Sul Ross State University

State Government
Political Science 2306-003
T/TR-11-12:15
Morelock 302
Sul Ross State University
Fall 2016

Contact Information
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Course Description
This is an introductory course covering State Politics and Texas Public Policy. The purposes of this class include introducing students to the most salient and contentious policy debates in Texas as well as providing the tools and knowledge necessary for students to critically and intelligently evaluate policy. It is my hope that the information you learn in this class will increase your interest in politics as well as make you a more informed citizen.

Program Learning Outcomes (Political Science)

The graduating student will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of significant theoretical approaches of political science through written work and oral communication.
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze domestic and international political processes in written work.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop arguments about global equity and equality issues in politics through written work and oral communication.

TExAS Domain III Competency 19: The teacher understands and applies social science knowledge and skills to plan, organize, and implement instruction and assess learning.

TExAS Domain III Competency 23: The teacher understands and applies knowledge of concepts of government, democracy, and citizenship, including ways that individuals and groups achieve their goals through political systems.

Course Goals

1. Describe the essential elements of public policy (To be evaluated on Exam III, and the Final Exam).

2. Explain how Texas political institutions affect the development and implementation of public policy (To be evaluated on Exams I, II, III, and the Final Exam).

3. Analyze the impact of constitutional law on public policy (To be evaluated with Exam II, and the Final Exam).

4. Analyze key public policy issues facing the Texas today (To be evaluated on Exam III, and the Final Exam).

5. Analyze how National, State, and Local government interact to implement policy (To be evaluated on Exam I, Exam II, Exam III, and the Final Exam).

Expectations

The duty of the instructor for this course is to be prepared and on time for the lectures. In turn, the students' duty is to be on time and prepared for the lectures as well. "Prepared" means having completed the assigned reading prior to the lecture. This course will rely heavily on discussion between instructor and students; so advanced reading by the students will facilitate an active classroom environment. Keeping up with the readings is essential in order to actively participate in class and to help the instructor monitor the students' understanding of the material before the exams, rather than on exam days. Please turn off cell phones during class. Seriously.

**Although attendance is not mandatory, you will have a difficult time passing this course if you do not attend it. Occasionally, I will take attendance and use this to determine 10% of the course grade. Further, it behooves you to come to class because a good deal of knowledge needed to pass the tests will be derived from the lectures.

If you happen to miss class it is your responsibility to get the notes from another student in class or come by my office hours. It is not my responsibility to provide notes for students that miss.

I expect you to act as responsible adults in your conduct in the classroom. If you infringe on my ability to conduct class, I will ask you to leave.

Common courtesy expected in class:

- Coming to class on time
- Disabling the ringer on cell phones
- Refraining from talking, sleeping, and reading outside material during class
- **Respect/toleration for fellow students regarding their political views

I am here to help you with the course material. Please feel free to come by my office hours or make an appointment with any questions you have. If you find that you are having difficulty with the material please come and see me as soon as possible particularly if you do not do well on the first exam and I can suggest study techniques that may help you do better on subsequent exams.

Books

There is no required book for this course. For your support, there is a website we will utilize that has the equivalent of a textbook for Texas Politics that I will link you to so that you can follow along with the various topics we cover. I will also use supplemental links/power points that will be provided to emphasize particular concepts we cover in class. For supplemental information, please see:

http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/

Course Requirements

Semester grades will be determined by each student's performance on four exams and attendance. The final exam will be cumulative; however emphasis will be placed on the material covered following the second exam. There will be no extra credit offered in this course, save for the occasional attendance "perk".
Your final grade will be based on the following:

Assignment	Date	Percent of Final Grade
Exam I	September 18th	20
Exam II	October 9th	20
Exam III	November 13th	25
Final Exam	December 9th	25
Attendance	End	10

Grade Scale: A: 100-89 B: 88-79 C: 78-69 D: 68-59 F: 58-0

Exams: The grading for this course will consist of attendance and 4 examinations. The exams will cover material from the lectures and class discussion. Each exam will consist of multiple choice, and true false questions. The final exam will be cumulative, but greater weight will be placed on the material covered in the later half of the class.

**Students who come to class on exam day after the first student has completed the exam and left the classroom will not be permitted to take the exam, so it is advised that you arrive on time for all exams.

Makeup Exams: I except that students will take exams on the day that they are given. If you have to miss an exam you must contact me **in advance** and plan a day to take the makeup exam. Any absences on an exam day require written documentation (doctor's note, etc.) and I reserve the right not to permit you to take a makeup. All makeup exams consist of essay questions and no one will be allowed to take a makeup for more than one exam. No makeup exams will be given for the final.

ADA: Disability Policy: It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. If you would like to request such an accommodation because of a physical, mental, or learning disability, please contact Joyce Sesters (University Center 211), the coordinator for program accessibility 837-8178.

Religious Holiday: A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.

Academic Honesty: Students will be expected to adhere to the university honor code for all assignments. Any student who is caught cheating or plagiarizing will be punished by automatically receiving a zero on the assignment in question and may be subject to further disciplinary action.

Cheating is defined in the Student Code of Conduct as:

1) Use of any unauthorized aid, sources, and assistance and assisting others in taking a course, quiz, test, or examination, writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out assignments;
2) The acquisition without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University community;
3) Alteration of grade records;
4) Bribing or attempting to bribe a member of the University community or any other individual to alter a grade.

Plagiarism is defined as: Offering the work of another as one's own, without proper acknowledgement. Any student, who fails to give credit for quotations or essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines, the Internet, and other reference works, or from the themes, reports, or other writings of a fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism.

Plagiarism includes:
1) Deliberate copying or use of another's work without citing the source.
2) Cutting and pasting of information off of the Internet without citing the source.
3) The use of an exact sentence from a source (book, Internet, etc.) without quotes.

Drop/Withdrawal Policy: November 14th is the last day to drop a course with a "W". Once the deadline to withdrawal has passed, the student receives an 'F' for the course if he/she still chooses to withdrawal. Thus, it is imperative for students to be cognizant of these dates to avoid earning an 'F' for the course.

Important Dates: November 14th is also the last day to drop a course and receive a refund (Does not apply to students who drop below zero hours).

Schedule of Classes (Subject to Change)**

08/23 Course introduction and overview
08/25 Texas History I and II
08/30 Political Culture, People and Land of Texas
09/01 Economic Development
09/06 Federalism
09/13 State Constitutions, Texas Constitution
09/15 Review
09/20 ***Test #1
09/22 Governor
09/27 Legislature
09/29 Interest Groups/Bureacracy
10/04 Judicial Branch
10/06 Political Parties and Elections
10/11 ***Test #2
10/13 The Welfare State
10/18 Healthcare Policy/Education Policy
10/20 Drug Policy, Crime Policy
10/25 Environmental Policy
10/27 Agriculture Policy
11/01 Immigration Policy
11/03 Video

11/08 Video
11/10 Review
11/15 ***Test #3
11/17 Civil Rights
11/22 Civil Liberties
11/29 The Media/Review
12/06 Final Exam

*****Final Exam*****
8:00 Tuesday, December 6th (this classroom)