

NCPACE

GOVT 2305 Student Syllabus

Democracy Under Pressure

Course Description

United States Government explores contemporary issues as examples of our government in action. As the title suggests, it is citizen-activist oriented in its approach to the study of political science focusing on interviews with national experts and a variety of political figures, and using actual documentary footage to bring the action to the student, the telecourse achieves what the traditional classroom sometimes cannot.

Textbook:	Cummings, Milton C. Jr., and Wise, David. <i>Democracy Under Pressure, An Introduction to the American Political System</i> . 10th Ed. Thomson Wadsworth 2006. ISBN (10): 0-495-00829-X; (13): 978-0-495-00829-3
Student Course Guide:	Lynch, Eileen; Camp Keith, Linda and Lee Sue. <i>Telecourse Guide for Voices in Democracy</i> . 3rd Ed. Thomson Wadsworth 2006. ISBN (10): 0-495-09107-3; (13): 978-0-495-09107-3
Video Lessons:	<i>Voices in Democracy</i> Videos. Dallas County Community College District, Dallas Colleges Online To access videos for download: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Go to http://144.162.197.105/mp4/VID/default.htm2. Username: ncpace3. Password: sailor Make sure all the downloaded files are working properly prior to deployment

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Democracy Under Pressure

Welcome to *Democracy Under Pressure!*

First, I would like to thank you for the work you are doing to protect our country and the freedom that we enjoy. Next, congratulations on your decision to continue your education while you are serving in the Navy.

Welcome to an exciting approach to the study of American Government. The information in this syllabus is designed to help you successfully complete this course.

Thomas Jefferson stated, "Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government." A pervasive public understanding of the workings of the American government is essential to its survival. The citizen plays a vital role in the ability of any republican democracy to last. Whether through voting, petitioning, or publicly speaking, an active citizenry is the lifeblood of American democracy. By understanding our role in our government, we are better prepared to participate and bring about change when necessary while protecting the basic principles upon which our government was founded.

IMPORTANT: Keep this syllabus handy and use it as a guide throughout the semester.

Sincerely,

Dallas Colleges Online Military Support Team

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Overview

GOVT 2305 is designed as a comprehensive learning system.

The *Student Course Guide* acts as your daily instructor. For each lesson, it gives you an overview, lesson assignments, textbook objectives, video objectives, practice test, and an answer key. If you follow the recommendations for reading and view each lesson carefully, you should successfully accomplish all of the requirements for this course.

The textbook offers an interesting presentation of facts and sidelights about the U.S. system of government. Key terms are defined in side margins. The specific reading assignment for each lesson appears in the student course guide. Be sure to read this material *before* viewing the videos.

Each video program is correlated with the textbook reading assignment for that lesson. The videos are packed with information, so view them closely. The examination questions are taken from the videos as well as the textbook, so careful attention to both is vital to your success in this course (you might find it helpful to view the videos more than once for review).

Course Goals

GOVT 2305 includes the following Exemplary Educational Objectives:

1. To comprehend the origins and evolution of U.S. political systems, with a focus on the growth of political institutions and the constitution of the U.S., federalism, civil liberties, and civil and human rights.
2. To understand the evolution and current role of the U.S. in the world.
3. To recognize and assume one's responsibility as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy.
4. To analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems.
5. To identify and understand differences and commonalities within diverse cultures.
6. To analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the area under study.
7. To develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.

Getting Started

You need the following course materials to complete GOVT 2305:

- *Voices in Democracy* Videos. To access videos for download:
 - Go to <http://144.162.197.105/mp4/VID/default.htm>
 - Username: ncpac
 - Password: sailor
- A student course guide titled, *Student Course Guide for Voices in Democracy*, that contains lesson overviews, lesson objectives, textbook objectives, video objectives, practice tests, and an answer key.
- A textbook titled, *Democracy Under Pressure, An Introduction to the American Political System* for assigned chapter reading.

These are the only course materials that may be used.

Course Components

Follow these guidelines as you study the material presented in each lesson:

1. **LESSON ASSIGNMENT**—
Review the Lesson Assignment in order to schedule your time appropriately. For each lesson, you will have a reading assignment and a video assignment.
2. **OVERVIEW**—
The Overview provides a brief narrative introduction describing the lesson focus.
3. **LESSON GOAL**—
The Lesson Goal informs you of the information you should have after completion of the lesson.
4. **TEXTBOOK OBJECTIVES**—
To get the most from your reading, review the Textbook Objectives, then read the assignment. You may want to write responses or notes to reinforce what you have learned.
5. **VIDEO OBJECTIVES**—
To get the most from the video segment of the lesson, review the Video Objectives, then watch the video. You may want to write responses or notes to reinforce what you have learned.
6. **PRACTICE TEST**—
After reading the assignment, watching the video, and addressing the objectives, you should be able to complete the following Practice Test. Some essay questions in this Practice Test may be included in your exams. When you have completed the Practice Test, turn to the Answer Key to score your answers.
7. **ANSWER KEY**—
The following provides the answers and references for the practice test questions. Objectives are referenced using the following abbreviations: T=Textbook Objectives V=Video Objectives

