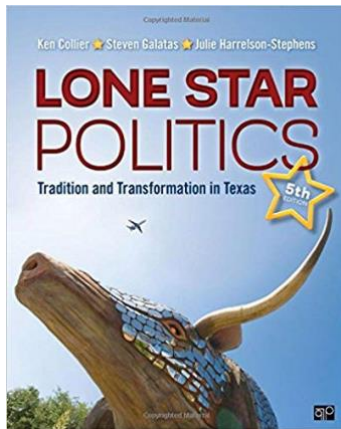


*State Government*  
*PS 2306, Fall 2019*  
*Location: LH 309*

**Professor:** Jessica Velasco  
**Office Hours:** MW, 2:30 – 5 p.m. & by appointment  
**Office Location:** LH 203  
**Telephone:** 432-837-8742  
**Email Address:** [jessica.velasco@sulross.edu](mailto:jessica.velasco@sulross.edu)



**Required Text:**

Ken Collier, Steven Galatas, and Julie Harrelson-Stephens, *Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation in Texas* (CQ Press, 5th 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, as well as the diversity of state government approaches across the country. Additionally, the interaction between the state, local, and national government will be explored.

**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. Analyze how national, state, and local government interact to implement policy
3. Describe the distinctive features of Texas government compared to other states and how each feature impacts outcomes for the state and its citizens
4. Discuss the key policy issues facing Texas today
5. Critically analyzing information to discern its meaning and validity
6. Express 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 and oral communication.

- 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.

**GRADING**

Grades in this class will be determined by the number of points you earn by the end of the course. The point distribution is listed below:

Attendance & Participation	330 points
State Comparison Paper (100 pts for planner + 150 for final paper)	250 points
Reading quizzes	150 points
Final Exam	150 points
Legislation Presentation	100 points
Introduction Post	20 points
Total	1000 points

A	900-1000 points
B	800-899 POINTS
C	700-799 POINTS
D	600-699 POINTS
F	BELOW 600 POINTS

**ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:**

There are 40 class days this semester. You receive points for each class you attend **and participate in**. If you enter the room after I have already finished taking attendance, it is your responsibility to come to me **immediately after class** to request notation of your attendance. I reserve the right to refuse to count your attendance if you miss a substantial portion of the class.

**STATE COMPARISON PAPER:**

Early in the semester, you will sign up for a state to compare with Texas for your major writing assignment for the course. You will be comparing (and contrasting) your selected state’s government structure and political history with Texas. More information and instructions are posted on Blackboard. This assignment has two due dates. You will submit the Paper Planner by 10/18 (worth 100 points) and the final paper by 11/15 (worth 150 points).

**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. Questions will come from classroom discussions and course readings. The final exam is comprehensive and required.

**LEGISLATION PRESENTATIONS:** There was a lot of exciting activity in the 86<sup>th</sup> legislative session in Texas. By the end of the third week of class, you will sign up (on a Blackboard discussion board) to present on a piece of legislation that was proposed during the 2019 legislative session in Texas. You must pick a different piece of legislation than your classmates.

During the last few weeks of class, you will be presenting information on this piece of legislation to the class. In your presentations, you should give a brief overview of what it is, what the effects (positive and negative) are, how it fared in the legislature, interest groups that were involved, and why you picked it/why it is important for other students to know about. More information about this assignment can be found on Blackboard.

**CITIZENSHIP POINTS:** It is well-established in higher education studies that students who engage in campus activities outside of the classroom do better inside the classroom. At the beginning of class sessions, I will announce options for citizenship points. All activities are worth 10 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 (November 25, 9 a.m.). Please use a DIFFERENT LINK each time you submit. 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 Outlines” link that has a PowerPoint summary of each chapter. Going through these resources after completing your readings will reinforce the information, as well as make your quizzes easier. Feel free to print these out and bring them to class if that helps you. There is also a student companion website the publisher provides: <https://edge.sagepub.com/collier5e/student-resources>

**CLASSROOM DEMEANOR:** I expect the environment during class to be conducive to learning. Please make sure to turn off all 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. **In addition, lap tops and tablets are**

**no longer allowed in my class.** If you feel you need special accommodations, please contact the Counseling & Accessibility Office, and they can assist you with other notetaking options.

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.

I will frequently ask students in the class to pair up, and I will also break you into groups for different activities and discussions. It is expected that you follow pairing instructions and contribute to the group. This is part of your participation grade.

**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 detection 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:** Given that all assignments, aside from the exams, are accessible from the beginning of the term, the occurrence of late work should be rare, except in cases of emergencies. If you are going to be out on a university excused absence on the day an assignment is due, you must submit **BEFORE** you leave.

**STRUGGLING IN THE CLASS?** It's okay! Talk to me ASAP. Be prepared to answer questions about the amount of time you spend outside of class reading and preparing for class and assignments. Please also make sure you have reviewed all materials on Blackboard (including your syllabus). Also, don't forget that we have all kinds of support resources on campus!

**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	8/26 8/28 8/30	Syllabus/Course Intro Introduction to TX Govt Chapter 1 continued	No reading	<b>Post an introduction to Blackboard by Friday at 9 a.m.</b>
2	9/2 9/4 9/6	Labor Day—No Classes Texas Constitution Chapter 2 continued	Chapter 2	<b>Ch. 2 Reading Quiz due by Wednesday at 9 a.m.</b>
3	9/9 9/11 9/13	Texas Legislature Chapter 3 continued Chapter 3 continued	Chapter 3	<b>Ch. 3 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
4	9/16 9/18 9/20	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	9/23 9/25 9/27	Texas Governors Chapter 5 continued Chapter 5 continued	Chapter 5	<b>Ch. 5 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
6	9/30 10/2 10/4	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	10/7 10/9 10/11	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	10/14 10/16 10/18	Texas-sized Justice Chap. 8 & Course Recap Finalize Paper Planner	Chapter 8	<b>Submit Paper Planner by Friday at 5 p.m.</b>
9	10/21 10/23 10/25	Campaigns & Elections Chapter 9 continued Chapter 9 continued	Chapter 9	<b>Ch. 9 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
10	10/28 10/30 11/1	Political Parties Chapter 10 continued Chapter 10 continued	Chapter 10	<b>Ch. 10 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
11	11/4 11/6 11/8	Organized Interests Chapter 11 continued LEG. PRESENTATIONS	Chapter 11	<b>Ch. 11 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
12	11/11 11/13 11/15	NO CLASS-SR HOLIDAY LEG. PRESENTATIONS LEG. PRESENTATIONS		<b>State Comparison Papers due by 9 a.m. on 11/15</b>

13	11/18 11/20 11/22	Local Government in TX Chapter 12 continued Chapter 12 continued	Chapter 12	<b>Ch. 12 Reading Quiz due by Monday at 9 a.m.</b>
14	11/25 11/27 11/29	LEG. PRESENTATIONS NO CLASS-SR HOLIDAY NO CLASS-SR HOLIDAY		<b>*Citizenship points due by 11/25, 9 a.m.</b>
15	12/2 12/4	LEG. PRESENTATIONS FINAL REVIEW	Last class	
16	TBA	FINAL EXAM		