

Transcripts of POLS 2306 Unit 1 Video Introduction

What is a state? A state can be defined in a lot ways, and in Political Science, we have one definition that is not really the same as the definition that most laypeople use when they talk about a state. So in this brief video introduction, we are going to talk about: What is a state? How do we use it in political science? And what does it mean in common parlance? In political science, we often use the word "state" when most people might use the word "country." What we are talking about in political science is an entity that has authority or sovereignty over its territory. A state could be France, or Germany, or Spain, or the United States. But when most people, especially here in the United States, especially here in the United States, talk about a state, they are talking about something like: Texas, Florida, Alabama. These states are what we call sub-units in a federal system. In this course, you will be learning a lot about what a federal system is, and how a state like Texas plays into that. Now Texas is a unique case, because we have had both definitions of a state apply to us. In 1836, Texas won its independence from Mexico and for nine years Texas was a state in the political science sense. Texas was an independent republic that was had sovereignty over its territory. In 1845, Texas was then annexed by the United States, becoming the kind of state that most people talk about when they use the word "state." It was a sub-unit of the Federal Government of the United States. Now even these states in this sort of common parlance sense of the word, as sub-units in a federal system, do have some sovereignty over their territory. A federal system leaves some powers to the national government. For example, national defense. And then some powers to the state government. For example, criminal law. So Texas has had both definitions of state. Both the political science definition and the common definition apply to it. The Texas government, both when it was a political science state or its own country and as a sub-unit of the federal system, or a state within the United States, has some very interesting aspects to its governance. Texas has history from Spain to Mexico, Native American governments, the United States, the Confederate States of America during the civil war. So many influences the way our government works, and we can see those influences in everything from our state constitution to our norms and values. In Texas, we can see those threads of history in every aspect of our government. In this course, you will learning a lot about both the origins of Texas government and how the history of Texas has influenced every aspect of the government we see today. But you will also be learning about government in practice. How does Texas' government work? And you will learning more broadly about how government, the purpose of government, theories of representation, and how Texas compares to other states and to other countries within the world. This course is intended to give an overview of Texas politics and government, but also think about government more broadly.

Transcripts of POLS 2306 Unit 2 Video Introduction

Texas' origins under Native American governments, as a colony of Spain, as part of Mexico, and as its own country, have a lot of influence over Texas today. In this video, we are going to talk about some of the myths that persist based on those Texas origins. The first myth is that Texas is the only state that has right to succeed from the Union. You hear this often. In fact, in the wake of Britain voting to leave the European Union - a phenomenon known as Brexit - we often heard people advocating for something similar for Texas. Texit, if you will. The idea that Texas still has the power to succeed from the United States, because it was once its own independent country. This statement is false. The Civil War once and for all established that states that do not have the right to succeed from the Union. And established that the Federal Government has supremacy in deciding matters such as succession. Texas certainly does not have the power to succeed at will. Texans as a whole, because of our origins, have a tendency to feel that Texas is somehow unique or more powerful than other states in the country. Another myth associated with Texas' origins, is that Texas is the one state whose flag is allowed to fly at the same height as the United States flag. This is in fact another myth. It is not true. The flag code doesn't really have anything to say about the height at which flags can be flown. Any state's flag can fly just as high as the United States flag. Although it is inappropriate for a state flag to fly higher than the United States flag. Another myth is that Texas can be divided into up to five states. Now this one has a kernel of truth. When Texas was annexed, the country was worried about adding such a geographically large slave state to the country. This was in 1845, during the run-up to the Civil War. The Civil War was fought primarily over slavery and whether states had the right to own slaves or not. Texas was a large slave state. So originally the idea was that Texas may be able to be divided into multiple states. But about five years after Texas' annexation, this question was settled. California was added to the Union as another geographically large state, and Texas remained as is. Overall, Texas history and origins have given us a culture, a lot of stories to tell. Some of them are true. Some of them are false, and some of them have grains of truth that have spread into larger legends. Texas' origins permeate all of our institutions, our history, our culture, and our government today. So knowing some of those origins stories is a very important part of understanding Texas politics.

