and can be taken away at any time.

If you are expecting a call or have children in daycare, notify me immediately and I will make an exception for you.

**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.

**Preparedness:** 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 class. We cover a great deal of material so it is critical that you attend class regularly, take careful notes, keep abreast of the readings, and participate fully in class discussions. If you feel you need extra help in managing the course materials, contact me and I will help you.

**Exam Day Conduct:** When taking exams, students need a pencil and an eraser. Cellular devices, tablets, iPods, pagers, etc., need to be either turned off or silenced – not on vibrate – and stowed away in a backpack, purse, bag, or any other packaging device. Also, all hats are to be removed upon taking an exam.

**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 at the Reese Campus on a Saturday morning to take an extensive comprehensive exam covering the entire course. NO late work will be accepted for any other component of the course.

### **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism is the taking of credit for something that is not the work of the owner. It is cheating and will not be tolerated. See the General Catalog for more information on plagiarism. Cheating or dishonesty of any type in this course will result in the student being dropped from this course with an "F."

### **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.

### **Diversity Statement**

In this class, the teacher will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves. By promoting diversity and intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

### **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

### **Tobacco Use**

Students are to follow SPC's rules and regulations on cigarette and electronic cigarette use. Also, students are not to use smokeless tobacco in class. This includes but not limited to: snuff, dip, chew, packets, etc. It is rude and distracting to do this during class and any violation will be dealt with accordingly.

### **Campus Concealed Carry**

Campus Concealed Carry - Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in South Plains College buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and South Plains College policy, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the SPC policy at:

([http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human\\_resources/policy\\_procedure/hhc.php](http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human_resources/policy_procedure/hhc.php))

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all South Plains College campuses. Report violations to the College Police Department at 806-716-2396 or 9-1-1.

**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.

**Syllabus Contract/Amendments:** All content within this syllabus is subject to change at any time and is completely up to the discretion of the professor. Students will be notified of such change(s) with appropriate time to adapt. By enrolling in this course you agree to follow all guidelines in this syllabus and be fully responsible for the grade you earn.

## **Course Schedule and Readings**

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

- 8/28: Introduction to Course
- 8/30: The Declaration of Independence; Constitution; Textbook Chapter 2
- 9/1: Textbook Chapter 2 continued

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

- 9/4: NO CLASS - Labor Day
- 9/6: Textbook Chapter 2 continued
- 9/8: Textbook Chapter 3; **Quiz 1**

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

#### **- Discussion Due 9/17 @ 12am Midnight**

- 9/11: Textbook Chapter 3 continued
- 9/13: Textbook Chapter 3 continued
- 9/15: Textbook Chapter 3 continued

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

- 9/18: Textbook Chapter 4 and 5; Bill of Rights (First 10 Amendment of Constitution)
- 9/20: Textbook Chapter 4 and 5 continued
- 9/22: Textbook Chapter 12; **Quiz 2**

### **Week 5: Branches of Government and Separation of Powers, Continued**

#### **Discussion Due 10/1 @ 12am Midnight**

- 9/25: Textbook Chapter 12 and 13
- 9/27: Textbook Chapter 13 continued
- 9/29: **Exam 1**

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

- 10/2: Textbook Chapter 1
- 10/4: Textbook Chapter 6
- 10/6: Textbook Chapter 6 Continued; **Quiz 3**

### **Week 7: Media**

- 10/9: Textbook Chapter 7
- 10/11: Textbook Chapter 7 continued
- 10/13: **Fall Break (No Class Meeting)**

### **Week 8: Participation and Voting**

- 10/16: Textbook Chapter 8
- 10/18: Textbook Chapter 8 continued
- 10/20: Textbook Chapter 8 Continued

### **Week 9: Political Parties**

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

- 10/23: Textbook Chapter 9
- 10/25: Textbook Chapter 9 continued; Federalist Papers No. 10
- 10/27: Textbook Chapter 9 continued

### **Week 10: Campaigns and Elections**

- 10/30: Textbook Chapter 10
- 11/1: Textbook Chapter 10 continued; Federal Papers No. 50
- 11/3: Textbook Chapter 10 continued; **Quiz 4**

### **Week 11: Groups and Interests**

- 11/6: Textbook Chapter 11
- 11/8: Textbook Chapter 11 continued
- 11/10: **Exam 2**

### **Week 12: Government and the Economy**

- 11/13: Textbook Chapter 14
- 11/15: Textbook Chapter 14 continued

- 11/17: Textbook Chapter 14 and 15; **Quiz 5**

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

- 11/20: Textbook Chapter 15 continued
- 11/22: **Thanksgiving Holiday (No Class Meeting)**
- 11/24: **Thanksgiving Holiday (No Class Meeting)**

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

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

- 11/27: Textbook Chapter 16 continued
- 11/29: Textbook Chapter 16 continued
- 12/1: Textbook Chapter 16 and 17

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

- 12/4: Textbook Chapter 17 continued
- 12/6: Textbook Chapter 18
- 12/8: Textbook Chapter 18 continued

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

- **Exam 3**

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

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

- Final Exam TBA