Government 2306.001: Texas Government
Fall Semester 2023
Department of Government, SFASU
Course Meeting Times: MWF 9:00 – 9:50 a.m.
Course Location: Ferguson #372
Instructor: Dr. Steven E. Galatas
Office Location: Dugas LAN # 134
Office Hours: MW 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. (ZOOM or in person); TR 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (in person); and by appointment
E-mail: galatasse@sfasu.edu
SI Leader: Mr. Gavin Willsey
SI Meeting Days and 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, 2032- 2024.

COVID-19 Policies:
Mask Policy:
While state policy prohibits SFASU from imposing a mask mandate, students are strongly encouraged to wear a mask (cloth face covering) while in class. In addition, state policy prohibits social distancing; however, students are encouraged to consider physical distancing as much as possible. Information regarding face masks and other physical distancing may be found at:

General Health Policy:
This course is designed to be conducted in person. If you suspect that you have been exposed to COVID-19 or if you are symptomatic, do not attend class so that the spread of COVID-19 is minimized. Please get a test as soon as possible. Tests are available from a variety of healthcare providers including the SFASU Health Clinic. Should you miss class and should the need for quarantine arise, provisions will be made on a case-by-case basis to ensure that you have access to course material.

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 the Texas political systems
• Communicate your understanding and interpretation of institutional arrangements of the Texas political systems, as well as the relationship between institutions and political behavior
• Understand social responsibility by examining state laws and state policy choices as they effect various regional, national, and global communities
• Understand, connect, and evaluate individual choices associated state public policy options and/or political science theories and concepts to institutional design of political systems

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>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>500</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.

Exams:

You will take four exams during the semester.

• All exams consist of fifty (50) multiple-choice questions worth two (2) points each. Thus, each of these exams is worth a total of one hundred (100) points.
  • Material for the exams comes from classroom discussions as well as the assigned readings from your textbooks.
  • Class sessions will not cover all material from the assigned readings, but all assigned readings, regardless of whether the material is discussed in class, may be covered on the exams.
• 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 professor ahead of time if you are going to miss an exam.
  • You must provide written documentation to substantiate your absence.
  • Failure to inform your professor 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.
• During exams, cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off and stored away.
• For each exam, you must bring a Scantron 882-E form and a pencil.
Collectively, all four exams total four hundred (400) points toward your final grade in class.

Homework Assignments:
Your will complete three (3) homework assignments throughout this semester. These assignments ask you to go beyond class modules, video presentation, and course readings to apply your knowledge to new situations and settings.

The first assignment asks you to complete an exercise related to redistricting of the Texas legislature. The assignment will be provided on-line through 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 **at the beginning of class on September 18, 2023.** This assignment is worth fifty (50) points.

The second assignment asks you develop a meme addressing a fundamental civil liberty and civil right. This assignment will be provided on-line through Brightspace by D2L. The assignment is due in the appropriate Dropbox by **11:59 p.m. on October 9, 2023.** This assignment will be worth twenty (20) points.

For the final homework assignment, you will write a brief memo that addresses an issue that addresses an issue that is important to you for a lobbyist to use when meeting with an elected official. This assignment will be provided online through Brightspace by D2L. The assignment is due in the appropriate Dropbox by **11:59 p.m. on November 8, 2023.** This assignment will be worth thirty (30) points.

Note that for homework assignments that require writing, especially Homework #2 and Homework #3, you will be graded upon the logical flow of your paragraph, the organization of your paragraph, the conciseness of your argument, and the preciseness of your language.

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

Note: The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for any of the homework assignments is prohibited. Any use of artificial intelligence for assignments in this course will be considered a violation of Academic Integrity guidelines of the university.

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.

During each class session, a sign-in sheet will be passed around.
• 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
• If another students signs your name, you will have ten (10) points deducted from your final grade for the course

• You may miss up to nine (9) times without penalty.
  • After the ninth absence, you will lose five (5) points for each additional absence
  • No distinction exits 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

• Class begins promptly at 9:00 a.m.
  • You are expected to be in class for the entire class 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.
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.