Course Requirements

To successfully complete this course you must complete the following:

- **Four Tests:** Each test will consist of fifty multiple-choice questions. Each of the tests will contribute 15% to your final grade. The test questions are taken from the video programs and the textbook. You will also see some of the same questions that are used in the Practice Tests in each chapter of the Student Course Guide. [Be sure to answer all questions on the tests. If you do not answer a question, it will automatically be counted as wrong; but if you attempt to answer it anyway, you may get it correct. Be sure you mark the answer under the correct column on the answer sheet. You will have three (3) hours to complete each test.]
- **Four Type-written Essays:** Choose four activities from the list below. Prepare a typewritten essay and submit it with your other work. It is highly recommended that you complete these essays as you proceed through the course and that you **DO NOT WAIT** until the end of the course to do them all at once. Each of the four typewritten essays will contribute 10% to your final grade.

Choose **four** of the following activities from this list as topics for your four typewritten essays:

- Poll some of your associates to determine their political party affiliation. Note their ages, gender, family background, etc. Compare your statistics with the textbook descriptions of a typical Democrat and Republican. Did you find that your associates fit the typical description? How many identified themselves as Independents?
- Write an editorial on the nature of American federalism. Express your beliefs about American federalism, and cite what you believe should be the proper division of responsibility between the national government and the states in solving environmental problems such as pollution and sanitary landfills.
- Figure out whether you would categorize yourself as a liberal, conservative, or moderate. Write out reasons why you put yourself in that category.
- Research and write an essay about the most recent presidential election. Who were the candidates? What issues were emphasized? What gaffes were committed? Were there any minor-party candidates who affected the strategy of the major-party candidates? Did you vote? For which candidate? Why did you support the candidate? What changes would you recommend for the next election?
- Mandatory drug testing is a very emotional issue. Research the topic, then decide which side you support and why. Address the factors in your decision and how you support your position constitutionally.
- Select a local government issue and write an editorial to the local newspaper. The topic could be about Wal-Mart wanting to build in your community, the need for street repair because of the numerous potholes, or the alleged improprieties among members of the city council, etc. Identify the issue, offer suggestions for resolving the issue, and predict the long-range effects if not addressed now.
- Do you believe that the media should be considered the “fourth branch” of government? Have journalists overstepped the intent of the freedom of the press? What are your opinions of the mass media today? Ask your colleagues their opinions.

Course Grades

Your performance on the Tests and Type-written Essays will determine your course grade. The grading scale is as follows:

Type	Point Value for each	Total Possible Points
Four Tests Each test contains a mix of multiple-choice and true or false questions.	150	600
Four Typewritten Essays	100	400
Total Points Possible		1,000

Numeric Value	Letter Grade
900 – 1,000	A
800 – 899	B
700 – 799	C
600 – 699	D
0 – 599	F

Follow these instructions when writing your typewritten essays.

- All writing assignments must be typewritten. The only exception to this is when your ship does not have a computer or printer. Please note that equipment was not available if you are turning in hand written essays.
- Use a standard font (Courier, Helvetica, Times, or Arial) and font size of 12 pt.
- Single-space all writing assignments.
- Be sure to put your name on all pages of your assignments.
- Essay Writing Assignments should be at least 1½ pages in length.
- Writing assignments are NOT announced in the video lessons.
- Pay attention to spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- **Submit your papers by way of your ESO/Proctor.**

Criteria for Writing Assignments in This Course:

These five traits: ideas/content, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, and mechanics — are the focus of writing assignments. When practiced and sharpened, these traits provide strong, balanced writing!

- **Ideas/Content** is the heart of the message, the content of the piece, the main theme, together with all the details that enrich and develop the theme. The ideas are strong when the message is clear, concise, and precise, not garbled. The writer chooses details that are interesting, important, and informative. These details must be carefully chosen with audience and purpose in mind. Ideas are what captivate and maintain the reader's interest.
- **Organization** is the internal structure of a piece of writing, the thread of central meaning. It doesn't matter what the pattern is, so long as it fits the central idea well. Organizational structures can be based on comparison-contrast, deductive logic, point-by-point analysis, development of a central

theme, chronological history of an event, or any of a dozen other identifiable patterns. When the organization is strong, the piece begins meaningfully, proceeds logically, and closes with a sense of resolution.

