**Government 2306.002: Texas Government**

**May Term 2023**

**Department of Government, SFASU**

**Course Meeting Times:** MTWRF 11:30 – 2:45 p.m.

**Course Location:** Ferguson #179 and Livestream on ZOOM

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

**Office Location:** Dugas LAN # 134

**Office Hours:** MTWR 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. and by appointment

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

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**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, 2022-2023.*

**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: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html

**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 asymptomatic, 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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignment</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
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Point values will be converted to letter grades using a standard 90% -- 80% -- 70% scale:

- A: 360 – 400 points (90% and above)
- B: 320 – 359 points (80% and above)
- C: 280 – 319 points (70% and above)
- D: 240 – 279 points (60% and above)
- F: 0 – 239 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 three (3) exams during the May Term.
• 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 3:00 p.m.** on the exam day and **will close at 11:59 p.m.** You will have sixty (60) minutes 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.

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 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 May 11, 2023.

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, ballot access, and their relationship to broader debates in contemporary Texas politics.

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 Design2Learn (D2L) website. The assignment is due May 19, 2023. This assignment is worth seventy (70) points.

Attendance:
This course is delivered in person and livestream via ZOOM. You are expected to attend class either in person or by ZOOM. **Note that this course is NOT an online only course.**

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 for those attending in person. For those attending by ZOOM, your login will be taken as a measure of your attendance. You must remain logged onto the ZOOM session the entire time.

For those attending in person, the following rules apply:
• 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 three (3) times without penalty.
• After the third absence, you will lose ten (10) 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
• Class begins promptly at 11:30 a.m.
• You are expected to be in class for the entire class session, whether in person or by ZOOM.
• Late arrivals and early departures are not tolerated either in person or by ZOOM.
• 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, whether in person or by ZOOM. 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.

For those attending by ZOOM, you are expected to keep your video visible throughout the class sessions.

Student Academic Dishonesty:
The following is taken from SFASU’s Policy Manual (2022), 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 (2022) or the University’s General Bulletin, 2022 – 2023 section entitled “Academic Integrity” and other sources of University policy.

Withheld Grades:
The following is taken from the SFA Policy Manual (2022), “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.

Course Hour Credit Justification
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, preparing for exams, and working on class assignments including homework assignments and writing assignments.

Mental Health and Wellness
SFA values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. 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: SFA Counseling Services
www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
Rusk Building, 3rd Floor 936.468.2401 SFA

Human Services Counseling Clinic
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp Human Services, Room 202 936.468.1041 Off

Campus Resources:
Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741
COURSE READINGS AND OUTLINE

05/08: Introduction to Course, Basic Concepts, and Texas in Context
Read Collier, et al., Chpt. 1

05/09: Texas Constitution
Read Collier, et al., Chpt. 2

05/10: Texas Legislature
Read Collier, et al., Chpt. 3

05/11: Texas Legislature
Review Collier, et al., Chpt. 3
Homework Assignment Due Exam #1

05/12: Texas Executive
Read Collier, et. al., Chpts. 4 and 5

05/15: Texas Executive
Review Collier, et. al., Chpts. 4 and 5

05/16: Texas Courts
Read Collier, et al., Chpt. 6

05/17: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights in Texas
Read Collier, et al., Chpt. 7
Exam #2

05/18: Campaign and Elections
Read Collier, et al., Chpt. 8

05/19: Organized Interests in Texas
Read Collier, et al., Chpt. 10
Writing Assignment Due

05/22: Political Parties in Texas
Read Collier, et al., Chpt. 9

05/23: Local Government in Texas
Read Collier, et. al., Chpt. 11
Exam #3
**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>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas though written, oral, and visual communication.</td>
<td>1) Homework Assignment</td>
<td>1) May 11, 2023</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Writing Assignment</td>
<td>2) May 19, 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3) Exam #3</td>
<td>3) May 23, 2023</td>
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<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.</td>
<td>1) Exam #1</td>
<td>1) May 11, 2023</td>
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<td>2) Exam #2</td>
<td>2) May 17, 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3) Exam #3</td>
<td>3) May 23, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to effectively engage in regional, national, and global communities</td>
<td>1) Exam #1</td>
<td>1) May 11, 2023</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2) Exam #2</td>
<td>2) May 19, 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3) Exam #3</td>
<td>3) May 23, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>To include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making</td>
<td>1) Exam #1</td>
<td>1) May 11, 2023</td>
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<td>3) Exam #3</td>
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