As Governor Rick Perry delivered his State of the State address to the 2013 Texas Legislature, some dozen years removed from his first, one could be forgiven for seeing the Texas political landscape as essentially unchanged. The same speaker of the house and lieutenant governor sat behind him that had been there two and four years before. Republicans continued to control both the house and the senate by comfortable margins. The land commissioner was halfway through his third term, while the attorney general and comptroller were midway through their second.

Nonetheless, there was a sea of new faces in the legislature. Voluntary and involuntary retirement changed the rosters. The lieutenant governor, who had practically packed his bags for Washington, DC, was back after primary voters had rudely rejected his bid for an open U.S. Senate seat. A year earlier, Perry had dreamed of DC as well, but his presidential ambitions didn’t last past the first month of the primaries. Many of the legislators who had survived challenges did so only after promising to “do better,” which meant different things depending on the makeup of their constituencies. Meanwhile, the other elected executives, who had waited patiently for the higher offices to open, were growing impatient, even as Perry and Dewhurst each fueled speculation that they might run for one more term.

Another game-changer was the state’s vastly improved fiscal condition. Two years prior, the legislature came into session facing a $27 billion deficit in its current services biennial budget, causing a substantial and lasting reduction in the size of government in Texas. Instead, the 2013 session opened with a budget surplus. Even conservatives, generally averse to spend, saw these new monies—much of it generated from the state’s rejuvenated oil fields—as an opportunity to begin long-needed upgrades to the state’s infrastructure, with a special emphasis on finally funding Texas’s all-important water development program.

Given that Texas is a conservative state, news of a surplus immediately brought calls for saving some of it or sending it back to the taxpayers through a series of tax cuts. This highlights the pressure-packed environment of Texas politics. Schools, tax cut proponents, and advocates for the poor all regarded the new revenue as at least partially theirs. And therein stands a great certainty in politics in both the Lone Star State and throughout the democratic world—no one gets everything they want.

The reality of the New Texas, with its contracted budget and significant infrastructure challenges, calls out for a revised edition of *Lone Star Politics* with a renewed emphasis on public policy. This second edition addresses the policy-making challenges foisted upon a government whose actions are limited by a predominant political culture wary of—if not outright hostile to—the mere discussion of increased taxes. Getting policy right is most important when resources are limited; getting it wrong proves significantly more costly. *Lone Star Politics* brings this process to life.

It is also important to underscore our particular interest in and knowledge of Texas politics. Starting in 2013, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board requires that the Texas portion of the six-hour college and university government requirement be fulfilled with a course dedicated specifically to Texas government. Collectively, the authors of *Lone Star Politics* have over three-quarters of a century experience teaching Texas government as a standalone course.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board outlined eight student learning outcomes that students should master through the Texas Government course. *Lone Star Politics* supports achievements toward all of these outcomes. The following are examples of how we approach each:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution. Our historic approach delves in depth into the formation of the 1876 constitution, contrasting it with the previous document and underscoring how it parallels the state’s earlier constitutions.

2. Demonstrate an understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government. Our strong emphasis on federalism isn’t confined to one chapter, but is reinforced by “Inside the Federalist System” features throughout the book.

3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas. We explain separation of powers and checks and balances in the first two chapters, but we describe how they work in practice as we delve into the legislative process and again as we explain the deliberate attempt to check power through the creation of the plural executive and the establishment of separate “highest courts” for civil and criminal matters.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government. Solid scholarship on each of the branches is found through the five chapters devoted to their study. Constraints on each are explained in the constitution chapter.

5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas. Separate chapters are devoted to interest groups and political parties. This new edition contains a media and public opinion chapter as well.

6. Analyze the state and local election process. In addition to explaining the way in which state and local elections are run, including discussion of the different types of elections, we consider other pertinent factors ranging from campaigning to redistricting.

7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Citizens’ rights are covered not only in the constitution chapter but due process is given a deeper, more vibrant treatment in this edition’s new criminal justice chapter. Civic engagement is encouraged in the elections, interest groups and legislative chapters.

8. Analyze the issues, policies, and political culture of Texas. From the opening chapter’s emphasis on Texas political culture through the last three policy-intensive chapters, Lone Star Politics intertwines how the state’s unique character both influences and limits political issues and the public policy that emerges through the policy process.

New to This Edition

The second edition of Lone Star Politics was comprehensively revised to cover recent political events in Texas and to support the student learning outcomes for the Texas Government course. Major changes in each chapter include:

- Chapter 1, “Texas Society and Political Culture,” includes a new opening that ties the Texas Revolution to contemporary Texas politics. We have a revised, thorough analysis of changing demographics highlighting policy implications, with a new focus on the state’s emerging Asian population. We analyze the state’s rapid recovery from last decade’s economic recession.

- Chapter 2, “Federalism and the Texas Constitution,” has a new opening that ties the present to the past as it analyzes the development of our state constitution. The latest U.S. Supreme Court federalism cases are weighed. Clashes between the state and the Environmental Protection Agency are examined from a policy perspective. Fresh analysis of the constitutional amendment process offers insight into the dynamics of change.


