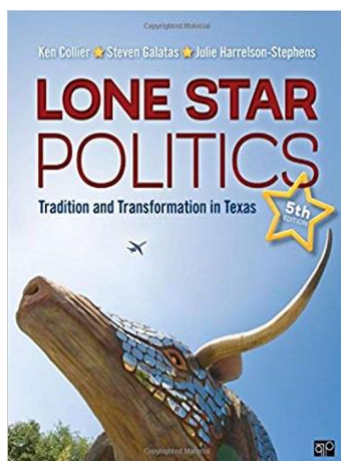




PS 2306: State Government Spring 2022, T/R 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m.



Professor: Jessica Velasco, DPA
Office Hours: MW (10 a.m.-12 p.m., TR 2-3 p.m.)
Virtual Office Hours: MW (1-3 p.m.) & by appointment
Office Location: LH 203
Email Address: 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). Companion site: <https://edge.sagepub.com/collier5e/student-resources>

Course description

This course will cover the state government of one of the most unique states in the country—Texas! You will learn about the historical foundation of Texas political culture, the structure of the Texas government, and the interaction between the state, local, and national governments. You will also learn about the way Texas approaches all sorts of governmental functions in a way that is distinctly...Texas.

Course learning outcomes:

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

1. Explain how the history, geography, and political structure of Texas have affected and continue to affect governance and policy implementation in the state
2. Describe the distinctive features of each of the three branches of Texas government compared to other states and how each feature impacts outcomes for the state and its citizens
3. Discuss how national, state, and local governments interact

4. Critically analyze information to discern its meaning and validity
5. Express your political opinions in ways that enhance understanding, while also learning to listen and understand different viewpoints
6. Become familiar with various resources available to learn more about state and local government in Texas

2021-2022 Core Assessment (Critical Thinking):

In addition to other outcomes listed, I will also be promoting the following in this class:

Critical Thinking: Students will develop critical thinking skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.

<p style="text-align: center;">Program Learning Outcomes (Political Science):</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The graduating student will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Marketable skills for Political Science:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can effectively communicate ideas and information verbally, visually, and in writing • Students can distinguish between credible/relevant information and information lacking credibility/relevance • Students can identify critical and common institutions of political decision-making and policy-making across different nation-state settings • Students can engage with social and political problems and use critical thinking to develop logical solutions
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Texas Domain III Competency 003 (Geography & Culture):

The teacher understands and applies knowledge of geographic relationships involving people, place, and environments in Texas, the United States, and the world: the teacher also understands and applies knowledge of cultural development, adaptation, diversity, and interactions among science, technology, and society.

Texas Domain III Competency 004 (Economics):

The teacher understands and applies knowledge of economic systems and how people organize economic systems to produce, distribute, and consume goods and services.

Texas Domain III Competency 005 (Government & Citizenship):

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:

A	895-1000 points
B	795-894 POINTS
C	695-794 POINTS
D	595-694 POINTS
F	BELOW 595 POINTS

You can track your progress by clicking on the “My Grades” tab in Blackboard. You can also view grading rubrics for each assignment in the “My Grades” tab. If I leave you additional feedback outside of the rubric, you will see a message bubble in the grading center. **PLEASE NOTE: As mentioned above, the grade for this class is based on POINTS, not the average that Blackboard gives you.**

POINT DISTRIBUTION

Introduction Post	10 points
Syllabus Quiz	20 points
Pre-Test	50 points
Weekly Quizzes (10 x 20)	200 points
State Comparison Worksheet	150 points
Participation/Course Engagement	270 points
Mid-term Exam	150 points
Final Exam	150 points
Total	1000 points
BONUS POINTS	TBA

INTRODUCTION POST: By Friday at 11:59 p.m. of the first week of class, you need to post an introduction to the discussion board. More information is on Blackboard. The introduction post is worth 10 points. To receive full points, you must follow the instructions.

