Government 2306.506: Texas Government
Summer II 2023
Department of Government, SFASU
Course Meeting Times: Online
Course Location: Online
Instructor: Dr. Steven E. Galatas
Office Location: Dugas LAN # 134
Office Hours: MTWR 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. (ZOOM) and by appointment
E-mail: galatasse@sfasu.edu

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.

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>Source</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Quiz</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>90</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 – 229 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 (4) exams during the Summer II Term.

- All exams consist 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 online modules, online lectures / videos, assigned readings from your textbooks and outside sources.
  - Class content in the Brightspace by D2L modules do not cover all material from the assigned readings, but all assigned readings, regardless of whether the material is presented in a content module, are incorporated into the exams.
- All exams will be taken online in Brightspace by D2L. Each exam will open at 12:00 p.m. (noon) 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 Assignments:

Your will complete three (3) homework assignments throughout the Summer II Term. 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 **11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, July 11, 2023.** This assignment is worth forty (40) 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 by **11:59 p.m. on Monday, July 24, 2023.** This assignment will be worth twenty-five (25) 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 on-
line through Brightspace by D2L. The assignment is due by **11:59 p.m. on Friday, July 28, 2023**. This assignment will be worth twenty-five (25) 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

**Attendance:**

Because this class is delivered through an online platform, there is no required attendance. Instead, you are expected to engage in logging onto the course management software, Brightspace by D2L, to complete modules and assignments based upon the schedule listed in the Course Calendar.

In addition, note the following course policies:

- This is an online course, so you will be required to engage in self-study and self-reminders as to when assignments are due and what is required of you. A due date timeline in addition to the syllabus is posted in the getting started section, and I will post announcements when necessary.
- We will maintain regular contact throughout the semester through D2L email.
- Late assignments are not accepted. Having another exam or paper due that day is not an exceptional circumstance.
- The open exchange of ideas will be respected by all students. Respectful discussion is required. While you are allowed to express your opinions during the discussions remember that other students may have different opinions and have the right to have and express those opinions. Personal attacks are not allowed as they do not promote civilized debate.
- While you may encounter technological issues such as problems uploading assignments to Brightspace by D2L or technological problems, these issues are not valid excuses for submitting work after the deadlines listed in this syllabus. You should complete your assignments in a timely fashion so that if you encounter a printer problem, etc. you have sufficient time to overcome the problem before the deadline for submitting work.

**Course Hour Justification:**

In compliance with SFA Policy 5.4, you are expected to spend 450 minutes each week engaged in class-related activities. These activities include reading and reviewing material from your assigned readings, as well as reviewing notes from readings, working on class assignments, and engaging in research related to your papers.

**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 (2021) or the University’s Graduate Bulletin, 2022 – 2023 section entitled “Academic Dishonesty” and other sources of University policy.

Withheld Grades:
The following is taken from SFASU’s 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 classes 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.

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 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 Assignment #2  
2) Homework Assignment #3  
3) Exam #4               | 1) July 17, 2023  
2) July 28, 2023  
3) August 3, 2023       |
| Critical Thinking       | To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information | 1) Exam #1  
2) Exam #2  
3) Exam #3  
4) Exam #4               | 1) July 12, 2023  
2) July 18, 2023  
3) July 26, 2023  
4) August 3, 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 #1  
2) Exam #3  
3) Exam #4               | 1) July 12, 2023  
2) July 18, 2023  
3) August 3, 2023       |
| 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) July 12, 2023  
2) July 18, 2023  
3) August 3, 2023       |