- Chapter 4, “Political Parties in Texas,” evaluates the heavy legislative turnover of the last few sessions. A new emphasis on third parties considers both their structural differences and their potential impact on politics. We consider the partisan implications of demographic change and take a fresh look at the supporters of the two major parties, with a special emphasis on the challenges facing each of these parties in the future.

- Chapter 5, “Interest Groups in Texas Politics,” has a new opening that examines contemporary issues pertinent to Texas interest groups. Political Action Committees receive a revised treatment. Both movement and more traditional groups receive new analyses. The cooperative actions between state and federal interest groups are examined in light of their impact on policy outcome.

- Chapter 6, “The Media and Public Opinion in Texas,” is completely new to this edition of Lone Star Politics. The chapter traces media from its Texas beginnings through print, radio, and television broadcasting. We explain the ties of early radio and television stations to daily newspapers. The impact of media coverage on the 1980s Texas supreme court crisis is analyzed. We consider the impact of the new media on Texas politics and examine the role of public opinion in the state’s policy making. The importance of exit polling as a political device is considered.
• Chapter 7, “The Legislative Process in Texas,” has a new opening that emphasizes the impact of legislation on Texans. A new treatment of redistricting and its attendant court battles analyzes its effect on the legislature. We explore the Tea Party’s challenge to Speaker Joe Straus and examine the impact of the 2009 stimulus act on the state budget.

• Chapter 8, “The Governor in Texas,” takes a fresh look at the governor’s veto power. We analyze both Governor Perry’s lengthy tenure in office and the impact of his appointees on policy. We discuss how Perry managed to remain governor for so long in a state that has traditionally been unkind to incumbent governors.

• Chapter 9, “The Plural Executive and the Bureaucracy in Texas,” introduces water policy as an overarching theme. We reconsider how and why the plural executive developed in Texas. We discuss the implications of hydraulic fracking on the water supply and examine the land commissioner’s plan for converting brackish water to a usable form. We offer a new examination of the Texas Water Development Board.

• Chapter 10, “The Texas Court System,” offers expanded examples of different types of law. A greater emphasis is placed on court jurisdiction, and the role of the courts in public policy making is highlighted. A new comparison of judicial selection systems is paired with an expanded treatment of proposed judicial reforms.

• Chapter 11, “Local and County Governments and Special Districts Government in Texas,” includes an expanded focus on urban issues. A new offering features San Antonio Mayor Julian Castro, a rising star in Texas politics. We have taken a deeper look at the policy-making role of the city manager and a revised look at the impact of local interest groups. We analyze Councils of Government as service providers.

• Chapter 12, “Public Policy in Texas,” is a standalone policy chapter with a new emphasis on the policy-making model. It examines the voter ID and state guns laws as examples of how policies are shaped by many actors. A new feature differentiates public policy from private business policy. We discuss how federalism constrains state policy options.

• Chapter 13, “Criminal Justice Policy in Texas,” analyzes crime data as it applies to policy-making. It includes revised analysis of the death penalty and the dropping numbers on Texas’s Death Row. New analysis visits the issue of dropping crime rates. A greater emphasis is placed on due process rights.

• Chapter 14, “Finance and Budgeting in Texas,” is completely rewritten and placed in its own chapter. A major point of emphasis is the long-term impact of the 2011 budget cuts. The budget-making process is explained in detail, with special attention given to the unique constraints that impact Texas fiscal policy. A new section explores the state’s major dedicated budget funds, and fresh analysis of the state’s tax structure provides insight into the fiscal process. The importance of nontax revenue is explained, as is the budget’s role as an important factor in public policy decisions.

We have also made the following pedagogical improvements in this edition of the text:

• Learning objectives tied to the major headings in every chapter identify the key concepts that students should know and understand with respect to Texas politics and government; these learning objectives also structure the end-of-chapter summaries.

• “Review the Chapter” summaries organized around the learning objectives highlight the most important concepts covered in each chapter.

• “Test Yourself” quizzes at the end of each chapter assess students’ comprehension and understanding of the most important terms, concepts, and ideas; an answer key is provided at the end of the book.

• A large portion of the photos in this edition are new. They capture major events from the last few years, of course, but to illustrate the relevancy of politics, they show political actors and processes as well as people affected by politics, creating a visual narrative that enhances rather than repeats the text.

• All of the figures and tables reflect the latest data.

• A new design simplifies the presentation of content to facilitate print and digital reading experiences.
Features

Our approach in writing this book is simple. First, be realistic. Texas politics is less a debate about ideology and theory than it is a pragmatic discussion of what works. We will show how different government officials use their powers to achieve their goals. Second, we want to give students the opportunity to understand the public policy process. Finally, since we think Texas politics is the most exciting game in town, we wrote this book to be as entertaining and fun as possible while still delivering all the information you need. You might even find it funny in places—that’s just the nature of Texas government.

