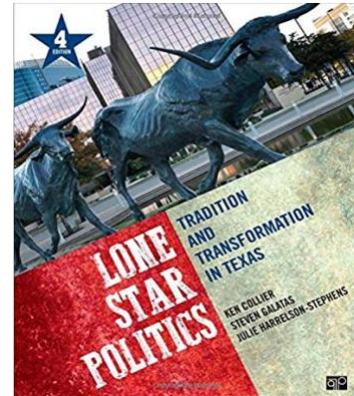


State Government
PS 2306-001, Fall 2018
MWF 8-8:50 a.m. LH 309

Professor: Jessica Velasco
Office Hours: MWF 10-11:30 or by appointment
Office Location: LH 203
Telephone: 432-837-8742
Email Address: jvel3108@sulross.edu

Required Text:

Ken Collier, Steven Galatas, and Julie Harrelson-Stephens, *Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation in Texas* (CQ Press, 4th edition, 2016).



Course description

This is an introductory course covering state politics and Texas public policy. This class will cover the historical foundation of Texas politics, the structure of the Texas government, and the most salient policy issues in Texas today. Additionally, the interaction between the state, local, and national government will be explored, as well as the diversity in state government approaches across the country.

Course learning outcomes:

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

1. Explain how the history, geography, and political structure of Texas have affected and continue to affect policy implementation in the state
2. Discuss the key policy issues facing Texas today
3. Analyze how national, state, and local government interact to implement policy
4. Describe the distinctive features of Texas government compared to other states
5. Understand, analyze and discuss American and Texas government and politics as it pertains to contemporary American political life
6. Critically analyze information to discern its meaning and validity

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 REQUIREMENTS

Assignments	100 points
Reading quizzes	150 points
Policy group	150 points
Mid-term	150 points
Final	150 points
Attendance	300 points

Total: 1000 points

ASSIGNMENTS: You have three assignments to be completed outside of class –an introductory post to the discussion board and two written assignments to assist in the application of course material (Future of Texas paper and State Comparison Assignment). The instructions and information regarding each assignment are on Blackboard. The introduction post to Blackboard is worth 20 points. The other two assignments are worth 40 points each.

QUIZZES: There will be 10 online reading quizzes this semester to assess your understanding of the reading material. All quizzes are located in the Quizzes folder in the course Blackboard. **Quizzes will be available until the Friday at 8 a.m. in the week in which they are due.** Each quiz is 10 multiple-choice questions and is worth 15 points. We will go over all quiz answers in class on Friday after they are due. NOTE: You can attempt the quizzes as many times as you want, and the top score will be used.

EXAMS: There will be two exams – a midterm and a final. Each will be a combination of multiple-choice and essay questions. The questions will come from the reading quizzes and lecture discussions. The final is not cumulative.

POLICY GROUP: Before mid-terms, you will be assigned to a policy group. You will have two class sessions to come up with an innovative group response to a current Texas policy issue, which you will present to the class in the final week of the course. More information about the presentation will be given after groups are assigned. Attendance at the policy group class days will be part of your policy group grade. Group meetings outside of class are not required but encouraged (if necessary). Outstanding group presentations will be recommended for the undergraduate research symposium in the spring.

CITIZENSHIP POINTS: On the course Blackboard page, I will post several different citizenship activities. All activities are worth 25 points. These are NOT required activities. However, you may earn up to 50 citizenship points that I will add to your course total at the end of the year. I will update this list throughout the semester, and I am open to suggestions. In order to receive these points, you MUST follow the instructions for citizenship points listed in Blackboard. Deadline: November 30, 8 a.m.

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE: A key element in the development of critical thinking and solid, educated opinions is involvement in discussion and debate. Therefore, I expect all students to attend all classes and to participate actively in activities and discussion during every class session. I will take attendance at the beginning of every class, and unexcused absences will have a negative impact on your final grade. If you are involved in a university-sponsored activity that will result in a class absence, you must notify me **BEFORE** the approved absence to ensure that I can make the necessary accommodations. “Excused absences” are those that have approved documentation (e.g. certified doctor’s excuses that specifically cite the class date, time, and reason for the missed day). With that said, **DO NOT SCHEDULE DOCTOR, DENTIST, CHIROPRACTOR, OR ANY OTHER TYPE OF APPOINTMENTS DURING THIS CLASS.**

PREPARATION FOR CLASS: In order to participate fully in class discussion and activities, it is necessary for you to complete the appropriate class readings. Reading for each class is expected to be done **prior to the class next to which the pages are listed.** This will help us have more meaningful class discussions. In addition to completing the assigned readings before each class, please also make sure to bring your text, a writing utensil, and paper to every class. On most Fridays of this term, we will be having “Fix It Friday,” and your involvement will be severely limited if you do not read.

OTHER COURSE RESOURCES: On the course Blackboard page, there is a “Chapter Guides” link that has a PowerPoint summary of each chapter, as well as e-flashcards for important terms. Going through these resources after completing your readings will reinforce the information, as well as make your quizzes easier.

