

Suggestions for Research Paper Topics

- **ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR SPRING 2019 F8B:**

- Expand the short essay you wrote about the governor you selected (or the governors assigned to those doing the make-up essay) to meet the guidelines for the final paper (at least three pages, etc.) – but be sure to include any changes to Texas governmental policy that occurred during the administration, rather than expanding the biography; focus on the JOB the person did as governor
- Watch the documentary film “Into the Abyss” directed by Werner Herzog about an execution in Texas, the details of the crime (committed nearby, in Conroe, Texas), the impact on families, and the thoughts and feelings of some of the people that carry out the executions in Huntsville. I don’t think it is available on Netflix or Amazon Prime, but for about four dollars you can rent it for 48 hours from Google Play, Amazon, and probably others like Hulu. You can find it on YouTube as well – for now (sometimes copywritten material is removed, even though you see a thumbnail).
- **These “alternatives” must include all the elements described in the general instructions for the paper, “Research Paper- Instructions INFORMATION ONLY REVISION 1 14April2019” in Canvas.**

- The textbook is a good place to start. If we’ve talked about something that interested you, see what the textbook has to say – there may be some references that will lead you to ideas.

Another use of the textbook is to jump to the chapter on “Public Policy” – here you will find discussion of important and sometimes controversial topics.

- We’ve discussed Supreme Court cases related to the civil rights, women’s rights, LGBT rights, and so forth. Select one of these cases, and trace the path of the case from the original jurisdictions in lower courts to the Supreme Court, describing the issue in broad strokes, the rulings of lower courts, the Supreme Court ruling, and so forth.
- Quite a few controversial issues have been on the agenda in Texas politics lately, and you can get some insight into what is afoot by reviewing a couple of publications – the centrist “Texas Tribune” and the more liberal “Texas Observer” websites. Both are completely free to anyone – you do not need to be a subscriber. The odds are good you’ll find something to write about as you browse those sites.
- You can also write a summary/review and analysis of a book or film that is related to our course in some way (via Texas politics, government, history, or culture). Here are some recent (and not so recent) suggestions:

Books

Greider, Erica. 2014. *Big, Hot, and Right: What America can Learn from the Strange Genius of Texas*. New York: Public Affairs Press.

Galbraith, Kate. 2013. *The Great Texas Wind Rush: How George Bush, Ann Richards, and a Bunch of Tinkerers Helped the Oil and Gas State Win the Race to Wind Power (Peter T. Flawn Series in Natural Resources)*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Barr, Alwyn. 1996. *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528–1995*, 2nd Edition. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Foley, Neil. 1999. *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture (American Crossroads)*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press.

Weber, David J. 2004. *Foreigners in Their Native Land: Historical Roots of the Mexican Americans*. Albuquerque NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Thorburn, Wayne. 2014. *Red State: An Insider's Story of How the GOP Came to Dominate Texas Politics*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Wuthnow, Robert. 2014. *Rough Country: How Texas Became America's Most Powerful Bible Belt State*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Krochmal, Max. 2016. *Blue Texas: The Making of a Multiracial Democratic Coalition in the Civil Rights Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Bickerstaff, Steve. 2007. *Lines in the Sand: Congressional Redistricting in Texas and the Downfall of Tom DeLay*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Campbell, Randolph B.

- 1991. *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821-1865*. Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press.
- 2017. *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State*. 3rd Edition. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Fehrenbach, T. R. 2000 (updated edition). *Lone Star: A History of Texas and the Texans*. Cambridge MA: Da Capo Press.

Davidson, Chandler. 1992. *Race and Class in Texas Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Woodward, C. Vann. 2001. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (commemorative edition). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Montejano, David. 1987. *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Gwynne, S.C. 2011. *Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Schutze, Jim. 1987. *The Accommodation: The Politics of Race in an American City*. New York: Citadel Press.

Videos / Documentaries

“LBJ” – a PBS/ American Experience film about Lyndon Johnson; HCC students should be able to stream it here:

[http://librus.hccs.edu/search~S23?/X\(LBJ\)&SORT=D&m=f/X\(LBJ\)&SORT=D&m=f&SUBKEY=\(LBJ\)/1%2C3%2C3%2CE/frameset&FF=X\(LBJ\)&SORT=D&m=f&1%2C1%2C](http://librus.hccs.edu/search~S23?/X(LBJ)&SORT=D&m=f/X(LBJ)&SORT=D&m=f&SUBKEY=(LBJ)/1%2C3%2C3%2CE/frameset&FF=X(LBJ)&SORT=D&m=f&1%2C1%2C)

On Netflix:

Into the Abyss- A Tale of Death, A Tale of Life (2011) – an excellent, highly regarded documentary about capital punishment in Texas, focused on the imprisonment, and 2010 execution of Michael Perry from a triple homicide committed in Conroe, Texas that takes you beyond the “facts” of crime and punishment to examine the impacts on everyone involved. Available on Netflix and probably YouTube. More information here:

<https://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/perfect-execution/>

Stream at low cost Google Play or Amazon:

The Thin Blue Line (2008)– crime, policing, and justice in Texas.

https://play.google.com/store/movies/details/The_Thin_Blue_Line?id=oEb_2mj1V8w

Lone Star (1996)– a narrative drama (about) cultures, politics, and race in Texas, set in the context of a murder investigation. Highly recommended. Stars include a very young Matthew McConaughey. https://play.google.com/store/movies/details/Lone_Star?id=h4qjrQvEObc

“The Big Buy: Tom DeLay’s Stolen Congress” (2006) – A documentary about a (once) powerful Texas congressman and “Dancing with the Stars” contestant, and his role in Texas congressional district changes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Y9mBRpFQPA>