**Government 2306.003: Texas Government**

**Fall Semester 2020**

**Department of Government, SFASU**

**Course Meeting Times:** MWF 9:00 – 9:50 a.m.

**Course Location:** Ferguson 179

**Instructor:** Dr. Steven E. Galatas

**Office Location:** Dugas LAN 134

**Office Hours:**
- MWF 10:00 – 10:50 a.m. (in person);
- MW 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. (ZOOM and in person);
- TR 2:00 – 2:30 p.m. (ZOOM and in person);
- or by appointment.

**E-mail:** galatasse@sfasu.edu

**SI Leader:** Mr. Thomas Martin

**SI Meeting Times:** TBA

**SI Location:** TBA

**Course Description:**

“This course introduces students to the origin and development of the Texas constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and intergovernmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas.” *General Bulletin, 2020-2021.*

**CoVID-19 Mask Policy:**

You must wear a mask (cloth face coverings) must be worn over the nose and mouth at all times in this class and appropriate physical distancing must be observed. If you do not wear a mask and/or do not observe appropriate physical distancing, **you will be asked to leave class.** All incidents of not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students who are reported for multiple infractions of not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing may be subject to disciplinary actions. Information regarding face masks and other physical distancing may be found at:


**General Education Core Curriculum Objectives:**

In any given semester, one or more of the following Core Curriculum Objectives for the political science / government Foundational Component Area may be assessed.

- Critical Thinking Skills – creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
- Communication Skills – effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
- Social Responsibility – intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to effectively engage in regional, national, and global communities
- Personal Responsibility – the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making

**Program Learning Outcomes:**

This course is a general education core curriculum course and no specific program learning outcomes for a political science major are addressed in this course.
Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, you should be able to

- Critically evaluate political science theories and approaches to institutional arrangements of Texas political system and to Texas public policy
- Communicate your understanding and interpretation of institutional arrangements of the Texas political system, and well as key domestic and foreign policy issues
- Understand social responsibility by examining Texas government policy choices as they effect various regional, national, and global communities
- Understand, connect, and evaluate individual choices associated with Texas state public policy options and / or theories and approaches to institutional design of the Texas political system

Students are expected to go beyond rhetoric and ideology to develop critical thinking about the American political system. As a result, students are encouraged to ask questions and to challenge assumptions of class discussions while respecting the logical and reasoned positions of others.

Textbooks:

One textbook is required for this class:


The professor reserves the right to add other readings at any time during the semester.

Grades:

Grades for the course will be drawn from the following sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Activity</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignment</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Point values will be converted to letter grades using a standard 90% -- 80% -- 70% scale:

A: 450 – 500 points (90% and above)
B: 400 – 449 points (80% and above)
C: 350 – 399 points (70% and above)
D: 300 – 349 points (60% and above)
F: 0 – 299 points (below 60%)

Course grades for the entire class are not curved or adjusted at the end of the semester. Extra credit work is not permitted. To receive a particular letter grade in the class, the student must earn at least the minimum number of points for that grade.

Introductory Activity:

After watching the introductory video about your professor, you will introduce yourself to me and to the rest of the class through a post to a discussion board in Brightspace by D2L. In this post, you should address the following questions.

- What is your major? Why did you choose that major?
- What is your classification? (First year, sophomore, junior, or senior)
- What is your home town? Where else have you lived?
- Where did you go to high school?
- What are some interesting things about yourself like hobbies, activities, and other things you like to do when you are not studying?

This activity will help me and your co-learners in the class get to know you a bit better. Your discussion post is due in the appropriate location in Brightspace by D2L by **8:00 p.m. on Friday, August 28, 2020**. Please note that your grade will be based upon the completeness of your answer as well as grammar and punctuation. Your answer should be about a good paragraph in length. The introductory activity is worth twenty (20) points.
Exams:
You will take four (4) exams during the Fall 2020 semester.

- All exams consists of fifty (50) multiple-choice questions worth two (2) points each. Thus, each of the exams is worth a total of 100 points.
  - Material for the exams comes from classroom discussions and the assigned readings from your textbooks and outside sources.
  - Class sessions do not cover all material from the assigned readings, but all assigned readings, regardless of whether the material is discussed in class, are incorporated into the exams.
- All exams will be taken online in Brightspace by D2L. Each exam will open at 8:00 a.m. on the exam day and will close at 8:00 p.m. You will have eighty (80) minute to take the exam. You will take the exam only once, and once you submit an answer to a question, you will not be allowed to go back and change your answer. These procedures are in place to prevent any academic dishonesty.
- Make-up exams are given only under the most extreme circumstances (e.g., a serious illness or a death in the family).
  - You must notify your instructor ahead of time if you are going to miss an exam.
  - You provide written documentation to substantiate your absence.
  - Failure to inform your instructor of an absence prior to the exam or failure to provide adequate documentation will result in a score of zero points (0) on the exam.
  - Your professor determines what constitutes adequate documentation to qualify for a make-up exam.