CLASSROOM DEMEANOR: I expect the environment during class to be conducive to learning. Please make sure to turn off your personal communication devices and remove any earbuds/earphones when class begins. Interruptions caused by these devices may result in your dismissal from class. If you feel that you need special consideration due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., your wife may go into labor soon, you anticipate a family emergency, etc.), see me beforehand.

Many political issues tend to be emotionally charged. It is highly unlikely in a class this size that everyone will share your personal values, beliefs, and opinions. Believe it or not, this is a good thing! The presentation of varying perspectives will help all of us to learn. **HOWEVER,** this can only be accomplished if ideas, beliefs, and opinions are presented in a way that is conducive to productive, adult conversation. We must all also provide every person, regardless of opinion, his/her opportunity to share.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Doing and/or taking credit for someone else’s work, presenting the ideas and work of others as your own, and/or not citing your sources when you utilize the ideas of others are all violations of academic integrity. It is your responsibility to read and understand the university’s stance on academic dishonesty in the SRSU Student Handbook, as all violations will be taken seriously and handled through the university judicial process. In addition, please note that I will be using plagiarism software for all written assignments.

MISSED EXAMS: It is expected that you take exams on scheduled exam dates. If you need to miss an exam due to an official, university-sponsored function, you will need to provide official documentation and schedule a time to complete the exam **BEFORE** the scheduled exam date. If some other emergency arises that results in your need to miss an exam, expedient communication and appropriate documentation will assist in my willingness to let you take a make-up exam.

LATE WORK: If you miss a due date, you will be given full credit **only if** the assignment was missed because of a university-excused absence **and only if** you notified me in advance of this absence (except for emergencies, of course). Given that all assignments, aside from the mid-term and final, are accessible from the beginning of the term, the occurrence of late work should be rare.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: It is Sul Ross State University policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you would like to request such accommodations because of a physical, mental, or learning disability, please contact the ADA coordinator for Program Accessibility located in FH 112 or call 837-8691.

UNDECIDED or UNSURE about YOUR MAJOR? Political Science may be for you! Hopefully this class and the assignments will help open you up to the various career possibilities in political science, and I would be happy to discuss this with any interested students.

Calendar (subject to change)

W	Date	Topic	Reading	Due or To Do:
1	Aug 27 Aug 29 Aug 31	Syllabus/Course Intro Introduction to TX Govt Chapter 1 continued	No reading Chapter 1	Post an introduction to Blackboard
2	Sept 3 Sept 5 Sept 7	<i>Labor Day – No Class!</i> Texas Constitution Chapter 2 continued	No class Chapter 2	Ch. 2 Reading Quiz due by Friday at 8 a.m.
3	Sept 10 Sept 12 Sept 14	Texas Legislature Chapter 3 continued Chapter 3 continued	Chapter 3	Ch. 3 Reading Quiz due by Friday at 8 a.m.
4	Sept 17 Sept 19 Sept 21	Legislative Org & Process Chapter 4 continued Chapter 4 continued	Chapter 4	Ch. 4 Reading Quiz due by Friday at 8 a.m.
5	Sept 24 Sept 26 Sept 28	Texas Governors Chapter 5 continued Chapter 5 continued	Chapter 5	Ch. 5 Reading Quiz due by Friday at 8 a.m.
6	Oct 1 Oct 3 Oct 5	Plural Exec & Bureaucracy Chapter 6 continued Chapter 6 continued	Chapter 6	Ch. 6 Reading Quiz due by Friday at 8 a.m.
7	Oct 8 Oct 10 Oct 12	Texas Judicial System Chapter 7 continued Chapter 7 continued	Chapter 7	Ch. 7 Reading Quiz due by Friday at 8 a.m.
8	Oct 15 Oct 17 Oct 19	Texas-sized Justice Chapter 8 continued Chapter 8 continued	Chapter 8	State Comparison Assignment due by Friday at 8 a.m.

9	Oct 22 Oct 24 Oct 26	MID-TERM REVIEW MID-TERM POLICY GROUPS		Study
10	Oct 29 Oct 31 Nov 2	Campaigns & Elections Chapter 9 continued Chapter 9 continued	Chapter 9	Ch. 9 Reading Quiz due by Friday at 8 a.m.
11	Nov 5 Nov 7 Nov 9	Political Parties Chapter 10 continued Chapter 10 continued	Chapter 10	Ch. 10 Reading Quiz due by Friday at 8 a.m.
12	Nov 12 Nov 14 Nov 16	Organized Interests Chapter 11 continued Chapter 11 continued	Chapter 11	Ch. 11 Reading Quiz due by Friday at 8 a.m.
13	Nov 19 Nov 21 Nov 23	POLICY GROUPS Thanksgiving Holiday Thanksgiving Holiday	No Class No Class	
14	Nov 26 Nov 28 Nov 30	Local Government in TX Chapter 12 continued Chapter 12 continued	Chapter 12	Future of Texas writing assignment due by 8 a.m. on Monday, November 26-- Ch. 12 Reading Quiz due by Friday at 8 a.m.
15	Dec 3 Dec 5 Dec 7	Group Presentations Presentations & Final Review No Class	Last Class!	Prepare for presentation & Study!
16		Final Exam - TBA		Final Exam