SYLLABUS QUIZ: By Friday at 11:59 p.m. of the first week, you need to complete the syllabus quiz on Blackboard in the Week 1 folder. You will have ONE attempt. The quiz is worth 20 points.

PRE-TEST: By Friday at 11:59 p.m. of the first week, please take the pre-test on Blackboard. This will serve as a pre-test for the course and give me an idea of where everyone stands starting out. **YOU GET THE FULL 50 points** if you complete the pre-test by Friday at 11:59 p.m. There is no penalty for missing questions. Please do NOT use your books or any other resources for the pre-test.

CHAPTER QUIZZES: There will be 10 online reading quizzes this semester to assess your understanding of some of the key concepts in the readings. All quizzes are located in the folder for each appropriate chapter. Each quiz is 10 multiple-choice questions and is worth 20 points. Quizzes are due by Friday at 11:59 p.m. each week. NOTE: You can attempt the quizzes as many times as you want, and the top score will be used. Also, there is not a quiz for Chapter 1 or Chapter 8.

CLASS MEETINGS/LECTURE: For the first week of class, we will be meeting via Blackboard Collaborate in the link in our course menu. After that, we will meet on Tuesdays/Thursdays at 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. in WSB 101. Dual enrollment students will join remotely through Blackboard Collaborate (although any dual enrollment students that live close enough are welcome to come to class in person as well). It is expected that students joining remotely will have their camera on for the entire class.

STATE COMPARISON WORKSHEET: Each student will be assigned a state to compare with Texas. You will need to submit the state comparison worksheet (provided on Blackboard). Even though the completed worksheets are not due until the end of the semester, **you will be expected to work on them throughout the semester and be prepared to point out key differences between your state and Texas when we discuss each chapter.** I would suggest printing out a copy of the worksheet and filling it out each week before we discuss that week’s chapter so you are prepared. It is due on 4/26/2022, and it is worth 150 pts.

PARTICIPATION/CLASS ENGAGEMENT: This class is offered in both online and face-to-face formats. By choosing the face-to-face format, I'm assuming that means you prefer to learn in a face-to-face setting. Therefore, I expect you to attend and participate—and to do your part to stay healthy so you can attend and participate. Class engagement is worth 270 points in this class. Please come prepared to participate. Being prepared to participate means:

- You have read the assigned materials
- You have your book, paper for notes, state comparison worksheet, and writing utensils
- You have removed all distractions—phone is off and stowed away, earbuds are removed, etc.
- You are on time, and you stay for the entire class
- You refrain from distracting other students during class
- You fully participate in discussions and other activities
- If you are joining remotely, you are joining with a secure connection AND you keep your video camera on throughout the class time

Your participation grade will be based on the items above and a self-assessment at the mid-term mark and at the end of the semester.

EXAMS: There will be a mid-term exam and a final exam in this class. Both will be available on Blackboard on the days and times specified below. PLEASE PUT THESE IN YOUR CALENDAR NOW. For each, you will have two hours from the time you start to finish the exam. Each is worth 150 points.

W	Date	Topic	Reading	Due or To Do:
1	1/10 Week	Introduction to the Course & *Jan. 13-Last Day for Schedule Changes	Syllabus/Review Blackboard course materials	Introduction Post, Syllabus Quiz, and Pre-test due by Friday at 11:59 p.m. --Virtual Class Meetings this week via Blackboard Collaborate (at our regular class time). See the announcements for more info.
2	1/17 Week	Texas History/Beginning *Jan. 17-MLK Jr. Holiday	Chapter 1	**BONUS Discussion—Post a discussion question by Wednesday at 11:59 p.m. and a response by Friday at 11:59 p.m. to earn up to 10 bonus points.
3	1/24 Week	Texas Constitutions	Chapter 2	Complete your chapter quiz by Friday at 11:59 p.m.
4	1/31 Week	Texas Legislature *Jan. 31-Last day to register to vote in primaries in TX	Chapter 3	Complete your chapter quiz by Friday at 11:59 p.m.
5	2/7 Week	Legislative Organization & Process	Chapter 4	Complete your chapter quiz by Friday at 11:59 p.m.
6	2/14 Week	Texas Governors *Feb. 14-25 Early Voting	Chapter 5	Complete your chapter quiz by Friday at 11:59 p.m.