Transcripts of POLS 2306 Unit 3 Video Introduction

If you grew up in Texas, particularly in a small town you'll know that in Texas, sports are king. Especially football. Countless movies and television shows like Friday Night Lights have depicted football culture in Texas. When you drive into small town, you'll see on the entrance sign to the town, "1997 Volleyball Champs." Sports is pervasive in Texas and it filters into our schools and universities. There are a couple of reasons why this fanaticism about sports can be important in informing our ideas about political culture in Texas, as well as public policy. First, the idea of rooting for your team. The idea that you should root for your team whether they are doing well or poorly, and that you identify with your team in sort of a tribal way, can bleed over into politics. If we think about the idea that say you're from Dallas and you should support the Dallas Cowboys regardless of whether they're doing well or badly. That can also influence the way you think about your political party. Say you're a Republican. Even if the Republicans are doing things that you don't agree with or that don't align with your values politically, you might have that instinct to still continue to align and support the Republican Part. Despite the fact that they are not doing what you would want them to do. This tribalism, the idea that you should support your team no matter what, can be problematic in politics. It leads us to stop thinking about issues and to in politics. It leads us to stop thinking about issues and to think of ourselves in political groups. As soon as we start identifying ourselves only in terms of political groups, we might stop thinking about what we have in common. And instead solely see it as a team against a team. If you are rooting for your home team at the football game on Friday night, you see the opposing team as almost like an enemy. As someone who needs to be defeated. If this bleeds over into politics, then we stop looking for commonalities between our political parties, and start only seeing the competition. The focus on athletics in Texas can bleed over into public policy as well. We see at our own university, the countless millions of dollars that are spent on the athletics program. Yes, the athletics program in many Texas universities bring in a lot of income. Most of the data seems to show that colleges and universities spend more on athletics than athletics actually brings in. This puts a lot of strain on the entire university. First, there is strain on student athletes. Who are expected essentially to be professional full time athletes for the university while still acting as full time students as well. Some universities have even proposed paying student athletes, as their university job. Instead of treating them just like students who are there on scholarship. But it's not just student athletes who are suffering a burden from this high priority on athletics. Other students can suffer a burden too. When students are enrolled in Liberal Arts or Humanities programs they may look at the expensive facilities that student athletes are receiving with envy. This can create tension on campus between student athletes and non-student athletes. Which is the last thing that any university needs. It happens at the high school level as well. The reason, perhaps, that so many towns put "1997 Volley Champs" even though it was twenty years ago might be because the reputation of a championship team can be important to attracting enrollment and attracting funding for the school. Fundraisers are more successful for winning teams than for losing teams. So once again, the high priority on sports in Texas political culture puts us into teams and it makes us into adversaries. Winning teams get funding. Losing teams don't. It's always important to think about how these seemingly trivial issues, for example it doesn't really matter at the end of the day whether the Cowboys won the Superbowl or not. If we have this trivial attitude and adversarial attitude toward sports then that can bleed over into things that really matter, like politics and policy.

Transcripts of POLS 2306 Unit 4 Video Introduction

Representation is essential function of any democracy. In a representative democracy, the goal is to use elections to choose officials who represent us in government. But often the officials who represent us in government are not similar to the people as a whole. Let's take a quick look at the legislature in the Texas' 85th Session. To see how the legislature differs from the population as a whole. One thing that tends to be true about legislatures, is that they tend to be more male, more white, and more rich than the average population. Some of this is simply because the people who vote in elections also tend to be white men who are wealthy. The people who are people color, who have less education, less income, are less likely to vote in the first place. The idea that people will vote for people who "look like them" is the idea of descriptive representation. This is the idea that someone who looks like you, whether in ethnicity, religion, income, education, someone who looks like you will better represent your interests than someone who is different. This might be the idea that if as a woman I vote for another woman, she will better represent me on women's issues, or on issues that reflect me in general. Now there are criticisms to the idea of descriptive representation. It is certainly not the case that all women have similar political views, or that all people of color have similar political views. Descriptive representation can only take you so far. But like partisanship it could be a shortcut to figuring out who is going to better represent you in government. The state of Texas is what we call majority minority state. Only 43% of the state of Texas' population is white. The rest identify as people of color. So with 43% of our state's population identifying as white, we might expect to see a similar pattern in the legislature, but we don't. Sixty-six percent of our legislators are white. It's similar when it comes to gender. Obviously the state of Texas is approximately 50% women and 50% men. So we would hope to see that 50% of the legislature was also made up of women. Instead we see that only 20% of our legislature is made up of women. Some of this might be because women simply don't run, but often we see in political science that women candidates have more of a struggle winning elections than male candidates do. Education is another place that the legislature is very different than the population. In our population around half of individuals have some college education, but in the legislature, 96% of our legislators have at least some college. Many have post-graduate degrees. Now that is not necessarily saying that there is a problem with our legislators being educated. Perhaps the reason we want them in office is because they are well educated and they can make decisions on behalf of the country. But it is important to note that the makeup of our state legislature does not reflect the population as a whole. Ruth Bader Ginsburg when asked how many women on the Supreme Court she thought would be enough, answer, "nine." Nine women she said would be enough women on the Supreme Court because for so long there were nine men and no one thought there was anything unusual about that. Perhaps thinking about descriptive representation in terms of ethnicity, gender, education, and income, is an important way to ensure our representatives are truly representing us.

