

The University of Texas at Tyler

Honors: Introduction to Texas Government & Politics

HPR Bldg Room 135 ~ TuTh 3:30PM - 4:50PM

POLS 2306.001

**Professor:** Dr. [Robert Sterken](#)

Office: Arts & Sciences 116

E-mail: [rsterken@uttyler.edu](mailto:rsterken@uttyler.edu)

**Office Hours:** TT 11a to 2p and by appointment.

Check **Canvas** for announcements!

Welcome to the study of [Texas government & politics](#) - POLS 2306! I congratulate you on choosing to study Texas Government! This will be an exciting course and I am thrilled to have you with me for a semester of learning! We will have a wonderful semester together as we focus our efforts on critical analysis and communicating a clear and coherent understanding of Texas government and politics as well as our social and personal rights, duties, and responsibilities!

**Course Objectives:**

1. to acquaint you with the study of political science, and
2. to improve your understanding of the institutions and processes that govern Texas and other states, as well as the localities (such as cities and counties) within them.
3. The student will become familiar with the historical antecedents which make up the political culture and regions of Texas.
4. The student will learn to characterize the trends in Texas' political history.
5. The student will be able to trace the changing political partisan face of Texas from a one-party Democratic state to a state with a strong Republican party.
6. The student will become cognizant of the changes facing Texas in ethnic diversity and population growth.

**Required Reading Materials:**

There are two (2) books required for this course:

1. [Uncovering Texas Politics \(https://www.uttyler.edu/press/files/uncovering-texas-politics-in-the-21st-century.pdf\)](https://www.uttyler.edu/press/files/uncovering-texas-politics-in-the-21st-century.pdf) You do not need a paper copy of this text, but it is available on Amazon if you would like to purchase it.
2. [Bill Ratliff: A Profile of Courage and Leadership in American Politics](#), by [Robert Sterken](#); ISBN-13: 978-1498546959.

Additional online videos will be assigned on the course Canvas site.

**Method of Instruction:** This is a face-to-face lecture and discussion-based course! Students are expected to complete readings and assignments before class meetings and to discuss major themes

and topics during class. I expect respectful, organic, and flexible class discussions. This robust course will emphasize learning and conceptual gain through guided peer-to-peer dialogue.

Watch the videos and take notes. Students who do not attend class and watch the videos cannot answer the exam essay questions. Your grade will suffer if you do not read, take notes, and watch the videos. You will need to take notes! As the exams will be drawn from the readings, assignments, and videos! Each of the videos is an essay question on each exam.

Complete the readings and assignments.

Take examinations 1, 2, and 3 in Canvas.

**Assignments and Grading: Your grade in this course will be based on the following:**

**Assessment Instruments and Values:**

**Examination # 1 15%**

**Examination # 2 15%**

**Ratliff Book Worksheet Assignments 25%**

**Textbook and Video Assignments 25%**

**Attendance and Participation 10%**

**Final Exam 15%**



**Course Requirements & Evaluation**

Are you learning? How much and how well are you learning? In this course, we will use several different tools to assess student learning. Since deep learning about Texas politics and government is our mission, students will demonstrate learning and understanding using several different tools.

Each assessment tool we use will have a specific weight contributing to your overall grade in the course. While some of the tools used are not weighted heavily – they will give you guidance and feedback and others (like in-class exams) are more heavily weighted. Please pay close attention to these weights and the expectations.

**Ratliff Assignment:** You must read the [Bill Ratliff book](#) and complete the writing assignment in Canvas. Late assignments will be docked one complete letter grade.

**Exams:** There will be three (3) examinations on the dates indicated below, covering the assigned materials from each module. The exams will be drawn from the material covered in the most recent section of the course: for example, Exam 2 will cover the material studied after Exam 1.

**Exam Content:** Questions on examinations are drawn from class discussions, your [textbook](#), and materials presented in the VIDEOS.