

State and Local Government  
POLS 2312  
Dr. Sledge  
University of Texas, Arlington  
Department of Political Science  
Fall 2012

Meeting Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 11am-12.20pm

Location: University Hall 108

Email: [dsledge@uta.edu](mailto:dsledge@uta.edu)

Office Hours: 1.30-2.30pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays. My office is University Hall 402.

Course Slides will be posted on my website: <http://sites.google.com/site/danieldavissledge/Home/>

**Description of Course Content:** This course provides an introduction to the workings of state and local government in the state of Texas and places Texas within a comparative framework.

**Political Science 2312 learning objectives/outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to be able to: 1) Define fundamental concepts associated with state politics through appropriate responses on exams. 2) Explain the theoretical and historical underpinnings of state constitutions; achieve basic understanding of the Texas constitution's content. 3) Describe the structure, function, powers of the differing branches of state governments and their influence on public policy. 4) Describe the evolving history of elections, eligibility, and impact of participation on democracy.

**Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials:** This course has one required text: *Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation in Texas*, Second Edition, by Collier, Galatas, and Harrelson-Stephens (CQ Press). For excellent coverage of politics and government in Texas, students are encouraged to read the Texas Tribune, available online at [www.texastribune.org](http://www.texastribune.org).

**Descriptions of major assignments and examinations with due dates:** Your grade for this course will be determined based on your performance on three multiple-choice exams. Each exam will be worth 1/3 of your grade. The final exam, which will take place during the allotted time in the final exam period, will be *cumulative*.

Grading Policy:

F: Below 60%

D: 60-70

C-: 70-72, C: 73-76, C+: 77-79

B-: 80-82, B: 83-86, B+: 87-89

A-: 90-92, A: 93-98, A+: 99-100%

**Attendance Policy:** You are expected to attend every meeting of the course. Exams will cover both material from the lectures and from the reading. Occasional extra credit will be given based on attendance.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering.

Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. Contact the Financial Aid Office for more information.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102.

Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Academic Integrity: I take cheating extremely seriously. Without exception, cases of cheating or academic dishonesty will be reported to the office of student conduct. Cheating will result, without exception, in an automatic "F" in the course.**

All students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

Instructors may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Student Support Services:** UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts.

### **Part I: Federalism, Texas, and Government**

Week 1- August 23<sup>rd</sup>: Introduction and overview of course. No reading.

Week 2- August 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>: The National Government and Federalism. *Lone Star Politics*, p. 31-39.

Week 3- September 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>: A brief history of Texas. *Lone Star Politics*, p. 1-29.

Week 4- September 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>: The Texas Constitution; state constitutions within the U.S.; Quiz at the end of class on the 13<sup>th</sup>. *Lone Star Politics*, p. 31-59.

Week 5- September 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>: Review, **Exam 1**

### **Part II: Political Institutions and Political Culture**

Week 6- September 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>: The Governor and the "Plural Executive." *Lone Star Politics*, p. 101-p. 129

Week 7- October 2<sup>nd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup>: The State Legislature. *Lone Star Politics*, p. 61-99.

Week 8- October 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>: The Judicial System. *Lone Star Politics*, p. 131-155

Week 9- October 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>: Texas Politics in Transition: Demographics, Political Economy, and Political Parties. *Lone Star Politics*, p. 227-245.

Week 10- October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>: Review, **Exam 2**

### **Part III: Politics and Public Policy**

Week 11- October 30<sup>th</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup>: Elections and Political Participation. *Lone Star Politics*, p. 189-225.

Week 12- November 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>: Elections, Public Policy (no reading).

Week 13- November 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>: Funding Government, Education. *Lone Star Politics*, p. 259-278.

Week 14- November 20<sup>th</sup>. In class film and Thanksgiving (no reading- no class on Thanksgiving).

Week 15- November 27<sup>th</sup> and November 29<sup>th</sup>: Health and Human Services, Review. *Lone Star Politics*, p. 279-2

Week 16: December 4<sup>th</sup>. Review, continued.

**The final exam for the course is cumulative, and will take place during the university allotted time.**