- **Word choice** is the use of rich, precise, concise language that communicates, not just in a functional way, but in a way that enlightens the reader toward understanding. In good descriptive writing, strong word choice paints clear pictures in the reader's mind. In good expository writing, strong word choice clarifies and expands ideas. In persuasive writing, careful word choice moves the reader to a new vision. Strong word choice is characterized not so much by an exceptional vocabulary that impresses the reader, but more by the skills of using everyday words well, and choosing words appropriate to audience and purpose.
- **Sentence fluency** is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear--not just to the eye. How does your writing sound when read aloud? That's the test. Fluent writing has cadence, power, rhythm, and movement free of awkward sentence patterns that flow the reader's progress. Sentences vary in length and style, and are well crafted to communicate appropriately for audience and purpose.
- **Mechanics** are the conventional correctness of the writing - spelling, grammar and usage, use of capitals, and punctuation. Writing that is strong in mechanics has been proofread and edited with care. Mechanics often trip up good writers, but they are simply the nuts and bolts that allow us to clearly communicate our ideas.

Grade	Criteria	Description
A 90–100	Ideas/Content	Purpose is clearly established and sustained; details effective, specific, relevant; writing is lively, original, insightful, and imaginative
	Organization	Clear introduction, body, conclusion; writing structured to enhance meaning; smooth, seamless transitions; logical sequencing fits purpose; sophisticated paragraphing
	Word Choice	Language is rich, effective, natural, precise, and vivid; words used to convey images appropriate to audience and purpose; vocabulary varied, specific, and accurate
	Sentence Fluency	Variation in pacing, sentence structure, and length that adds interest, flow to text; strong control over simple and complex sentence structures
	Mechanics	Few or no mechanical, grammatical, or usage errors; varied and skillful use of conventions; little or no need for editing
B 80–89	Ideas/Content	Purpose established and generally maintained; ideas and details usually effective, specific, and relevant, but may be limited in depth; writing sustains audience interest
	Organization	Recognizable introduction, body, and conclusion; effective transitions; sequencing appropriate for purpose; effective, logical paragraphing
	Word Choice	Language reflects a variety of words that are acceptable, functional, and appropriate to audience and purpose.
	Sentence Fluency	Sentence structure allows reader to move through topic; more sophisticated sentence patterns attempted; strong control over simple structures, but variable control over more complex structures
	Mechanics	May have some errors, but they do not interfere with meaning; skillful use of common conventions; moderate need for editing

Grade	Criteria	Description
C 70–79	Ideas/Content	Purpose inconsistent or vaguely established; ideas thinly developed; details, while provided, may be irrelevant, unfocused or general
	Organization	Undeveloped or ineffective introduction, body, and/or conclusion; transitions mechanical or rarely used; sequencing attempted but coherence weak; placement of details ineffective; some errors in paragraphing
	Word Choice	Language is ordinary or inappropriate for audience or purpose; words lack interest, precision, or variety; words may be misused, misunderstood, or misinterpreted
	Sentence Fluency	Over-reliance on simple or repetitive constructions; good control over simple structures with little control over complex structures; awkwardness in structures interfere with meaning
	Mechanics	Errors do not block meaning, but do distract the reader; some control over basic conventions; significant need for editing
D/F 0–69	Ideas/Content	Purpose not established; ideas, details very limited; unclear, or difficult to follow; writing is repetitive, disconnected, random; writing is off topic
	Organization	Failure to provide an identifiable introduction, body, or conclusion; transitions ineffective or missing; writing unfocused; significant errors in paragraphing
	Word Choice	Language is monotonous, repetitious, or inaccurate; words are general, vague, limited in range, or fail to communicate
	Sentence Fluency	Significant number of awkward, choppy, or rambling constructions; sentence structure frequently obscures meaning; little, if any, sentence variety
	Mechanics	Errors interfere with readability and meaning; limited skill in using conventions; need for extensive editing

Study Tips

The *Student Course Guide for Voices in Democracy* is essential for successful completion of this course. It provides important information about each lesson, correlates the reading assignments and the video programs, and supplies invaluable Focus Points. Refer to this book often.

The textbook, *Democracy Under Pressure, An Introduction to the American Political System*, describes the writing process and rhetorical devices. To do well in this course, you must read the appropriate textbook pages listed in the Assignment Calendar.

Plagiarism

In any written essay, you are guilty of the academic offense known as plagiarism if you half-copy or copy the author’s words. This results in an automatic “F” for the course. You cannot mix the author’s words with your own or “plug” your synonyms into the author’s sentence structure. To prevent unintentional borrowing, resist the temptation to look at the source as you write. The author’s words, phrases, sentences must be put in your words, in your way of writing. When you do this, you are demonstrating the ability to comprehend.