Transcripts of POLS 2306 Unit 5 Video Introduction

One of the most famous works in political science is David Mayhew's, *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, written in 1974. In this work, David Mayhew outlines the behavior of legislators. Legislators, he argues, are single minded reelection seekers. This means that more than anything else, your legislators just want to win reelection. So let's think about this in terms of both Texas and the United States more broadly. In Texas, we have a House of Representatives and a Senate. So you will elect your state representatives similar to the way you elect your U.S. representatives. And according to Mayhew, once your representative or your senator has been elected, the only thing that they are going to focus on is getting elected again. Now this is contrary to an idea that once a representative or a senator gets elected, their first priority is making good government or good policy. Mayhew argues that this is not the case. That making good policy is either a secondary consideration or just a means to get reelected. Mayhew argues that there are three things that congressmen and senators do in order to get reelected. They engage in three primary activities. The first activity that your representatives engage in, in order to try and get reelected, is credit claiming. Credit claiming means that they want to be able to go to the legislature, to pass a bill or to get something for their own district and then come back to the district and claim credit for it. You can see this in action whenever a senator or a representative comes back to the district and talks about the way he or she voted on a policy, all of the jobs that will come to the district because of this policy he or she voted on. Even if a bill didn't pass, they may want to take credit for voting against it. So think about Texas Tech University. We are funded significantly by our State Legislature. Our local representatives have an interest in ensuring higher education funding for the University in our area. Our representative or our senator might go to the legislature during the session and work hard to ensure that a bill is passed to increase higher education funding for Texas Tech. Then they will come back and they will tell their district, "I voted for this bill. I advocated for this bill." And claiming credit is one way to encourage people to vote for our representatives. The second thing that our representatives do in order to try and get reelected, is advertising. Advertising is exactly what it sounds like. Have you ever driven around town near an election and seen about 500 signs everywhere? The more someone gets his or her name out there, the more likely it is that people will vote for them. Name recognition is one of the biggest predictors of electoral success. It is also really common for incumbents, which means someone who already holds office, to win reelection. More so than challengers who are trying to challenge the incumbent for his or her seat. Advertising can also mean holding meetings, giving speeches. Just getting your face and your name out there, is a way to try and encourage people to vote for you. The third activity that representatives engage in, in order to try and get reelected, is position taking. Position taking can be a very tricky one. It depends a lot on the composition of your district, but position taking is a way that representatives can send a message about where they are in the ideological spectrum. So what representatives will do, is they will tell their district how they feel about specific issues. In a district like the 19th Congressional District here in West Texas. We are a relatively conservative district and most of our voters vote Republican. This means that it is safer for candidates for reelection to take conservative positions on issues. But if you're in a more moderate district where the election is likely to be very competitive, you might want to take moderate positions on issues. Rather than taking a more extreme positions. This is also where we can see candidates change their positions depending on their constituency. If you remember the 2012 election, in which Mitt Romney challenged Obama for the presidency, we saw that the Mitt Romney who was Governor of Massachusetts had very moderate positions. In fact, some might have called them liberal positions. When Mitt Romney moved to the primary election process, his positions that he took became much more right wing. Then in the general election, he had to moderate his positions somewhat to appeal to more people at the national level. Position taking is a way to encourage electoral success. Unfortunately, if you change your positions too often, people might not like that either. Reelection, Mayhew argues, is the single most important goal for legislators. Some of this is because legislators, unlike the President, don't have term limits. They can get reelected as many times as they want. At the national level, legislators become professional congressmen. They stay in for decades. In the Texas Legislature, that is somewhat less common. Our legislators, are amateur legislators, which you will learn about later in this unit. It means that they do not serve very often and they don't make very much money. But still, serving as a legislator is a great way to open doors for future careers. If you are interested in running for office. Contact your local political party representatives, but make sure that you can credit claim, advertise, and take positions.

