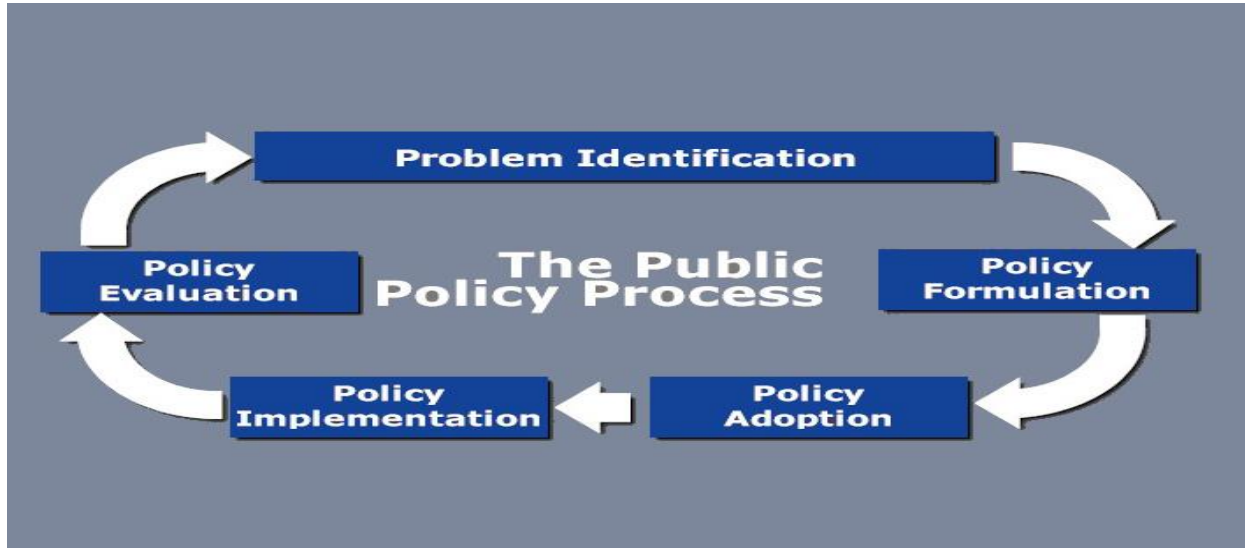




# PS 3303: Public Policy Analysis

## Fall 2025

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**Professor:** Jessica Velasco, DPA

**Office Hours:** M (2-5 p.m.), Thur (1-3 p.m.), and by appointment

**Office Location:** LH 210

**Phone:** 432-837-8742 (office)

**Email:** [jessica.velasco@sulross.edu](mailto:jessica.velasco@sulross.edu)



### Required Text:

Martin, K., Lee Jr., K. E., & Hall, J. P. (2021). *Public policy: Origins, practice, and analysis*. University of North Georgia Press. <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/public-policy-origins-practice-and-analysis>

### Course Description:

Public policy is complex and fascinating—and it impacts us in all we do. In this class, you will learn the answer to basic questions such as: What is public policy? Who are the policy makers? What is the policymaking process? In addition, you will learn how to analyze and study public policy, including the theoretical lenses that are applied to this endeavor. This will be accomplished through discussing current policies, reading published research, and creating a public policy brief on a selected issue.

### Course Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Define *public policy* and identify key policy actors
- Explain the policymaking process and the many variables that impact every part of the process
- Describe several of the theoretical approaches to public policy study
- Explain some approaches to public policy study after reading peer reviewed studies
- Demonstrate the ability to research public policy and to present the findings

### GRADING

Grades in this class will be determined by the number of points you earn by the end of the course.

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

The point distribution is listed below:

Introduction Post	10
Syllabus Quiz	20
Policy Brief Draft Submissions (5 x 30)	150
Expansion Presentations (5 x 50)	250
Chapter Prompt Responses (6 x 40)	240
Public Policy Paper & Presentation	200
Attendance & Participation	130
Total	1000
Bonus Points	Up to 50

### ASSIGNMENTS:

**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.

**READINGS:** The majority of the reading for this class will come from the textbook. Aside from that, there will be other assigned readings throughout the course. This information will be provided on Blackboard and in the class. All assigned articles will be accessible through the SRSU library online database. In addition, you will be looking up additional information for your policy brief, expansion presentations, and class assignments.

**CHAPTER PROMPT RESPONSES:** For each week that you have a chapter of the text to read, you will need to respond to the discussion prompts on the discussion board by Monday at 11:59 p.m.

**EXPANSION PRESENTATIONS:** The text provides a great foundation for understanding the public policy process, and it also provides some great opportunities for elaborating on items it includes. Each week where you have an assigned chapter, you will also be selecting an item from the chapter, researching it further, and then coming ready to provide a 3-5 minute presentation to the class. The intention is to promote deeper reading of the material and to give everyone the chance to contribute directly to the class.

