

**Social and Economic Policy Analysis**  
**PS 4311/5316: W01**  
**Summer 1**  
**Sul Ross State University**  
**SYLLABUS**

**Professor:** Dr. Tiffany Vincent  
**Office Hours:** Available via email.  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed with a focus on the development, assessment, and evaluation of the complexities of the public policy making process. To this end, we will focus our attention of the domestic policy areas of social and economic policies. In doing so, we will discuss their strengths/weaknesses, as well as identify and evaluate areas of improvement.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

**The graduating student will be able to:**

1. Evaluate the political intricacies surrounding the policy process.  
**Method of Assessment:** Weekly discussion, question creation, and Exam 1
2. Identify and apply major conceptual policy models.  
**Method of Assessment:** Weekly discussion, question creation, and Exam 1
3. Describe the role of public and non-public actors in the formulation of policy.  
**Method of Assessment:** Weekly discussion, question creation, and Exam 2
4. Identify strengths and weaknesses of contemporary domestic policy areas.  
**Method of Assessment:** Weekly discussion, question creation, and Exam 2
5. Demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate statistical tools for quantitative analysis.  
**Method of Assessment:** Weekly discussion, question creation, and Exam 3

**COURSE FORMAT & EXPECTATIONS:**

This is an online distance education course. As such, it is open throughout the Summer 1 session but there are assigned due dates for submitting assignments and exams (see class schedule on the last page of this syllabus). This course is designed to allow for a more peer-led learning vs. instructor-led lecture environment. The role of the instructor will be to guide the students through the process of understanding the course subject matter. The role of the student will be to read the assigned chapters from the required textbook each day and participate in the online class discussion forums. Specifically, it is required that each student:

1. Read and be prepared to discuss the assigned materials online.
2. Raise relevant questions and contribute relevant observations to the topic at hand.
3. Fully participate in online discussion forums.
4. Demonstrate appropriate and respectful communication with classmates and the instructor.

**DISTANCE EDUCATION STATEMENT:**

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRSU email, which require secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

**CLASSROOM POLICIES:**

Without full participation and being prepared for each daily activity, students shall find themselves at a severe disadvantage for achieving success in this course. *Keep in mind that your computer problems are NOT an excuse for any lack of completion of course material. YOU will need to maintain access to a reliable Internet connection (keep in mind there are computers available for your use in the Sul Ross Library). I am not responsible for any technological glitches that may occur in the online environment.* Sul Ross State University does not tolerate cheating, plagiarism, or collusion. Procedures for dealing with these acts are outlined in the Scholastic Dishonesty Policy.

**CIVILITY STATEMENT:**

In the classroom environment I hold each of you accountable for both your actions and words. Therefore, you should commit yourself to behave in a manner that recognizes personal respect and demonstrates concern for the personal dignity, rights, and freedoms of every individual in the classroom, including respect for University property and the physical and intellectual property of others. If a student is asked to leave the classroom because of uncivil behavior, the student may not return to that class until he or she arranges a conference with the professor, it is the student's responsibility to arrange for this conference. —\*Note: This *DOES* apply to this online course.

**DISABILITY POLICY:**

In order to receive accommodations on exams or assignments, proper documentation must first be provided to the Office of Counseling and Accessibility Services. Contact Mary Schwartze (Office: 112 Ferguson Hall) to set up an accommodations meeting, or call (432) 837-8203. Students must then present this documentation to the instructor as soon as possible so that accommodations may be arranged.

**TEXTBOOK (Required):**

Peters, Guy B., *American Public Policy: Promise and Performance*, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. Sage, CQ Press, 2016.  
ISBN: 9781483391502

**GRADING SCALE:**

- 60% Exams (3 exams worth 20% each)
- 30% Chapter Reflections/Discussion Board Posts
- 10% Participation

\*There is NO EXTRA CREDIT for this course, so please do not ask.

This course follows the traditional percentage based grading system below.

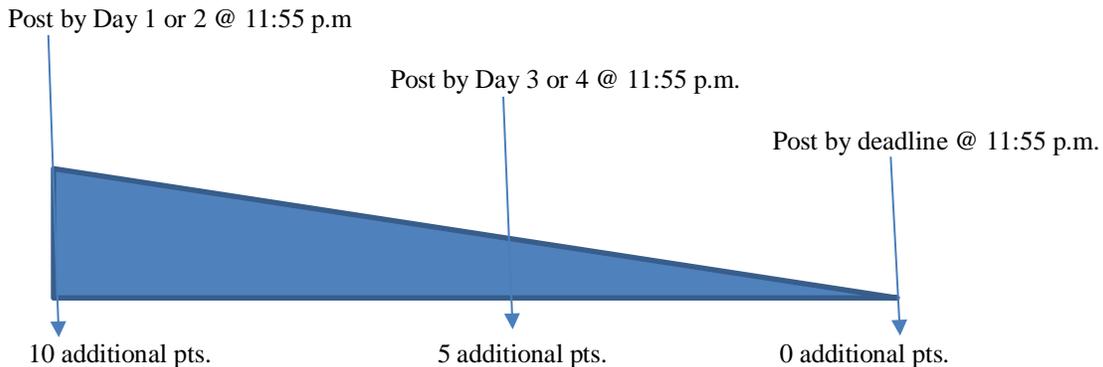
- A: 100-90
- B: 89-80
- C: 79-70
- D: 69-60
- F: 59 & below.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**EXAMS-** Each student will complete three exams in this course. In this course your exams will consist of written essay responses to question(s) that I will create to determine your ability to think critically about the assigned material. Exams (and directions) will be emailed to your sulross.edu email address (*each exam is worth 20% of your overall final course grade*) and will be due on the date specified in the course outline below. I will email you the exams the day before they are due (see course schedule on the next page), this means that you will have 48 hours to complete the exam and submit it to me. **Missed exams will result in a grade of zero. Exam deadlines are inflexible and absolute – no excuses.**

