Stephen F. Austin State University
Texas Politics GOVT 2306.524
ONLINE COURSE Spring 2024

Professor: Dr. Julie Harrelson-Stephens
Office: 135 Liberal Arts North, Department of Government
Phone: 468-2380
Email: *the best way to contact me is the email in Brightspace

Office Hours Tuesday, Thursday 11:00 – 12:00, and by appointment
ZOOM Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 9:00- 11:00

ZOOM office hours are drop-in and do not require an appointment. If I am with another student, you may be in the waiting room. Click on the links for drop-in zoom office hours during the listed times. If you need to meet with me at another time, I am happy to. Send me an email and we will set up an appointment.

Purpose
This course is one of two required political science courses. This course focuses on Texas government. It covers the Texas constitution and the state's institutions (the executive, legislative, and judicial branch). It also explores a few of the policy outputs produced by the political system. Although many of you are not majoring in political science, all of you will be affected by the political process. Hopefully by the end of this course you will not only be more informed about the political process, but also more interested and involved in it.

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, 2021-2022

This three-credit hour face-to-face course requires approximate 150 minutes of classroom time/direct instruction as well as at least six hours of out-of-class reading and studying each week in preparation for exams and completion of writing assignments.

This course uses a textbook, Lone Star Politics 8th edition, by Collier, Galatas, and Harrelson-Stephens, in the Vantage platform. Students must purchase the textbook in the platform and associated with this course (through the link in D2L) in order to succeed in this course.
Knowledge Checks 10%
Chapter Tests 30%
Four in-class Exams 60%

As you read through the chapters in Vantage, you will be assigned Knowledge Checks throughout the chapter worth 10% of your total grade. These checks are relatively easy but are designed to help you comprehend the material as you are reading. If you get one of the questions wrong, you can (and should) retake the check. You can take them as many times as you want until the due date, and the highest score will be recorded. Once the due date closes, you can continue to take the checks for your own benefit, but the grade will not change.

In addition, there are end of Chapter Tests worth 30% of your total grade, which cover basic vocabulary and concepts from the textbook. You may take each end of chapter tests as many times as you want to help study the material. These tests can help you check your knowledge; and point you to information you need to study.

The bulk of your grade, 60%, will come from four exams given during the semester, consisting of multiple choice and short answer. Tests will cover material from the lecture and the reading. Exams will be taken in class, during the regularly scheduled time.

If you know you will miss an exam for any reason (including ANY university excused absences) you must make arrangements with me at least two days prior to the scheduled exam date to take the exam early. This means if you participate in any SFA extracurricular such as a sports team or academic competition team, you must arrange to take your exams before rather than after the exam date. Otherwise a zero will be recorded for your exam grade. If you miss an exam unexpectedly, contact me immediately. You may be allowed to take an alternative exam with appropriate documentation, such as a doctor’s note.
Grading:

Course grades of 90 – 100 will be scored an A; 80-89 is a B; 70-79 is a C; 60-69 is a D; below 60 is an F.

If you think that an error has been made in calculating your grade, it is your responsibility to provide me with all of your work. To that end, it would be prudent to save anything that is handed back to you until you get your final grade report. Assignments are always due at the beginning of class and are considered late if you are late to class.

Success in this course:

Study skills are developed with practice. It is unlikely that you can merely read an assigned chapter and fully absorb all the concepts contained in that chapter in one sitting. Rather, it is often the case that to truly understand new material, you have to read it more than once, spend time contemplating the material, and even discussing it with your peers or in the SI group. Success is significantly more likely if you keep up with the course requirements throughout the semester, rather than cramming the requirements in a day or two before the exam. To increase the likelihood that you succeed, I have review questions and basic quizzes. The course also has an SI session twice a week where concepts and themes from the class are covered.

Anyone having problems in this course is strongly encouraged to contact me as early as possible. I will be happy to help you in any way possible. I may be able to help you study more effectively or recommend other assistance. Do not wait until the end of the semester to ask for help, when so much of your grade is already completed. Ask for help as soon as you know you need it. Remember, I want you to do well in this class!

Email inquiries should employ professional language including a subject line that indicates the nature of the email, your full name, which course and section you are enrolled in, and appropriate salutations. I will not respond to emails that are answered in the syllabus or requesting extra credit or any other adjustment in your grade. I will also not respond to emails merely repeating questions from the review questions that I give you to fill out. I am happy to answer questions and help you with material you are struggling with, but you should be sure you have been keeping up with the material and the modules.
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 this course, students will be able to:

- 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

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

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>
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<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. Bumper Sticker: Political Culture</td>
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| 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 |
| 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 #4 |
| 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 |

### Attendance Policy
Attendance is strongly encouraged. It is unlikely that you will be able to pass the class if you do not attend regularly.

### Institution Absences (HOP 04-110)
An Institutional Absence may be granted to a student who participates as a representative of the University in academic (including research), extra- or cocurricular, or athletic activities. Students will be excused for institutional purposes from otherwise required academic activity only when a valid Institutional Absence is approved by the appropriate administrative unit or official and the documentation of approval is provided to the faculty member at least five (5) days in advance.

Institutional absences will not be approved for keystone events, defined as: a special or unique assignment, test, project, experience, or other academic exercise identified by the Faculty member as critical for successful completion of standards of the class and unable to be missed. These events must be identified on the syllabus at the beginning of the semester and communicated to the students. Events added to the syllabus at a later date will not qualify for Keystone Event status. Keystone Events where the date/time is changed will no longer be considered a Keystone Event. Students should make themselves aware of any Keystone Events identified in the syllabus to ensure there are no conflicts.

For keystone events where the assignment dates vary, it is incumbent upon the students to work with their faculty member to not select a conflicting date.

More information on Institutional Absences, including how to apply, can be found at [https://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents/student-resources/institutional-absences](https://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents/student-resources/institutional-absences).
Academic Integrity

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.

You are not permitted to use AI in any assignments for this course. Please ensure that all work you post or submit is your original work, and that any material belonging to others is properly cited according to the APSA Style Manual opens in new window.
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
936.468.7249
dos@sfasu.edu

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

The Health and Wellness Hub “The Hub”
Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.
To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:
- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Student Outreach and Support
- Food Pantry
- Wellness Coaching
- Alcohol and Other Drug Education
www.sfasu.edu/thehub
936.468.4008
thehub@sfasu.edu
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

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.

Other Important Policies:
This syllabus should be seen as a rough guide of the coming semester. I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus throughout the semester.

Class information, including changes of dates, study aides, changes in assignments due to weather days or other information will be posted on the class D2L page.