

STUDENT MATERIALS

GOVT 2305 AMERICAN GOVERNMENT I

**A DCCCD TeleCourse adapted exclusively
for delivery to the
Navy College Program for Afloat College Education (NCPACE)**

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Dallas County Community College District

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- Textbook:** Cummings, Milton C. Jr., and David Wise. *Democracy Under Pressure, An Introduction to the American Political System*. 10th Ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Thomson Learning, Inc. 2007.
ISBN (10): 0-495-50213-8
- Telecourse Guide:** Lynch Eileen, Linda Camp Keith, and Sue Lee. *Telecourse Guide for Voices in Democracy*. 3rd Ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Thomson Learning, Inc. 2008.
ISBN (10): 0-495-09107-3
- CD/Video Lessons** "Voices in Democracy" video lessons on CD-ROM

INSTRUCTOR'S LETTER TO THE STUDENT

Dear Student:

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 for 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.

For questions regarding textbooks, grade requirements, lessons, software issues, etc. contact: NCPACE@dccd.edu.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Read all information carefully in the Course Syllabus below. The Syllabus serves as the *Orientation* to this course.

COURSE SYLLABUS

OVERVIEW

American Government I is designed as a comprehensive learning system.

The *TeleCourse Guide* acts as your daily instructor. For each lesson it gives you an overview, learning objectives, lesson assignments, and textbook and video focus points. 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 *Telecourse Guide*. Be sure to read this material *before* viewing the videos.

Each video 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.

COURSE MATERIALS

Occasionally, you will find duplicated reading assignments. You will reinforce your learning if you re-read (or at least scan the material previously read) while focusing on the objectives for that particular lesson.

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Substitutions to course materials are not permitted.

COURSE COMPONENTS

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

LESSON ASSIGNMENT: Review the Lesson Assignment in order to schedule your time appropriately. Pay careful attention to the titles and numbers of the textbook chapter, the Notebook lesson, and the video programs.

OVERVIEW: The Overview provides a brief narrative introduction describing the lesson focus.

LESSON GOAL: The Lesson Goal describes the overall objectives of the lesson.

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.

VIDEO OBJECTIVES: To get the most from the video segment of the lesson, review the Video Objectives, then view the video. You may want to write responses or notes to reinforce what you have learned. You may want to view the videos more than once to review.

PRACTICE TESTS: Prior to each graded test, you will have the opportunity to take one or more practice in the *Telecourse Guide*. Each practice test will cover the same material as the graded test. The practice test serves as a useful study tool for the graded test. They DO NOT count toward your grade.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To successfully complete this course you must complete the following:

1. **Four Tests:** Each test will consist of 50 multiple choice questions. Each of the tests will contribute

15% to your final grade. The test questions are taken from the videos and the textbook. You will also see some of the same questions that are used in the Practice Tests in each chapter of the TeleCourse 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.)

2. Four Written Assignments: Choose four activities from the following list. Prepare a written report and submit it with your other work. It is highly recommended that you complete these reports as you proceed through the course and that you do not wait until the end of the course to do them all at once. These reports should be at least 1 ½ pages in length, single-spaced, use a standard font size of 12 pt. (Courier, Helvetica, Times, Arial) and typed. Each of the four reports will contribute 10% to your final grade.

Writing assignments in this course will be evaluated using the following criteria. 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 are 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	Ideas/Content	Organization	Word Choice	Sentence fluency	Mechanics
A 90-100	Purpose clearly established and sustained; details effective, specific, relevant; writing is lively, original, insightful, imaginative	Clear intro, body, conclusion; writing structured to enhance meaning; smooth, seamless transitions; logical sequencing fits purpose; sophisticated paragraphing	Language rich, effective, natural, precise, and vivid; words used to convey images appropriate to audience and purpose; vocabulary varied, specific, and accurate	Variation in pacing, sentence structure, and length that adds interest, flow to text; strong control over simple and complex sentence structures	Few or no mechanical, grammatical, or usage errors; varied and skillful use of conventions; little or no need for editing
B 80-89	Purpose established and generally maintained; ideas, details usually effective, specific, and relevant, but may be limited in depth; writing sustains audience interest	Recognizable introduction, body, and conclusion; effective transitions; sequencing appropriate for purpose; effective, logical paragraphing	Language reflects a variety of words that are acceptable, functional, and appropriate to audience and purpose.	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	May have some errors, but they do not interfere with meaning; skillful use of common conventions; moderate need for editing
C 70-79	Purpose inconsistent or vaguely established; ideas thinly developed; details, while provided, may be irrelevant, unfocused or general	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	Language is ordinary or inappropriate for audience or purpose; words lack interest, precision, or variety; words may be misused, misunderstood, or misinterpreted	Over-reliance on simple or repetitive constructions; good control over simple structures with little control over complex structures; awkwardness in structures interfere with meaning	Errors do not block meaning, but do distract the reader; some control over basic conventions; significant need for editing
D/F 0-69	Purpose not established; ideas, details very limited; unclear, or	Failure to provide an identifiable introduction, body, or conclusion;	Language is monotonous, repetitious, or inaccurate; words are general,	Significant number of awkward, choppy, or rambling	Errors interfere with readability and meaning; limited skill in