7	2/21 Week	Plural Executive & Texas Bureaucracy	Chapter 6	Complete your chapter quiz by Friday at 11:59 p.m.
8	2/28 Week	Mid-Term Review (TBA) & Mid-Term Exam *March 1-Primary Elections		MID-TERM: Available on Blackboard from 12:15 p.m. on Tuesday, 3/1/2022, to 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, 3/3/2022
9	3/7 Week	Spring Break		Be safe, and have fun!
10	3/14 Week	Texas Judicial System	Chapter 7	Complete your chapter quiz by Friday at 11:59 p.m.
11	3/21 Week	Texas-Sized Justice	Chapter 8	**BONUS Discussion—Post a question by Wednesday at 11:59 p.m. and a response by Friday at 11:59 p.m. to earn up to 10 bonus points.
12	3/28 Week	Campaigns & Elections *March 28-Last day to drop with a “W”	Chapter 9	Complete your chapter quiz by Friday at 11:59 p.m.
13	4/4 Week	Political Parties *Student evaluations of instructors open on BB	Chapter 10	Complete your chapter quiz by Friday at 11:59 p.m.
14	4/11 Week	Organized Interests *April 15-University Holiday	Chapter 11	Complete your chapter quiz by Friday at 11:59 p.m.
15	4/18	Local Government in Texas	Chapter 12	Complete your chapter quiz by Friday at 11:59 p.m.
16	4/25	Final Exam Review & FINAL EXAM		STATE COMPARISON WORKSHEET DUE by 11 a.m. on 4/26/2022 The final exam will be available on Blackboard from 8 a.m. on 4/29 to 11:59 p.m. on 5/1

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME:

- **I will support your health and safety by promoting social distancing in class, by maintaining my distance, and by wearing a mask as much as possible. I have also been vaccinated and boosted.**

- I will provide communication with the class through announcements (in class and through Blackboard announcements and emails, when needed).
- I will provide email responses within 24 hours of receipt during the hours of 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday-Friday.
- I will provide grades and feedback for assignments **within one week of the due date**.
- I will provide clear and concise instructions on how to complete course requirements.
- I will provide a range of opportunities to engage in the course content in a meaningful way.
- I will stay abreast of the current research in the field to help you get the best possible experience in the course.

WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU:

- **You will do your part to stay healthy to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other sicknesses.**
- **You will do your best to maintain social distancing while interacting with others, including me,—and will respect the choices others have made to keep themselves safe and healthy.**
- You will familiarize yourself with the course syllabus, policies, assessments, evaluation, grading criteria, and course design.
- You will acquire the tools necessary to be successful in this class. This includes the book, reliable Internet access, and a device other than your phone for completing assignments.
- You will complete all assigned readings and coursework by assigned due dates.
- You will take the time to review feedback I provide to avoid repeating mistakes.
- You will engage in the course, with your peers, and with me, using open and appropriate communication
- You will be diligent about using communication in a way that shows respect to me and your classmates.
- You will submit college-level work that has been checked carefully for errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation (using a free extension like Grammarly is recommended).
- You will respond to communication from me and your classmates in a timely manner (within 24 hours).
- You will not plagiarize the work of others or yourself, and you will also not collaborate with others on class assignments, quizzes, or exams.
- You will reach out to me immediately if you are having trouble in the class or with access to course materials. For general access issues or technical help, please call the Help Desk- 888.837.6055.

