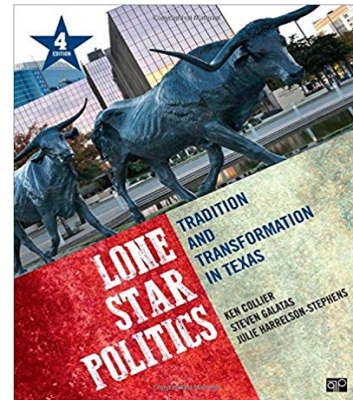


*State Government*  
*PS 2306-001, Spring 2019*  
*MWF 10-10:50 a.m. LH 309*

**Professor:** Jessica Velasco  
**Office Hours:** Mondays from 2-3:15 p.m.,  
Wednesdays from 2:30-5 p.m., and by appointment  
**Office Location:** LH 203  
**Telephone:** 432-837-8742  
**Email Address:** [jvel3108@sulross.edu](mailto: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
7. Get opportunities to practice expressing your political opinions in ways that enhance understanding, while also learning to listen and understand different viewpoints

**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	420 points	A=900-1000
Attendance & Participation	280 points	B=800-899
Reading quizzes	150 points	C=700-799
Final	100 points	D=600-699
Concept Presentations	50 points	F=less than 599

Total: 1000 points

**ASSIGNMENTS:** You will be required to complete a handful of assignments throughout the semester to assist in the application of course material. The detailed instructions for each assignment are on Blackboard in the “Assignments” tab. Point values and due dates are below:

Assignment	Point value	Due Date
Introduction post	20 points	January 25, 2019, by 9 a.m.
State Comparison Assignment	200 points	March 15, 2019, by 9 a.m.
Future of TX Paper	200 points	April 26, 2019, by 9 a.m.

**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 Monday at 9 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 Monday 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 one exam, the final exam. The questions will come from the reading quizzes and lecture discussions. The final is cumulative.

**CONCEPT PRESENTATIONS:** In the first two weeks of class, you will each sign up for two concepts to present to the class during the appropriate lecture period (25 points for each one). These presentations will involve briefly explaining the concept to the class. Each concept presentation should last only a few minutes. No visual aids or extra materials are required nor expected, just a thorough and clear explanation of the concepts.

**CITIZENSHIP POINTS:** At the beginning of class sessions, I will announce options for citizenship points. All activities are worth 15 points each. These are NOT required activities. However, you may earn up to 30 citizenship points that I will add to your course total at the end of the year. **In order to receive these points, you MUST follow the instructions for citizenship points listed in Blackboard, and you must submit them by the deadline. These are extra points, and I will not add any points after the deadline.**

## 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, paper, your name card, and a good attitude to every class.

**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 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)

<b>W</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Due or To Do:</b>
1	Jan 23 Jan 25	Syllabus/Course Intro Introduction to TX Govt	No reading	<b>Post an introduction to Blackboard by Friday at 9 a.m.</b>
2	Jan 28 Jan 30 Feb 1	Chapter 1 continued Texas Constitution Chapter 2 continued	Chapter 2	<b>Ch. 2 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
3	Feb 4 Feb 6 Feb 8	Texas Legislature Chapter 3 continued Chapter 3 continued	Chapter 3	<b>Ch. 3 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
4	Feb 11 Feb 13 Feb 15	Legislative Org & Process Chapter 4 continued Chapter 4 continued	Chapter 4	<b>Ch. 4 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
5	Feb 18 Feb 20 Feb 22	Texas Governors Chapter 5 continued Chapter 5 continued	Chapter 5	<b>Ch. 5 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
6	Feb 25 Feb 27 Mar 1	Plural Exec & Bureaucracy Chapter 6 continued Chapter 6 continued	Chapter 6	<b>Ch. 6 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
7	Mar 4 Mar 6 Mar 8	Texas Judicial System Chapter 7 continued Chapter 7 continued	Chapter 7	<b>Ch. 7 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
8	Mar 11 Mar 13 Mar 15	Texas-sized Justice Chapter 8 continued Chapter 8 continued	Chapter 8	<b>State Comparison Assignment due by Friday at 9 a.m.</b>
9	Mar 18 Mar 20 Mar 22	SPRING BREAK- NO CLASSES		

10	Mar 25 Mar 27 Mar 29	Course Recap Campaigns & Elections Chapter 9 continued	Chapter 9	<b>Ch. 9 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
11	April 1 April 3 April 5	Political Parties Chapter 10 continued Chapter 10 continued	Chapter 10	<b>Ch. 10 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
12	Apr 8 Apr 10 Apr 12	Organized Interests Chapter 11 continued Chapter 11 continued	Chapter 11	<b>Ch. 11 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
13	Apr 15 Apr 17 Apr 19	Local Government in TX Chapter 12 continued NO CLASS-SR HOLIDAY	Chapter 12 No Class	<b>Ch. 12 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
14	Apr 22 Apr 24 Apr 26	Chapter 12 continued Local government issues Local government issues		<b>Future of Texas writing assignment due by Friday at 9 a.m.</b>
15	Apr 29 May 1 May 3	Current issues Current issues Current issues		
16	May 6 May 8	Course Recap Final Review		<b>STUDY!</b>
17	May 10	FINAL EXAM, 10:15 am -12:15 pm		