Transcripts of POLS 2306 Unit 6 Video Introduction

The 2006 Gubernatorial election in Texas, that is the election for Governor, was one of the craziest gubernatorial elections that Texas has ever seen. The incumbent governor, Republican Rick Perry, was running for a second term as Texas Governor. He ran against three opponents. First, there was a Democratic candidate, Chris Bell, but unusually there were two Independent candidates, who had relatively successful runs. This is unusual in Texas, because to run as an Independent there are a lot of hurdles that you must overcome in order to even get on the ballot. There are thousands of signatures that are required on a petition before an Independent candidate can appear on the ballot. There were two Independent candidates in the 2006 Gubernatorial election. The first was Carole Strayhorn, who had unsuccessfully tried to win the Republican nomination for the election. She ran as an Independent, and won about 18% of the votes. But the second Independent candidates was perhaps the most interesting of all. Kinky Friedman was a famous country and western singer, who won a surprising amount of the votes in the 2006 election. Kinky Friedman ran on a platform that included the full legalization of hemp and marijuana. He received a lot of support from college students, animal lovers, and even some farmers and ranchers. Some of his unusual country western songs, included one titled, "They ain't making Jews like Jesus anymore." Kinky Friedman ran a successful grassroots campaign and earned 12% of the vote. Even so, the incumbent candidates, Republican Rick Perry, won the election with almost every single district. The other candidates were simply too fractured to achieve any major success. But this election remains one of the most curious elections in Texas' Gubernatorial election history.

Transcripts of POLS 2306 Unit 7 Video Introduction

In Texas, we have two high courts. We have a Court of Criminal Appeals, which is the highest court for criminal cases. And we have a Supreme Court, which hears civil cases. Civil cases are when one person or group of people sues another person or group of people. Suing is something that you often hear about. You even see commercials with lawyers saying that if you have been injured in a car accident, you might be eligible for money. A lot of times people look down on those who sue. Have you ever heard of the story of the woman who sued McDonald's over hot coffee? A lot of people use this as the biggest example of a frivolous lawsuit that has ever occurred. Of course coffee is hot. Of course, if you spill it, you are going to get burned. How on earth could she get hundreds of thousands of dollars in damages based on spilling hot coffee on herself? But the real story is a little bit more complicated. In reality, McDonald's had been cited dozens of times for serving coffee that is far too hot. They'd received citations and still not corrected their hot coffee problem. And the woman, who was in her 70s when she spilled the coffee, received third degree burns over 6% of her body from that hot coffee. The coffee was absurdly hot. The facts of the case are that McDonald's had been warned about its coffee being too hot, did not take action, and then caused third degree burns on a 79 year-old woman. This is something that is not necessarily a frivolous lawsuit, but you often hear the term "frivolous lawsuit" thrown out, as though lawsuits can't be serious if they deal with something that seems perhaps on its face to be absurd. This is why many people advocate for tort reform. Tort reform is a concept that refers to a legal limit to the amount of damages that can be awarded to someone who is suing. It means that there is a cap on how much a jury can actually award a person who sues. Right now juries and judges have the ability to decide the amount of damages that a plaintiff is awarded in a civil case. Tort reform would take that power away from juries and say that there is a certain limit. Now in some cases this might make sense. Sometimes you hear stories about outrageous awards. When juries give ridiculous amounts of money to people who suffer seemingly minor damages. But tort reform also places limits on serious cases. For example, think of a situation in which a doctor's negligence results in the death of a baby. Is there really a legal limit onto what a baby's life is worth? It is also important to think about the amount that the jury prescribes in damages, not as necessarily an award to the plaintiff, but as a punishment to the defendant who has done something wrong. For example, in the McDonald's case, the jury arrived at the punitive damages based on the amount of revenue McDonald's makes on coffee in just a couple of days. So punitive damages in the millions of dollars, was just a drop in the bucket for McDonald's who is making billions of dollars every day in revenue. Tort reform might be a way to reduce some kinds of costs. A lot of people advocate tort reform as a way to reduce insurance premiums. This might not necessarily be true. We've seen insurance companies still reporting growing profits, even as damages paid out in lawsuits continues to rise. Tort reform might be a way to save costs, but it also takes a lot of power away from judges and juries.

