



## PS 2306: State Government Spring 2023-001 Class Meeting Times: T/R 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

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**Professor:** Jessica Velasco, DPA  
**Office Hours:** M 12-2 p.m., T/R 1-3 p.m., & by appointment  
**Office Location:** LH 210  
**Telephone:** 432-837-8742 (office)  
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### 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.



### Textbook & Course Materials:

We will be using an Open Educational Resource (OER) textbook for this class. It is *Texas Government* by Daniel M. Regalado, which was created this year. You can access this textbook here:

<https://www.oercommons.org/courseware/lesson/93113/student/>

There will be additional materials for you to read and review each week. All of these items are provided on Blackboard.

### Course learning outcomes:

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

1. Explain how the history, geography, and political culture of Texas have affected and continue to affect various aspects of the structure and function of the Texas government
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. Explain how national, state, and local governments interact
4. Illustrate and explain important state government concepts, vocabulary, and processes
5. Appropriately interpret information provided in various charts and graphs
6. Express your political opinions clearly, while also learning to listen and understand different viewpoints
7. List some of the many resources available to learn more about state and local government in Texas

**Core Assessment**

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

**Personal Responsibility**

Students will develop principles of personal responsibility for living in a diverse world; to include intercultural competency, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global communities.

**Social Responsibility**

Students will develop principles of social responsibility for living in a diverse world, to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

**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
Attendance & Participation	150 points
3-2-1 Weekly Assignment (30 x 12)	360 points
Content Study Notebook	150 points
Mid-term Exam	110 points
Final Exam	150 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000 points</b>
<b>BONUS POINTS</b>	<b>TBA</b>

**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 incorrect answers. Please do NOT use your books or any other resources for the pre-test.

**ATTENDANCE & 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. Attendance and participation are worth 150 points in this class. Please come prepared to participate. Being prepared to participate means:

- You have read the assigned materials
- You have paper and writing utensils to take notes
- 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

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.

**CONTENT STUDY NOTEBOOK:** This semester, you will be creating a content study notebook of important concepts, vocabulary, and processes you learn. I have provided instructions and a sample page in Blackboard, and I will give more guidance as the semester goes on. You will need loose leaf notebook paper and folder with brackets for this assignment. Please bring this and a writing utensil with you to class each day (as well as the information listed above). You will be working on the content study notebook in class and on your own time, and I will collect pages at various points throughout the semester. The content study notebook is worth a total of 150 points.

**3-2-1 WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT:** Each week, starting with Week 2, **post the following. All items must be related to the readings AND materials posted in Blackboard for the topics we are covering that week (not the previous week) by Tuesday at 11 a.m.:**

- THREE (3) items you learned (three complete sentences)
- TWO (2) items you want to learn more about or don't understand (two complete sentences)
- ONE (1) discussion question for your classmates (see guidance below on discussion questions)

**Please use the following format** and submit the appropriate place on Blackboard by the due date each week. These are each worth 30 points. **NOTE: The submission link for each week will close when class starts each Tuesday. Post on time, or you lose the points.**

3 things I learned:

1. Complete sentence
2. Complete sentence
3. Complete sentence

2 things I want to learn more about/need clarification on:

1. Complete sentence
2. Complete sentence

Discussion Question (must be related to the readings and materials for the week we are in):

DQ: Your question

**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.

W	Dates	Topic	Reading	Due or To Do:
1	1/15-1/21	1/15, MLK, Jr. Holiday 1/18, SRSU Classes Start Introduction to the Course	Syllabus/Review Blackboard course materials	<b>Introduction Post, Syllabus Quiz, and Pre-test due by Friday at 11:59 p.m.</b>
2	1/22-1/28	Texas History, Culture, and Constitutions	OER-1, 1.1, 1.2, 2, and 2.2 & Items on Blackboard	<b>3-2-1 Weekly Assignment due by 11 a.m. on Tuesday (submit on BB)</b>
3	1/29-2/4	Texas Legislature	OER 3 & Items on Blackboard	<b>3-2-1 Weekly Assignment due by 11 a.m. on Tuesday (submit on BB)</b>
4	2/5-2/11	Legislative Organization & Process	OER 3.1 & Items on Blackboard	<b>3-2-1 Weekly Assignment due by 11 a.m. on Tuesday (submit on BB)</b>
5	2/12-2/18	Texas Governors	OER 4 & Items on Blackboard	<b>3-2-1 Weekly Assignment due by 11 a.m. on Tuesday (submit on BB)</b>
6	2/19-2/25	Plural Executive & Texas Bureaucracy	OER 4.1 & Items on Blackboard	<b>3-2-1 Weekly Assignment due by 11 a.m. on Tuesday (submit on BB)</b>
7	2/26-3/4	Texas Judicial System	OER 5, 5.1 & Items on Blackboard	<b>3-2-1 Weekly Assignment due by 11 a.m. on Tuesday (submit on BB)</b>
8	3/5-3/11	<b>MID-TERM REVIEW &amp; MID-TERM</b>		<b>Study &amp; take your mid-term</b> <b>The mid-term will be available from 1 p.m. on March 7 through 11:59 p.m. on March 9.</b>