GROUND RULES FOR DISCUSSION

Adapted from:

Center for Teaching and Learning. (2020). Sample discussion board ground rules. Retrieved from <https://ctl.wiley.com/sample-discussion-board-ground-rules/>

- **Ask questions.**
If you find something confusing or want to know more, do not hesitate to ask questions.
- **Participate.**
Do not hide in the background; it is not fair to lurk and let others do all the work. Contribute to discussions to get as much as possible from the course and to maintain your participation grade.
- **Do not dominate a discussion.**

Share your knowledge, but not to the point of excluding others. If you have something to offer, please share it, but allow everyone to contribute equally to a discussion.

- **Be intellectually rigorous.**
Do not excuse sloppy or illogical thinking. Challenge yourself and one another.
- **Be tactful.**
Be critical of ideas, but remember there are other people involved. Be tactful and kind.
- **Forgive other students' mistakes.**
Do not correct others. Instead, offer a different perspective to encourage further discussion.
- **Listen carefully before responding.**
Listen before responding so you don't repeat what others have already said. Try to contribute clarifying information or a new idea to a discussion.
- **Be concise.**
Do not waste people's time by stating basic, repetitive information. Make your point clearly and quickly..
- **Cite your sources.**
Give credit where credit is due.
- **Maintain confidentiality.**
Respect your classmates' privacy. Do not repeat the personal information that others share.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES & RESOURCES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Intellectual development requires hard work. Academic dishonesty severely interferes with this development and reduces the value of college degrees. Presenting the ideas or work of others as your own, submitting the same paper for multiple classes, doing someone else's work, and/or failing to cite your sources when you utilize the ideas of others, are all examples of dishonest academic conduct. As an SRSU student, it is your responsibility to read and understand the university's expectations about academic integrity. All violations will be taken seriously and handled through the appropriate university process. The policy can be found at:

<https://www.sulross.edu/about/administration/university-policies/>

In addition, please note that plagiarism detection software will be used in this class for written assignments. **If you have any questions about this, please ask!**

LATE WORK: I have been very intentional about how I have designed this course and distributed the content to optimize your learning and comprehension. Trying to cram weeks of work into a few days or waiting until the end of the semester to do everything isn't conducive to learning. For this reason, you must have an extenuating circumstance and approval from me to submit late work. If you submit late work without an approved extension from me, I reserve the right not to grade it. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Since university-related travel (e.g., travel for athletics competition) is planned in advance (with a few exceptions), make sure to plan ahead and submit assignments before departure to avoid missing deadlines.

COURSE BLACKBOARD RESOURCES: There are several resources on the course Blackboard page. You are expected to review and familiarize yourself with the items in Blackboard in the first week of class. **NOTE:** Please post general, course-related questions to the discussion board forum I have set up for this. Typically, if one student in the class has the question, others do as well. Please allow 24 hours for a response, and then feel free to email me or call me directly with your question.

SRSU LIBRARY SERVICES:

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

The Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC) Libraries at Uvalde, Del Rio, and Eagle Pass offer additional access to library spaces and resources. Del Rio, Eagle Pass, and Uvalde students may also use online resources available through SWTJC website, library.swtjc.edu. The SWTJC Libraries serve as pick-up locations for InterLibrary Loan (ILL) and Document Delivery from the Alpine campus.

SRSU DISABILITY SERVICES: Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mary Schwartze Grisham, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203 (please leave a message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can during working hours). The office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall (Suite 112), and their mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832. **Please note that instructors are not permitted to provide classroom accommodations to a student until the appropriate verification has been received.**

DISTANCE EDUCATION STATEMENT: Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. 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. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

BLACKBOARD TECHNICAL SUPPORT: SRSU 24/7 Blackboard Technical Support Online Support Desk Contact Info: Toll Free: 888.837.6055. Email: blackboardsupport@sulross.edu

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

I will strive to create a learning environment that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives, and experiences, and also one that honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, socioeconomic class, age, nationality, etc.). It is my expectation that we will be partners in this commitment so that, together, we can create a classroom community that feels welcoming to all.

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.