**PUBLIC POLICY PAPER DRAFTS:** Every other week, you will be submitting a piece of your policy brief. This will encourage you to work on your paper throughout the semester, and it will also give me the opportunity to provide feedback before the final paper is submitted. NOTE: It is expected that the drafts you submit are solid drafts with appropriate spelling, grammar, and punctuation. It is also expected that you update each section to address the feedback provided before you submit the final paper.

**PUBLIC POLICY PAPER & PRESENTATION:** To help you apply what you have learned throughout the semester, you will be writing a public policy paper and presenting it. By the beginning of the second week of classes, you should identify your topic for this paper and post it to the discussion board. Please follow the outline I have provided in Blackboard and see the posted rubric for more details on the grading component. You must submit the paper AND do the presentation to receive a grade for this assignment. Presentations will take place during the scheduled final exam time (TBD). The paper is due the day of the presentations.

### **PROCESS FEEDBACK REQUIREMENT**

For all of your draft sections and your final paper, you must use **Google Docs with the Process Feedback extension** or the **Process Feedback online editor**. These tools track your writing and revision process. Copying text from another tool and pasting it into these platforms will invalidate the process data. Instructions for using this tool are included on Blackboard.

For each tracked assignment, you will submit both:

1. Your final paper (Word or PDF format), and
2. A **Process Feedback report** (PDF or shareable link).

The Process Feedback report will be considered part of your assignment submission.

**ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION/CLASS ENGAGEMENT:** I expect you to attend and participate—and to do your part to stay healthy and alert so you can attend and participate. Attendance and participation are worth 130 points in this class. Please come prepared to participate. Being prepared to participate means:

- You have read the assigned materials
- You have properly prepared for any presentations or discussions
- You have paper and writing utensils to take notes
- You have removed all distractions—all electronics are turned off and stowed away, earbuds are removed, etc.
- **You are on time, and you stay for the entire class**
- Your camera is on (for students signed up for synchronous online section)
- You refrain from distracting other students during class
- You fully participate in discussions and other activities (e.g., in class assignments)

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. Remember that you play a role in the overall class community and atmosphere. It will be better if everyone participates.

### Calendar (subject to change)

Week	Class Dates	Topic	Reading	Assignments and Important Dates*
1	Aug. 27	Introduction to the Course	Syllabus	Syllabus quiz & introduction post by Friday at 11:59 p.m.
2	Sept. 3	Introduction to Public Policy	Chapter 1	<b>**Education Panel</b> <b>*Submit list of problems and policy topics to the discussion board by Monday at 11:59 p.m.</b>
3	Sept. 10	Library Resources & Theories		<b>In-class assignment</b>
4	Sept. 17	Origins & Actors	Chapter 2	*Respond to discussion prompts by Monday at 11:59 p.m. *Constitution Day Event & Expansion presentations in class
5	Sept. 24	Policy Brief		<b>*Policy brief portion draft in Google Doc by Monday at 11:59 p.m.</b> <b>*In-class assignment</b>

6	Oct. 1	Foundations of the Policy Process	Chapter 3	*Respond to discussion prompts by Monday at 11:59 p.m. *Expansion presentations in class
7	Oct. 8	Policy Brief		<b>*Policy brief portion draft in Google Doc by Monday at 11:59 p.m.</b> <b>*In-class assignment</b>
8	Oct. 15	Problem Identification & Formulation	Chapter 4	*Respond to discussion prompts by Monday at 11:59 p.m. *Expansion presentations in class
9	Oct. 22	Policy Brief		<b>*Policy brief portion draft in Google Doc by Monday at 11:59 p.m.</b> <b>*In-class assignment</b>
10	Oct. 29	Policy Design & Formulation	Chapter 5	*Respond to discussion prompts by Monday at 11:59 p.m. *Expansion presentations in class
11	Nov. 5	Policy Brief		<b>*Policy brief portion draft in Google Doc by Monday at 11:59 p.m.</b> <b>*In-class assignment</b>
12	Nov. 12	Policy Implementation	Chapter 6	*Respond to discussion prompts by Monday at 11:59 p.m. *Expansion presentations in class
13	Nov. 19	Policy Brief		<b>*Policy brief portion draft in Google Doc by Monday at 11:59 p.m.</b> <b>*In-class assignment</b>
14	Nov. 26–28 (Thanksgiving Break, no class this week)	Policy Analysis & Evaluation Thanksgiving Week	Chapter 7	*Respond to discussion prompts by Monday at 11:59 p.m.

