



PS 2306: State Government Summer 2023



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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. You can access this textbook here: <https://shorturl.at/xzUW9>

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. 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

IMPORTANT NOTE:

This course is only 6 weeks long. However, I must cover the same amount of material that I cover in 16-week courses. This means you will be doing and reading about 3 times more each week than you would typically do and read in one week for a 16-week course. If you do not think you have the time, resources, and/or discipline to complete this course in this format, I recommend that you sign up for this course in the fall or spring, when I will be teaching it in the full 16-week format, both face-to-face and online.

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	20 points
Syllabus Quiz	30 points
Pre-Test	100 points
Discussion Board (4 x 50)	200 points
Weekly Applied Assignments (100 x 5)	500 points
Final Exam	150 points
Total	1000 points

INTRODUCTION POST: By Friday at 11:59 p.m. of the first week, you need to post an introduction to the discussion board. More information is on Blackboard. The introduction post is worth 20 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 30 points.

PRE-TEST: By Friday at 11:59 p.m. of the first week, please take the pre-test in the Week 1 folder. This will give me an idea of where everyone stands starting out. **YOU GET THE FULL 100 points** if you attempt every question by Friday at 11:59 p.m. There is no penalty for missing questions. However, please approach the assignment with integrity and give it an honest effort. Also, please do **NOT** use your books or any other resources for this first attempt of each quiz. I will update your points once I have recorded your pre-test score for reference purposes.

WEEKLY APPLIED ASSIGNMENTS: For Weeks 2-6, after you have completed reading and reviewing the materials on the folder for each chapter, you will complete an applied assignment. The instructions for each weekly assignment are in Blackboard in each week's folder. For Weeks 2-5, the assignments are due by Friday at 11:59 p.m. For Week 6, the assignment is due by Monday, August 14, at 11:59 p.m. (the same time your final exam is due), as that is when the summer course ends. Each weekly assignment is worth 100 points.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION BOARD: Even though we are on online class, I would like to have some sort of class interaction. Each week, starting with Week 2 (but not including the final week of class), **post the following related to the readings and materials for the chapters we are covering by Wednesday at 11:59 p.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)

All of these should be in ONE post. Please use the following format:

Subject line for your post: 3-2-1 Your name

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

Question for the class

DQ: Post your question

After you have made this post, you will need to respond to the discussion question of one other student by Friday at 11:59 p.m. Each discussion board is worth 50 points. Please see the information at the end of the syllabus for more information about discussion board questions, responses, and expected behavior. **NOTE: All discussion boards are "post-first" boards, meaning you will not see the posts of your classmates until you post.**

INTERACTION WITH ME: I will be having a virtual class meeting on the first day of class, July 10, at 6 p.m., to answer any questions you have about the course. There will be an optional, weekly lecture (time and day TBA) over Blackboard as well. In addition, I will be interacting with you over the weekly discussion boards.

EXAM: The final exam will be available from 8 a.m. on August 12 through 11:59 p.m. on August 14. You will have two hours from the time you start to finish. It is worth 150 points.

W	Dates	Topics & Readings	Due or To Do:
1	July 10-14	Syllabus, Texas History & Constitutions Chapters 1 & 2 & Items on Blackboard	Due by Friday at 11:59 p.m. -Introduction Post -Syllabus Quiz -Pre-test OPTIONAL: Virtual class meeting/question time—6 p.m. on Monday, July 10
2	July 15-21	Texas Legislature & Legislative Process Chapter 3 & Items on Blackboard	3-2-1 posts due by Wed at 11: 59 p.m.; Response posts and applied assignments due by Friday at 11:59 p.m. OPTIONAL: Virtual class (TBA)
3	July 22-28	Texas Executive Chapter 4 & Items on Blackboard	3-2-1 posts due by Wed at 11: 59 p.m.; Response posts and applied assignments due by Friday at 11:59 p.m. OPTIONAL: Virtual class (TBA)
4	July 29- August 4	Texas Judicial Branch & Criminal Justice in Texas Chapters 5 & 11 & Items on Blackboard	3-2-1 posts due by Wed at 11: 59 p.m.; Response posts and applied assignments due by Friday at 11:59 p.m. OPTIONAL: Virtual class (TBA)
5	August 5- August 11	Voting & Elections, Political Parties Chapters 7 & 8 & Items on Blackboard	3-2-1 posts due by Wed at 11: 59 p.m.; Response posts and applied assignments due by Friday at 11:59 p.m. OPTIONAL: Virtual class (TBA)
6	August 12- August 15	Interest Groups, Local Government Chapters 6 & 9 & Items on Blackboard FINAL EXAM	Applied assignments due by August 14 at 11:59 p.m. Available 8 a.m. on August 12 through 11:59 p.m. on August 14

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 (three days in the summer)**.
- 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 exam.

If you have any questions about this, please ask!

LATE WORK: In a summer course, there is no time to get behind. The whole course (except for the final exam) is open and available for you to work on as soon as the course opens. Make sure you commit the time and energy necessary to complete the work in this condensed class. Please reach out to me immediately if you have an extenuating circumstance preventing you from completing the work so we can discuss whether you should drop the class. For summer classes, it is best to hit the ground running and to stay ahead. PLAN AHEAD. There will be no extensions given for holiday travel or events.

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. 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 Schwartz 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 INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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>Program Learning Outcomes (Political Science): 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>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 policymaking 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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FOR THOSE SEEKING A TEACHING CERTIFICATION

These are competencies this course helps to support. Also, please let me know if you are seeking a teaching certification. I have some other resources I can share with you.

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.