9	3/12-3/18	SPRING BREAK		
10	3/19-3/25	Texas-Sized Justice	OER 5.2, 5.3 & Items on Blackboard	<b>3-2-1 Weekly Assignment due by 11 a.m. on Tuesday (submit on BB)</b>
11	3/26-4/1	88 <sup>th</sup> Legislative Session & Content Study Notebook updates <b>-MARCH 31-SRSU Women's Conference</b>	Items on Blackboard	<b>3-2-1 Weekly Assignment due by 11 a.m. on Tuesday (submit on BB)</b>
12	4/2-4/8	Campaigns & Elections	OER 6 and 6.1, & Items on Blackboard	<b>3-2-1 Weekly Assignment due by 11 a.m. on Tuesday (submit on BB)</b>
13	4/9-4/15	Political Parties	OER 6.4 & Items on Blackboard	<b>3-2-1 Weekly Assignment due by 11 a.m. on Tuesday (submit on BB)</b>
14	4/16-4/22	Organized Interests	OER 6.5 & Items on Blackboard	<b>3-2-1 Weekly Assignment due by 11 a.m. on Tuesday (submit on BB)</b>
15	4/23-4/29	Local Government in Texas	OER 7.1 & Items on Blackboard	<b>3-2-1 Weekly Assignment due by 11 a.m. on Tuesday (submit on BB)</b>
16	4/30-5/6	88 <sup>th</sup> Legislative Session & Content Study Notebook updates		<b>Final content study notebook check</b>
17	5/7-5/13	Final Exam Review & <b>FINAL EXAM</b>		<b>Final Exam (Available on Blackboard from 8 a.m. on Friday, May 12 to 11:59 p.m. on Monday, May 15)</b>
18	5/14-5/20	Finals Week Graduation (5/19, 5:30 p.m.)		

**WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME:**

- 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 submission due date.**
- I will provide clear and concise instructions on how to complete the 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 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 paper, writing utensils, 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.

### **GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

--A good discussion question meets the following criteria:

- Is clear and easy to understand
- Has appropriate grammar, spelling, and punctuation
- Allows your classmates the opportunity to apply or critically think about a concept from the readings or to discuss an issue that is **relevant to the topics for the week**
- Is open-ended, allowing for a 2-3 sentence response. Adding a “why or why not” follow up question is appropriate
- Encourages deeper exploration of course topics
- Helps bring in new knowledge to the learning environment

--A good discussion question DOES NOT

- Ask for specific answers that can be easily found in the book or online (you’re not testing your classmates)
- Promote a certain opinion (e.g., Do you agree that meeting yearly is a bad idea?)
- Duplicate questions from other sources or assignments—create questions in your words
- Reword a quiz question
- Present inaccuracies (e.g., Why do we limit the number of terms the governor can serve?)

### **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. Respondus Lockdown and Monitor will likely be used for the two exams as well.**

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 and Archives of the Big Bend 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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.**

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

<p><b>Program Learning Outcomes (Political Science):</b> The graduating student will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate knowledge of significant theoretical approaches of political science through written work and oral communication.</li> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to analyze domestic and international political processes in written work and oral communication.</li> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to develop arguments about global equity and equality issues in politics through written work and oral communication.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Marketable skills for Political Science:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can effectively communicate ideas and information verbally, visually, and in writing</li> <li>• Students can distinguish between credible/relevant information and information lacking credibility/relevance</li> <li>• Students can identify critical and common institutions of political decision-making and policymaking across different nation-state settings</li> <li>• Students can engage with social and political problems and use critical thinking to develop logical solutions</li> </ul>
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**FOR THOSE SEEKING A TEACHING CERTIFICATION:**

**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.