15	Dec. 3	FINAL CLASS DAY (Review of Chapter 7)		<b>*Have Google Doc updated with full draft by the start of class on Wednesday for Peer-Review</b>
16	Finals week	<b>POLICY BRIEF &amp; FINAL PRESENTATIONS DUE</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Policy Briefs are due the day of presentations</li> <li>• Presentations of policy briefs will take place during scheduled exam time for this class (TBA—I will update once the final exam schedule is posted)</li> </ul>

### Other important dates:

- 8/25, First day of classes
- 9/1, Labor Day Holiday, no classes
- 8/28, Last day for registration and schedule changes
- 9/10, Last day to drop a 16 week class without a record
- 9/26, University Meal on the Mall
- 10/6, Last day to register to vote in the November election
- 11/3, Registration for Spring 2026 opens
- 11/4, Election Day
- 11/7, Last day to withdraw with a “W” (16 week classes)
- 11/26-11/28, Thanksgiving Break, No Classes
- 12/3, Last class day before finals
- 12/4, Dead day
- 12/5 & 12/8-12/10, Final Exams
- 12/11, Residence Halls Close at 12 p.m. noon (non-graduating students)
- 12/12, Fall Commencement, 5:30 p.m. Gallego Center
- 1/14/26, First Day of Spring 2026 Classes

### **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME:**

- I will provide weekly communication with the class through announcements (email and posted on Blackboard), email notifications, and virtual office hours (by appointment during summer).
- 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 online course requirements.
- I will provide a range of opportunities to engage in the course content in a meaningful way.
- I will engage in the weekly discussion boards to provide direction or clarification to the discussion.

- I will do my best to 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 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 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—but not generative AI tools).
- 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 or use generative AI to complete assignments (unless clearly authorized to do so)
- You will reach out to me immediately if you are having trouble in the class or with access to course materials (although please call the Help Desk--888.837.6055 for general access issues)

### **GROUND RULES FOR DISCUSSION BOARDS**

SOURCE: 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. Make sure to post your questions in the appropriate thread.
- **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. You can hurt the feelings of a person reading your post.
- **Forgive other students' mistakes.**

Do not correct others, even if you follow the rules of netiquette and use good manners. Just because you do not agree with a student's post does not mean that he or she is wrong. Instead, offer a different perspective to encourage further discussion.

- **Read the whole thread before posting.**  
Read all the posts in a thread 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 posting basic, repetitive information. Make your point clearly and quickly.
- **Reread and check your posts.**  
Practice professionalism. Be mindful of how you look online; others will likely judge the tone and quality of your writing. Reread your posts and edit for clarity and mechanics.
- **Cite your sources.**  
If you use a source, cite it properly. Give credit where credit is due. Include links where appropriate.
- **Maintain confidentiality.**  
Respect your classmates' privacy. Do not repeat the personal information that others share.
- **Report technical problems.** If the platform is not working properly, please let me know as soon as possible

## **OTHER COURSE POLICIES & RESOURCES**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid engaging in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. ***In this course, every element of class assignments must be fully prepared by the student. The use of generative AI tools for any part of your work will be treated as plagiarism.*** Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

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. Communication is key.

**INCOMPLETE POLICY:** We do have the ability to assign students an incomplete at the end of a course. However, two conditions are typically required for an incomplete to be granted: 1) an extenuating circumstance, and 2) most of the work for the course has been completed. We will be using this option more sparingly than we did in the pandemic years, but we reserve the right to assess a grade letter penalty for incomplete classes. In addition, the max extension for an incomplete is 6 months, and incompletes are calculated as an “F” in your GPA until you have successfully completed the final assignments.

**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.

### **ALPINE LIBRARY INFORMATION**

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/](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 by phone (432-837-8123).

No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting [library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/](http://library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/) or ask a librarian by emailing [srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu).

### **ADA STATEMENT**

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the 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 Mrs. Mary Schwartze Grisham, LPC, SRSU’s Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email [mschwartz@sulross.edu](mailto:mschwartz@sulross.edu) or [ronnie.harris@sulross.edu](mailto:ronnie.harris@sulross.edu). RGC students can also contact Alejandra Valdez, at 830-758-5006 or email [alejandra.valdez@sulross.edu](mailto:alejandra.valdez@sulross.edu). Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT**

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Student Handbook and the Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog and for abiding by the University rules and regulations. Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all

federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

### **COUNSELING SERVICES**

Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/365 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](#). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

### **SRSU 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 a 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](mailto:blackboardsupport@sulross.edu)

<p><b>Program Learning Outcomes (Political Science):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>SLO 1: Domestic Processes and Concepts:</b> Students will understand key political processes, institutions, and concepts within the United States.</li><li>• <b>SLO 2: International and Global Processes:</b> Students will develop an awareness of international relations, global issues, and the influence of global organizations on national politics.</li><li>• <b>SLO 3: Applied Government Experience:</b> Students will gain practical experience working in government settings, applying political science knowledge to real-world policy and decision-making processes.</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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