Collectively, all four exams total four hundred (400) points toward your final grade in class.

Homework Assignment
For a homework assignment, you will complete an exercise related to redistricting of the Texas legislature. The assignment will be provided on-line though the Brightspace by D2L website associated with this course. This assignment is worth thirty (30) points. You will upload this assignment to the course Brightspace by D2L website by 8:00 p.m. on September 11, 2020.

Writing Assignment:
For this assignment, you will examine the current status of voting rights in the United States. Your paper will address debates over the last decade about the need for voter identification laws and their relationship to broader debates over access to the ballot box on election day.

Your paper will be graded based upon the logical flow of your argument and your ability to connect that argument with the position that you take either in favor or against voter identification laws. Moreover, you will be graded based upon your grammar, spelling, and other key elements of good writing. Here are a few of Dr. Galatas’ pet peeves when writing. Please avoid these common mistakes in academic writing.

- Confusing “feel” when you mean “think” or “believe”
- Splitting infinitives: to think clearly, not to clearly think
- Avoiding contractions: you have, not you’ve
- Writing in the first person, I or we

In addition, any sources of material that you consult other than your textbooks and course information presented in Brightspace by D2L must be properly cited in the paper and a bibliography must be provided. If you fail to provide adequate citations and bibliographic information, you have committed academic dishonesty. Your paper will receive a score of “0,” and your academic dishonesty will be reported to the university.

More details of the assignment will be provided on-line through the course’s Brightspace by Desire2Learn (D2L) website. The assignment is due by 8:00 p.m. on October 21, 2020. This assignment is worth fifty (50) points.

Attendance:
You are expected to attend class. A strong correlation exists between attendance and student performance in the course. Thus, attendance is required for this course. Moreover, regular attendance makes a clear and distinct statement about personal responsibility; habits developed during a student’s career at SFA carry over to the post-university world of employment.

Because this course is being delivered through a combination of in-person, face-to-face instruction and livestream through ZOOM, your attendance will be based upon only those days your are assigned to attend class. You will be assigned to group; each group will be assigned specific days to attend class each week to ensure social distancing. On the days that you
attend in person, will record your attendance using a sign-in sheet.

- You will sign for yourself only
- If you sign the attendance sheet for another student, you will have ten (10) points deducted from your final grade for the course and vice-versa.
- You are expected to be in class for the entire session
- Late arrivals and early departures are not tolerated
- If tardiness or early departure on your part becomes an issue, remedial action will be taken.

Class session in which you are to participate through ZOOM will not be counted toward attendance. However, you should attend virtually to ensure maximum benefit to you from class participation and experience.

You may miss this class through not being present in person six (6) times throughout the semester. After the sixth absence, you will lose five (5) points for each additional absence. No distinction exists for “excused” or “unexcused” absences; you are either in class or not in class. You DO NOT need to tell your professor why you missed class.

**Participation:**

Students are expected to come to class prepared to engage in a critical evaluation of the topic of the day. At a minimum, participation entails preparation for class by completing the assigned readings before the start of class on the day that the reading is scheduled. In addition, students should be prepared to contribute voluntarily to class discussion. Although participation does not make up a portion of the final grade for the course, participation may prove to be a significant factor in determining borderline grades. For example, participation may be used as a criterion for a student whose final grade in the class is a 89.6% (B). A student who participated often in class discussions may receive an A as the final course grade.

**Classroom Etiquette:**

Please demonstrate common courtesy for your fellow students by avoiding the following during class:

- Working on assignments for your other courses
- Engaging in text messaging, Facebooking, and similar activities
- Watching movies, television shows, and other media
- Playing games
- Answering cell phone calls

Engaging in any or all of these activities during class presents an unprofessional personal statement on your part. Such behavior is disrespectful to your fellow students. If you engage in any of these activities, you will be asked to leave the classroom for the day, and you will be recorded as absent for the day.

**Student Academic Dishonesty:**

The following is taken from SFASU’s Policy Manual (2020), section on “Student Academic Dishonesty.”

“Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members must promote the components of academic integrity in their instruction, and course syllabi are required to provide information about penalties for cheating and plagiarism, as well as the appeal process.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: using or attempting to use unauthorized materials on any class assignment or exam; falsifying or inventing of any information, including citations, on an assignment; helping or attempting to help other student(s) in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to: submitting an assignment as one’s own work when it is at least partly the work of another person; submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source; incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper or presentation without giving the author credit.

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty:

Penalties may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, resubmission of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf.

All cases of academic dishonesty will be handled according to University policies and procedures in the SFASU Policy Manual and other sources of policy. The consequences for academic dishonesty may range from a score of zero (0) on the assignment to an “F” for the course. For details, students should refer to the SFA Policy Manual (2019) or the University’s General Bulletin, 2019 – 2020 section entitled “Academic Integrity” and other sources of University policy.
Withheld Grades:

The following is taken from SFASU’s Policy Manual (2020), “Course Grades Policy.” (Policy 5.5)

“At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic unit head, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F, except as allowed through policy [i.e., Active Military Service (6.14)]. If students register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.”

Students with Disabilities:

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Acceptable Student Behavior:

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the iCare program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

SFA Policy 5.4

In compliance with SFA Policy 5.4, you are expected to spend 150 minutes each week attending class. In addition, you should spend 300 minutes each week in preparation for class. This time included reading and reviewing material from your assigned readings, as well as reviewing notes from class, working on class assignments, and engaging in research related to your research project. During weeks in which you will meet one-on-one with your professor, you are expected to spend more time engaged in research and writing on your major research project.
## COURSE READINGS AND OUTLINE

(Tentative)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Core Curriculum Objective</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Introduction to Course</td>
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<td>None</td>
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<td>08/26</td>
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<td>Lone Star Politics, Ch. 2</td>
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<td>Texas Constitution</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/04</td>
<td>The Legislature</td>
<td>Lone Star Politics, Ch. 3</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/07</td>
<td>The Legislature</td>
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<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>09/11</td>
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<td>Homework Assign.</td>
<td>Communication Skills: Visual</td>
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<td>09/14</td>
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<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>09/16</td>
<td>Exam #1</td>
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<td>09/18</td>
<td>Texas Plural Executive</td>
<td>Lone Star Politics, Ch. 5</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>09/21</td>
<td>Texas Plural Executive</td>
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<td>Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>09/23</td>
<td>The Governor</td>
<td>Lone Star Politics, Ch. 4</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Governor</td>
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<td>Texas Court System</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/30</td>
<td>Texas Court System</td>
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<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/02</td>
<td>Criminal Justice Policy</td>
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<td>None</td>
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<td>None</td>
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<td>Campaigns and Elections</td>
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<td>None</td>
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<td>10/21</td>
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<td>Writing Assignment</td>
<td>Communication Skills: Written and Visual</td>
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<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 8</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>None</td>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>10/30</td>
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<td>11/09</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
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<td>None</td>
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<td>Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>None</td>
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<td>11/30</td>
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<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 12</td>
<td>Online Module</td>
<td>Social and Personal Responsibilities</td>
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<td>12/02</td>
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<td>Online Module</td>
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</table>
Course Syllabus Appendix

General Education Core Curriculum
The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has identified six core learning objectives: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. SFA is committed to the improvement of its general education core curriculum by regular assessment of student performance on these six objectives.

By enrolling in GOVT 2306: Texas Government you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the Core Curriculum / General Education Objectives of Communication Skills (Visual and Written), Critical Thinking, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.

During the semester, you will receive assignments that fulfills both the requirements of this course and the needs of Stephen F. Austin State University's Core Curriculum Assessment Plan with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. If you have any questions, please see your Instructor or the Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment at (936) 468-1130.

The chart below indicates the core objectives addressed by this course, the assignment(s) that will be used to assess the objectives associated with this course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Course Assignment Titles</th>
<th>Date Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Communication Skills | To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas though written, oral, and visual communication. | 1) Introductory Activity  
2) Homework Assignment  
3) Writing Assignment | 1) August 31, 2020  
2) September 11, 2020  
3) October 21, 2020 |
| Critical Thinking    | To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information | 1) Exam #1  
2) Exam #2  
3) Exam #4 | 1) September 16, 2020  
2) October 12, 2020  
3) December 7, 2020 |
| Social Responsibility| To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to effectively engage in regional, national, and global communities | 1) Exam #2  
2) Exam #3  
3) Exam #4 | 1) October 12, 2020  
2) November 4, 2020  
3) December 7, 2020 |
| Personal Responsibility| To include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making | 1) Exam #1  
2) Exam #3  
3) Exam #4 | 1) September 16, 2020  
2) November 4, 2020  
3) December 7, 2020 |