	difficult to follow; writing is repetitive, disconnected, random; writing is off topic	transitions ineffective or missing; writing unfocused; significant errors in paragraphing	vague, limited in range, or fail to communicate	constructions; sentence structure frequently obscures meaning; little, if any, sentence variety	using conventions; need for extensive editing
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Choose four of the following activities from this list:

- 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 a report 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 Writing Assignments will determine your course grade. The grading scale is as follows:

Total Points Earned	Letter Grade
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 or less	F

Assignment	Points	Total Points
Examinations:		
Proctored Exam – Test #1 (Lessons 1-6)	15	60
Proctored Exam – Test #2 (Lessons 7-12)	15	
Proctored Exam – Test #3 (Lessons 13-18)	15	
Proctored Exam – Test #4 (Lessons 19-26)	15	
Writing Assignment #1	10	40
Writing Assignment #2	10	
Writing Assignment #3	10	
Writing Assignment #4	10	
TOTAL		100

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All course work in this class is undertaken with the understanding that academic honesty is the only acceptable behavior. Further, it is understood that the instructor sets the standards of academic honesty in the class, determines when these standards have been violated, and determines the consequences of that behavior by the student. The following instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and if committed, will result in a grade of “F” in the course. Suggestion: include specific penalties for dishonesty so students will know exactly what to expect if caught cheating in this course. For example, “If you copy another student’s work and submit it as your own, both students will receive a zero on the assignment and/or a failing course grade.” The “and/or” gives the Instructor the right to make a more costly decision regarding cheating.

- a. Cheating – intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or student aids in any academic exercise. Specifically
 1. Copying from another student’s test paper or case problem.
 2. Using test materials not authorized by the person administering the test.
 3. Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test without permission from the test administrator.
 4. Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, or soliciting, in whole or in part, the contents of an unadministered test.

5. The unauthorized transporting or removal, in whole or in part, of the contents of the unadministered test.
 6. Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for one's self, to take a test.
 7. Bribing another person to obtain an unadministered test or information about an unadministrated test.
- b. Collusion – unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit i.e., providing exam information to another students, working collectively on assignments intended as individual tasks.
 - c. Fabrication – intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information in an academic exercise.
 - d. Plagiarism – intentionally representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.

NCPACE COURSE PLANNER

It is crucial to plan out the time you have to complete your NCPACE course effectively so that you have ample time to do all the required assignments for the course. When you attend a course on a campus, the professor usually supplies each student with a copy of a course syllabus that outlines what material will be covered in the class and what the student is expected to do to complete the course successfully. This Course notebook will take you step by step through the course for which you enrolled.

Although the NCPACE student notebooks are quite extensive, there is crucial information that is missing. In class, professors provide students with due dates for each assignment and exam. Because each command determines their own NCPACE term dates, it is impossible to give due dates in the student notebooks. In addition, NCPACE courses are designed to be self-paced because each Sailor knows his/her schedule best and is expected to complete the course at their personal comfort level so long as it falls between the term dates set by the command.

Please contact your NCPACE Point of Contact on board for your current semester dates.

Semester 1: Start Date _____ End Date _____

Semester 2: Start Date _____ End Date _____

Below is a list of all of the assignments required for your course. It is recommended that you take this time to determine when you would like to have each of the below course requirements completed. By doing this simple exercise, it will be easier to remain on track throughout the semester.

Test 1 / Written Assignment 1: _____

Test 2 / Written Assignment 2: _____

Test 3 / Written Assignment 3: _____

Test 4 / Written Assignment 4: _____

It is recommended that you make a copy of this page for your NCPACE Point of Contact so he/she can see that you have planned ahead and get an idea of when they will need to proctor exams. Please remember to schedule each exam with your NCPACE POC a couple days prior to the actual day you wish to take the exam. The dates you determine are not set in stone, but as stated above are flexible so long as the course requirements are completed by the end of the semester.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

To be completed by student and proctor at course completion.

GOVT 2305: American Government I

EXAMINATIONS:

- Proctored Test 1
- Proctored Test 2
- Proctored Test 3
- Proctored Test 4

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

- Writing Assignment #1
- Writing Assignment #2
- Writing Assignment #3
- Writing Assignment #4

The writing assignments may be turned in at the end of the course but it highly recommended that they be completed and turned in to coincide with the completion of the four tests.