Transcripts of POLS 2306 Unit 8 Video Introduction

What kinds of industries do we have in Texas? Well, the answer has changed a lot throughout our history. In the beginning, Texas was primarily an agricultural and rural society. Most of economy was driven by agriculture. And this is still somewhat the same. We can think about what we call the "two c's" cotton and cattle. Cotton and cattle drove our economy in the beginning of Texas' history, from its time before when it was a Republic even. Cotton and cattle still drive much of the economy, especially here in West Texas. If you drive just outside of town in Lubbock, you will see cottons farms as far as the eye can see. And there are cattle feedlots everywhere here in Lubbock. That is why Lubbock has such a distinct smell. Cotton and cattle certainly are not the only industries driving Texas' economy today. We can look in different regions of Texas to see different industries. Opportunities are boundless in our state. Other industries in Texas are countless and they are flourishing. In the Houston area, we see ports and shipping. In Austin, the high tech community is thriving. In Dallas, there are countless corporate headquarters that locate in the city because of Texas' favorable economic climate. Of course there are also other opportunities in Texas. For example, the Texas Government is one of the largest employers in the state of Texas. Whether you work directly for the government as a civil servant or for an institution like a university, like Texas Tech. The government is a large industry in Texas, and with a political science background, you are well suited for a position in government. Texas is also favorable to smaller business. We see small family-owned businesses thriving in Texas because of our business friendly policies. Now some of our business friendly policies mean great things for our economy. We see a lot of economic growth, we see business relocating here, and we see a lot of opportunities for employment. But some of our business friendly policies also have a drawback. Our tax system is relatively regressive, and so we see that sometimes the poorer people in Texas are more burdened. We also spend very little on social services in Texas because we don't take in very many taxes due to our business friendly environment. This means that there isn't a lot of ways for Texas to provide social services to those who need it most. Now you have countless opportunities in Texas industry. You can go to Dallas and work for a corporate headquarters, Austin and work for a high tech industry, or you could stay right here in Lubbock and innovate new kinds of cotton products for our farmers to grow. There are countless opportunities for you in Texas and Texas' economy is constantly changing.

Transcripts of POLS 2306 Unit 10 Video Introduction

The political system is always changing and one thing that we are seeing, especially over the past few decades, is the emergence of women as a very powerful force in politics and in business. One thing you might often hear about is the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap is the concept that women and men are paid differently for doing the same work. Now some people like to throw out the statistic that women make 77 cents for every dollar that a man makes. Now this is true if you average all the wages of all women and all men and compare the two. Women do make about 77% of what men do. But it might not be appropriate to compare wages in this way. Instead we might want to compare women and men's salaries when they are doing the exact same work with the exact same experience. Once we start breaking down the gender pay gap into men and women who are working in the same fields, the pay gap tends to shrink. We see that in some fields, women are making almost as much as men are, while in others they are pretty far behind. What explains the gender pay gap? Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn wrote one of the most famous articles on the gender pay gap. They were able to isolate the effect of discrimination. They controlled for education, choices experience, industry, hours worked. They controlled for everything and yet they still found roughly a 10% pay gap between men and women. Now it might not be the case that women are making less simply because the boss says, "You are a woman, I am going to pay you less." There could be other factors besides just blatant discrimination like that, that are affecting this pay gap. That doesn't mean discrimination doesn't exist. For example, women often don't negotiate their salaries as strongly as men do. This might be the reason why men end up making more money. They simply negotiate more. However, some research has shown that the stronger negotiate, the more likely they are to be perceived as difficult. Whereas men who negotiate strongly, instead are rewarded with higher salaries. So even though this is a subtle form of discrimination, it still exists. There is also the question of choices. Perhaps women are making different choices than men. This leads to disparities in their salaries. For example, women may choose to leave the workforce for a time in order to take care of children. Now this is certainly a possible explanation for why women might be lagging behind men in their salaries, but then again the fact that women are more likely to have to make these choices could be a subtle form of discrimination also. This subtle discrimination could also come all the way from childhood. Where young girls are encouraged certain kinds of careers, while young boys are encouraged to pursue others. Is it that women make less because they are teachers? Or is it that teachers make less because they are women? It is important to recognize that the experiences of men and women are different all the way from birth. This isn't even introducing the differences in pay between women of color and white women, which introduces an even further layer of subtle discrimination into the process. Women of color make even less than their white counterparts do. Now this is certainly not saying that men have done something wrong. Men certainly are not intentionally perpetuating this kind of discrimination, or at least most aren't. But it is important that men and women are able to have a conversation about the subtle kinds of discrimination that exist. Because as we move forward, if women are not treated as equals in society, then we are missing out on half of our population. Women have a lot of to contribute and the future of politics in Texas and in the world requires equality.