**CHAPTER REFLECTIONS/DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS-** As a summer online course, your active engagement, participation, and demonstration of reading comprehension is vital to your success in this class. To this end, at the beginning of each Section (and there are a total of 3—see course schedule on the next page) I will post a discussion question in our Blackboard home page. You are required to respond to my question, create a question of your own, and respond to a classmate’s question. *For each Section then, a total of 3 discussion board posts are required.* The questions/answers should be analytical (theoretical) over the topic at hand and/or an attempt to develop a closely related line of inquiry. The purpose is to generate productive online classroom discussion and demonstrate critical thinking ability with regard to the assigned reading(s). The questions/answers are meant to be evaluative/analytical for the sake of discussion rather than trivia questions from the readings. Failure to be respectful and civil in your responses/questions with classmates or with the instructor will result in no credit—and potential removal from the course. Ideally I would like for you to complete your posts as soon as possible, to allow for your fellow classmates to critically evaluate and respond to your questions; however there is some flex-time, which will be that **discussion posts for each section are due the day BEFORE THE EXAM IS DUE FOR THAT SECTION.** For example, our first exam will be on WEDNESDAY, June 7<sup>th</sup>; therefore you must complete the discussion board posts (all three—which means you will answer my question, post your question, and answer a classmates question) for that section BY TUESDAY, JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup> AT 11:55 p.m. At the end of the semester, I will take the average of your grades on these weekly submissions and that grade will be worth 30% of your overall final course grade.

**TIMELY PARTICIPATION-** Worth 10% of the overall course grade, your active and productive participation in this course is expected and required. This category is directly related to the section above (chapter reflections/discussion board posts). To encourage productive and thoughtful discussion, the earlier you complete your readings and post your discussion question, the more you will be rewarded (this way you hopefully will not have to wait until the last minute to answer a classmate’s posted question). If over a majority (51%) of your posts throughout the summer course are completed using the submission cut-off dates in the chart below, you will receive additional points toward this category. For example, if you post your question by day one or two (of when that section begins—see course schedule on the next page) you can get up to 10 additional points added to this category; post by day 3 or 4 (of when that section begins), 5 additional points. No additional points are given for submitting work by the required deadline (which is the day before the exam). *\*NOTE: If you choose to complete your posts by the deadline (which is the day before the exam) you are not penalized, but there will not be any additional points being added to your grade in this category.*



**Course Content/Class Schedule:**

DAY	TOPICS COVERED
<b>SECTION 1</b>	
Wednesday, May 31 <sup>st</sup>	Introduction to Course and Blackboard Navigation
Thursday, June 1 <sup>st</sup>	What is Public Policy (Ch. 1)
Friday, June 2 <sup>nd</sup>	The Structure of Policymaking in American Government (Ch. 2)
Monday, June 5 <sup>th</sup>	Explaining Policy Choices (Ch. 3)
Tuesday, June 6 <sup>th</sup>	Agenda Setting and Public Policy (Ch. 4) *Section 1 discussion board posts due today by 11:55 p.m.
<b>Wednesday, June 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Exam 1 (covering section 1)</b>
<b>SECTION 2</b>	
Thursday, June 8 <sup>th</sup>	Legitimizing Policy Choices (Ch. 5)
Friday, June 9 <sup>th</sup>	Organizations and Implementation (Ch. 6)
Monday, June 12 <sup>th</sup>	Cont. Organizations and Implementation (Ch. 6)
Tuesday, June 13 <sup>th</sup>	Budgeting: Allocation and Public Policy (Ch. 7)
Wednesday, June 14 <sup>th</sup>	Cont. Budgeting: Allocation and Public Policy (Ch. 7)
Thursday, June 15 <sup>th</sup>	Evaluation and Policy Change (Ch. 8) *Section 2 discussion board posts due today by 11:55 p.m.
<b>Friday, June 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Exam 2 (covering section 2)</b>
<b>SECTION 3</b>	
Monday, June 19 <sup>th</sup>	Economic Policy (Ch. 9)
Tuesday, June 20 <sup>th</sup>	Cont. Economic Policy (Ch. 9)
Wednesday, June 21 <sup>st</sup>	Tax Policy (Ch. 10)
Thursday, June 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Cont. Tax Policy (Ch. 10)
Friday, June 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Health Care Policies (Ch. 11)
Monday, June 26 <sup>th</sup>	Social Security and Welfare (Ch. 12)
Tuesday, June 27 <sup>th</sup>	Cont. Social Security and Welfare (Ch. 12)
Wednesday, June 28 <sup>th</sup>	Social Values and Public Policy (Ch. 16)
Thursday, June 29 <sup>th</sup>	Policy Analysis: Cost-Benefit Analysis and Ethical Analysis (Ch. 17)
<b>Friday, June 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Exam 3 (covering section 3)</b> <b>Your Final Exam is this third exam</b> *Section 3 discussion board posts due today by 11:55 p.m.

\*NOTE: This schedule is tentative and therefore subject to change at my discretion.