Diversity

The course content and the course environment are dedicated to an understanding of and acceptance of all people. Disparaging remarks in relation to others' ethnic or racial background, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, socioeconomic background, etc. will not be tolerated.

Academic Honesty

The purpose of the Student Code of Conduct is to provide guidelines for the educational environment of the college. Such an environment presupposes both rights and responsibilities. Disciplinary regulations at the college are set forth in writing in order to give students general notice of prohibited conduct. Students should be aware of disciplinary actions for all forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and collusion. Your college catalog and the DCCCD catalog contain the entire Student Code of Conduct, which is also on the Internet at <http://www.dcccd.edu>. Click on Student Services, Code of Student Conduct.

Assignment Calendar

For ease the explanation:

- Workbook = *Student Course Guide for Voices in Democracy: United States Government*
- Textbook = *Democracy Under Pressure*
- Videos = Video programs from the series, "Voices in Democracy" MP4 download

Weeks		Topics Covered	Student Activities
1	Workbook	Lessons 1 and 2	Read Lessons 1–2; complete the activities
	Textbook	Chapters 1 and 2	Read pp. 3–31, 33–61
	Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic Voices in a Changing Society • The Living Constitution 	View
2	Workbook	Lessons 3 and 4	Read Lessons 3–4; complete the activities
	Textbook	Chapters 3, 5, and 13	Read pp. 63–89, 160–162, 448–454,
	Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution in Crisis • Federalism 	View
3	Workbook	Lessons 5 and 6	Read Lessons 5–6; complete the activities
	Textbook	Chapters 6, 18, and 19	Read pp. 175–197, 613–616, 630–633, 666–679
	Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental Relations • Public Opinion and Political Socialization 	View
Exam 1 and Typewritten Essay #1 due. Covers Lessons 1–6 of the student course guide, corresponding textbook pages, and video programs			Schedule exam with NCPACE POC a few days before taking the exam.

Weeks		Topics Covered	Student Activities
4	Workbook	Lessons 7, 8, and 9	Read Lessons 7–9; complete the activities
	Textbook	Chapters 7, 8, and 11	Read pp. 199–219, 221–253, 331–344
	Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in Democracy • Mass Media and Government • Interest Groups 	View
5	Workbook	Lessons 10 and 11	Read Lessons 10–11; complete the activities
	Textbook	Chapters 8 and 9	Read pp. 221–232, 255–287
	Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Parties • Media and Elections 	View
6	Workbook	Lessons 12 and 13	Read Lessons 12–13; complete the activities
	Textbook	Chapters 10 and 11	Read pp. 289–329, 344–377
	Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidential Elections • Congressional Elections 	View
Exam 2 and Typewritten Essay #2 due. Covers Lessons 7–13 of the student course guide, corresponding textbook pages, and video programs.			Schedule exam with NCPACE POC a few days before taking the exam.
7	Workbook	Lessons 14, 15, 16, and 17	Read Lessons 14–17; complete the activities.
	Textbook	Chapters 10, 12, and 13	Read pp. 320–328, 379–461
	Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress • Legislative Process • Congress and the President • The Presidency 	View
8	Workbook	Lessons 18 and 19	Read Lessons 18–19; complete the activities
	Textbook	Chapter 14, 17, and 18	Read pp. 463–497, 587–611, 613–647
	Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucracy • Domestic Policy 	View
Exam 3 and Typewritten Essay #3 due. Covers Lessons 14–19 of the student course guide, corresponding textbook pages, and video programs.			Schedule exam with NCPACE POC a few days before taking the exam.

Weeks		Topics Covered	Student Activities
9	Workbook	Lessons 20, 21, and 22	Read Lessons 20–22; complete the activities
	Textbook	Chapters 15 and 16	Read pp. 499–519, 541–582
	Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign Policy • Global Politics • Federal Courts 	View
10	Workbook	Lesson 23, 24, 25, and 26	Read Lessons 23–26; complete the activities
	Textbook	Chapters 4, 5, and 15	Read pp. 91–120, 129–179, 501–505, 519–539
	Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal Justice • Due Process of Law • First Amendment Freedoms • The Struggle for Equal Rights 	View
Exam 4 and Typewritten Essay #4 due. Covers Lessons 20–26 of the student course guide, corresponding textbook pages, and video programs.			Schedule exam with NCPACE POC a few days before taking the exam.

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Dallas County Community College District

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The DCCCD is a Service member's Opportunity College – NAVY
The seven member colleges of the DCCCD are independently accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.