Academic Integrity (4.1)
The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy. Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (5.5)
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the coursework 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. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf.
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. Failure to request services promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Student Wellness and Well-Being

SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**

**The Dean of Students Office**  
Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby  
[www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents](http://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents)  
936.468.7249  
dos@sfasu.edu

**SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic**  
Human Services, Room 202  
[www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp)  
936.468.1041

The **Health and Wellness Hub** “The Hub”  
Corner of E. College and Raguet St.  
- Health Services  
- Counseling Services  
- Student Outreach and Support  
- Food Pantry  
- Wellness Coaching  
- Alcohol and Other Drug Education  
[www.sfasu.edu/thehub](http://www.sfasu.edu/thehub)  
936.468.4008  
thelhub@sfasu.edu

**On-campus Resources:**

**Crisis Resources:**

- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343  
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8  
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)  
- johCrisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Core Curriculum Objective</th>
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<tr>
<td>08/28</td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/30</td>
<td>Basic Concepts</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/01</td>
<td>Basic Concepts</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/04</td>
<td>Introduction to Texas</td>
<td>Lone Star Politics, Ch. 1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/06</td>
<td>Introduction to Texas</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>09/08</td>
<td>Texas Constitution</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 2</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>09/11</td>
<td>Texas Constitution</td>
<td>Lone Star Politics, Ch. 2</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/13</td>
<td>The Legislature</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 3</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/15</td>
<td>The Legislature</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 3</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/18</td>
<td>The Legislature</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 3</td>
<td>Homework #1</td>
<td>Communication Skills: Visual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/20</td>
<td>The Legislature</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 3</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>09/22</td>
<td>The Legislature</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 3</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>09/25</td>
<td>Exam #1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking, Personal Responsibility</td>
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<td>09/27</td>
<td>Texas Plural Executive</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 5</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/29</td>
<td>Texas Plural Executive</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 5</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>10/02</td>
<td>The Governor</td>
<td>Lone Star Politics, Ch. 4</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>10/04</td>
<td>The Governor</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 4</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/06</td>
<td>The Governor</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 4</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/09</td>
<td>Texas Court System</td>
<td>Lone Star Politics, Ch. 6</td>
<td>Homework #2</td>
<td>Communication Skills: Written; Communication Skills: Visual</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/11</td>
<td>Texas Court System</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 6</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/13</td>
<td>Texas Court System</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 6</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>10/16</td>
<td>Exam #2</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Critical Thinking, Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>10/18</td>
<td>Civil Liberties in Texas</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 7</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/20</td>
<td>Civil Liberties in Texas</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 7</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/23</td>
<td>Civil Rights in Texas</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 7</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/25</td>
<td>Civil Rights in Texas</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 7</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/27</td>
<td>Campaigns and Elections</td>
<td>Lone Star Politics, Ch. 8</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Communication Skills: Written</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>Campaigns and Elections</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 8</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Communication Skills: Visual</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/01</td>
<td>Campaigns and Elections</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 8</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Communication Skills: Visual</td>
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<td>11/03</td>
<td>Campaigns and Elections</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 8</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
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<td>11/06</td>
<td>Organized Interests</td>
<td>Lone Star Politics, Ch. 10</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/08</td>
<td>Organized Interests</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 10</td>
<td>Homework #3</td>
<td>Communication Skills: Written</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>Organized Interests</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 10</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>11/13</td>
<td>Exam #3</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Social and Personal Responsibility, Communication Skills: Visual</td>
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<td>11/15</td>
<td>Political Parties</td>
<td>Lone Star Politics, Ch. 9</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>11/17</td>
<td>Political Parties</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 9</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
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<td>11/20</td>
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<td>11/27</td>
<td>Political Parties</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 9</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>11/29</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>Lone Star Politics, Ch. 11</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/01</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 11</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>12/04</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 11</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>12/06</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 11</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>12/08</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>Review Lone Star Politics, Ch. 11</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>12/13</td>
<td>Exam #4 at 8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Social and Personal Responsibility, Critical Thinking</td>
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</tbody>
</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 through written, oral, and visual communication. | 1) Homework #1  
                         |                                                                          | 2) Homework #3  
                         |                                                                          | 3) Exam #3              | 1) September 25, 2023  
                         |                                                                          | 2) November 8, 2023  
                         |                                                                          | 3) November 13, 2023   |
| Critical Thinking      | To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information | 1) Exam #1  
                         |                                                                          | 2) Exam #2              | 1) September 25, 2023  
                         |                                                                          | 3) Exam #4              | 2) October 16, 2023  
                         |                                                                          |                        | 3) December 13, 2023   |
| 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              | 1) October 16, 2023  
                         |                                                                          | 3) Exam #4              | 2) November 8, 2023  
                         |                                                                          |                        | 3) December 13, 2023   |
| Personal Responsibility| To include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making | 1) Exam #1  
                         |                                                                          | 2) Exam #3              | 1) September 25, 2023  
                         |                                                                          | 3) Exam #4              | 2) November 8, 2023  
                         |                                                                          |                        | 3) December 13, 2023   |