Independent Study
PS 5305: Fall 2025

Professor:	Jessica Velasco, DPA
Office Hours:	M (2-5 p.m.), Thur (1-3 p.m.), and by appointment
Office Location:	LH 210
Telephone:	505-362-0406
Email Address:	jessica.velasco@sulross.edu

Course Description
In this independent study course, the student will complete the evaluation study that he designed in the Public Administration Survey course.

Required Materials
There are no required texts for this course. The student will be using resources relevant to his study.

Meetings with Instructor

The student will meet with the instructor every two weeks to provide updates on his project and to review feedback on submitted portions.

Course Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, the student will:

- Complete the program evaluation as designed in the Public Administration Survey course, which includes:
  - Collecting the data from TEA (request already submitted)
  - Coding data
  - Analyzing the data
- Compose a written manuscript of the findings to be submitted for publication, presented at a conference, and/or provided to Texas lawmakers to help prepare for the 2026 legislative session. The manuscript will include:
  - Introduction
  - Literature Review
  - Methodology (description of how the study was done)
  - Results
  - Discussion/Conclusion
- If the opportunity provides itself, a presentation of results will be made to other graduate students. NOTE: The instructor will work with the student to organize logistics of this.

Program Learning Outcomes

Public Administration	Political Science
The graduating student will:	The graduating student will:
• Demonstrate the ability to critique significant theoretical approaches of public administration. • Demonstrate the ability to evaluate domestic and international administrative processes. • Demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate statistical tools for quantitative analysis.	• Demonstrate the ability to analyze significant theoretical approaches of political science • Demonstrate the ability to evaluate domestic and international political processes • Demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate statistical tools for quantitative analysis

Marketable Skills

Public Administration	Political Science
• Students can organize and execute presentations relevant to public administration • Students understand and can execute a program evaluation • Students can conduct statistical analyses that are useful to the work of public administrators. • Students can read and interpret an organization budget	• Students can organize and execute verbal and written presentations of complex social issues • Students can tackle social and political problems by acquiring relevant data and using insight and technical skills to analyze data and develop logical solutions • Students understand the roles and responsibilities of institutional authority within local, state, national, and international communities. • Students understand and can execute a policy analysis

GRADING

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

Draft submissions (5 x 100)	500		A	900-1000 points
Meetings with Instructor (biweekly)	300		B	800-899 POINTS
Final Paper	200		C	700-799 POINTS
Total	1000		D	600-699 POINTS
			F	BELOW 600 POINTS

Week	Week starts	Due or To Do:
1	8/25	**Work Week**
2	9/1	**Meet with Dr. Velasco**
3	9/8	**Draft of Introduction Section Due**
4	9/15	**Meet with Dr. Velasco**
5	9/22	**Work Week**
6	9/29	**Meet with Dr. Velasco**
7	10/6	**Draft of Literature Review Due**
8	10/13	**Meet with Dr. Velasco**
9	10/20	**Draft of Methodology Section Due**
10	10/27	**Meet with Dr. Velasco**
11	11/3	**Draft of Results Section Due**
12	11/10	**Meet with Dr. Velasco**
13	11/17	**Draft of Discussion/Conclusion Due**
14	11/24	**Meet with Dr. Velasco**
15/16	12/1-end of term	**Final Paper Due by 11:59 p.m. on December 8, 2025**

Other important dates:

- 8/25, First day of classes
- 9/1, Labor 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 & Spring 2026 graduation application 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

- 12/12, 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 communication with the students through announcements (email and posted on Blackboard), email notifications, and virtual office hours.
- 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 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 graduate-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 (unless clearly authorized to do so). You will refrain from using generative AI for your work in this class.
- 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)

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. In our program, we have been very flexible with this policy, especially during COVID. However, we are not seeing the best results from students who are granted this option. In addition, we feel that it has created a level of unfairness for students who finish all their work by the stated deadlines. Therefore, not only will we be using this option more sparingly, 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/. 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 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/ or ask a librarian by emailing 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 mschwartze@sulross.edu or ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. RGC students can also contact Alejandra Valdez, at 830-758-5006 or email 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

IMPORTANT NOTES ON GRADUATE COURSEWORK AND COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

Grades: In graduate school, a "C" is required to pass the class. In addition, you must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA to remain in good standing. The program faculty evaluate the progress of students in the program at the end of each semester. Just maintaining a "B" average in the program is not enough to be deemed eligible to continue in the program or to complete the comprehensive exam.

Comprehensive Exam: A comprehensive exam is required in the final semester of coursework for MA-PS and MPA students. We will send out information to those finishing coursework in their final semester. However, you can request the comprehensive exam information anytime. Please make sure to save copies of all of your papers, assignments, and books. These will assist you in the comprehensive exam.

Marketable Skills

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