To provide greater focus and direct the reader to think about the core themes of each chapter, we have structured our analysis around learning objectives, restructured the chapter summaries and conclusions around these learning objectives, and provided test questions at the end of each chapter. The other pedagogical features not only reflect this effort to provide more targeted learning guidance but also zero in on key themes specific to studying Texas government.

- “Inside the Federalist System” provides insight into the state’s interaction with the national government as it implements public policy.
- “Texas Mosaic” feature boxes provide students with an inside look at politics in Texas, whether focusing on a group, an individual, or an institution. Each of these features is accompanied by critical thinking questions.
- “The Texas Constitution: A Closer Look” delves into the state’s governing document, highlighting its impact on both government structure and policy.
- Explore Further at the end of each chapter feature seminal books and articles, as well as links to significant websites that offer information beyond that contained in the textbook.
- A running marginal glossary clearly defines bolded key terms for students at the points in chapters when the terms are first introduced and discussed.

Lone Star Politics provides comprehensive coverage of Texas state and local politics, with a special emphasis on policy-making. Teaching Texas as a standalone course allows more opportunity to examine policy and its impact on Texans. Each chapter helps the student understand how the political, cultural, and social underpinnings of the state influence policies that flow from the various levels of government.

- Chapter 1, “Texas Society and Political Culture,” introduces students to the Texas political environment. Special attention is given to the historic, economic, and demographic factors that shape the state.
- Chapter 2, “Federalism and the Texas Constitution,” examines the legal relationship between the national and Texas governments, focusing on the limits on and the powers of each. It evaluates how previous state constitutions have impacted the current document and how the constitution limits policy choices. Additionally, we examine political forces that maintain the status quo.
- In Chapter 3, “Voting and Elections in Texas,” we analyze the evolution of voting rights in Texas and evaluate its impact on turnout. After careful consideration of who votes and who doesn’t, we introduce the various types of elections in the state and analyze the role of money in the quest for votes.
- Chapter 4, “Political Parties in Texas,” explains how the state shifted from solidly Democratic to solidly Republican, and examines factors that may lead it to shift again. New analysis of third parties in Texas adds depth, and both party structure and the convention system are examined.
- Chapter 5, “Interest Groups in Texas Politics,” examines the role of these groups from multiple perspectives. The roles of lobbyists and campaign contributions are analyzed, as is the important role of providing information in an environment stressed for such resources and the effects of such information on policy decisions.
- Chapter 6, “The Media and Public Opinion in Texas,” is an all-new chapter that analyzes the way government actions are covered by the Texas press. It traces the rise of the media in 20th-century Texas and the advocacy role that many media entrepreneurs played in boosting their cities. It includes special insight into recent cutbacks in political media deployment. Additionally, the chapter examines public opinion and exit polling in the state.
• Chapter 7, “The Legislative Process in Texas Politics,” emphasizes the importance of legislative leadership. It illustrates the difficult process of passing a bill, with special emphasis on maneuvers employed to stop legislation. It evaluates how legislative policy making impacts Texas citizens, and it examines recently passed legislation.

• Chapter 8, “The Governor in Texas,” explores the ways in which a power-limited chief executive can exercise influence over both the legislative process and the bureaucracy. It examines the importance of the governor’s staff and evaluates the unique circumstances associated with the longest governor’s tenure in Texas history.

• Chapter 9, “The Plural Executive and the Bureaucracy in Texas,” explores the powers shared across the state’s executive offices, boards, and commissions. It explains the deliberate decision to disperse executive power and how it affects public policy. The chapter differentiates between the cabinet form of government in operation at the national level and in many states, and the plural executive in Texas.

• Chapter 10, “The Texas Courts System,” explains the differences between civil and criminal law. It examines the unique structure of the Texas court system, explains the jurisdictions of Texas courts, and evaluates the role of the courts in policy making.

• Chapter 11, “Local and County Governments and Special Districts in Texas,” explores the various layers of local government in the state. It explains the different types of city government and the unique challenges in delivering local public policy, as well as the expanding role of the city manager as policy creator.

• Chapter 12, “Public Policy in Texas,” explains the stages of the policy-making model, applying it specifically to the voter ID issue and the Stand Your Ground law. The chapter differentiates among the various types of public policy and distinguishes public policy from corporate policy.

• Chapter 13, “Criminal Justice Policy in Texas,” analyzes law enforcement, crime, and punishment. It examines the administration of capital punishment in the state and explores due process rights. It evaluates public policy making by the Dallas County district attorney.

• Chapter 14, “Finance and Budgeting in Texas,” explains budget making in Texas. It identifies the main actors in the process, examines the institutions that impact its creation, and analyzes the state’s tax policy and spending choices. The chapter contains an in-depth analysis of the state’s radically reduced base budget and explains the difference between tax and nontax revenue, and how this impacts policy making.

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