Instructor:
Dr. Wendy Watson
Office: 302J Sage Hall
e-Mail: wwatson@unt.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday, 2 – 5;
Wednesday, 3-5;
and by appointment

Course Description:
This course is part of a two-semester introduction to American and Texas politics. The goal of the two-semester sequence is to give you a general understanding of how government forms the policies that affect you -- such as setting interest rates, deciding to go to war, and permitting or prohibiting abortion -- and how you, as a citizen or resident of the U.S., can influence those policy decisions. This class, specifically, will introduce you to the institutions of government, the logic behind their structure and operation, and the rules that constrain their behavior.

During the first portion of this course, will examine the rationale behind our system of government, with special attention to how and why we divide power among various government institutions. We will then turn our attention to “majoritarian politics” (politics based on the wishes of the majority) and the elected branches of government (the legislative and executive branches), considering how they are organized, what they do, and how they interact. Finally, we will explore the role of “countermajoritarian politics” (limits or checks on what the majority can do) in a democratic system, focusing on the courts, civil rights, and civil liberties.

Course Materials:
Pearson Publishing has created a custom text (Fiorina/Dye) for PSCI 1040 at UNT. It is available in two formats

(1) You can purchase it as a loose-leaf text at the UNT bookstore for a price of $77.50. This loose-leaf edition will come with a registration code for MyPoliSciLab and access to an electronic version of the text. You need that code, because exercises in MyPoliSciLab are required for the course.

(2) You can purchase the electronic version of the text and access to MyPoliSciLab directly from Pearson. There is a link to this purchase option on our class Blackboard page. The cost for the e-text/MyPoliSciLab “bundle” is $42. A print version of the text will be on reserve at the UNT library, but it may not be removed.

In addition to the text and MyPoliSciLab, you will need to purchase a Turning Point “Response Card” (better known as a “clicker”). You can purchase a clicker from the UNT Bookstore for $42.75 new. You are also welcome to purchase a used clicker or to get one from any other source you can find. Be sure, though, that your clicker is created by Turning Technologies and that it’s a “radio frequency” (as opposed to infrared) device. Other devices will not work on our campus. Please note that you can reuse clickers throughout your college career, so if you have one from another class, you can use it again in PSCI 1040.
Classroom Etiquette:

You are adults, and I expect you to behave like adults. That means I expect you to respect the learning environment in our classroom. The rules for my classroom are as follows:

(1) I do not mind if you eat or drink during class, but do be quiet about it (no potato chip bags or sandwich wrappers) and dispose of your trash at the end of class.
(2) If you arrive late to class, you must enter the classroom quietly and sit at the back of the room. Do not climb over your fellow students to get to your assigned seat.
(3) If you need to leave early, you should sit in the back of the room and leave quietly.
(4) We call it “attending class”--not “showing up for class”--for a reason: when you are in class, you should be paying attention. I cannot force you to concentrate on the lecture, but if you engage in activities that undermine my ability to teach or the ability of your fellow students to learn (talking, reading the newspaper, surfing the net, playing solitaire, etc.), you will be asked to leave class.

If I ask you to leave class because of disruptive behavior, you will be “credited” with an unexcused absence (see below).

Assignments and Grading:

Your grade in this course will be based on four exams and a number of assignments from the Cox workbook. The weights associated with each portion of your grade are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams (3 @ 15% each)</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clicker Points</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A More Perfect Union</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty Pageants (3 @ 5% each)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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There is no curve in this class. It is thus possible that everyone in the class will receive an A. It is also possible that no one will receive an A. Grades will be based upon the following scale:

A: 90-100%
B: 80-89.9%
C: 70-79.9%
D: 65-69.9%
E: anything below 65%

Incompletes will only be given to students who provide documentation of a serious illness or family emergency that prevents them from completing course requirements in a timely fashion.

NextGen:

This course is a “NextGen” course. That means that it includes a combination of traditional lecture, small group experiential learning activities, and online work.

What does that mean for you?
(1) You will be expected to work through online “learning modules” on Blackboard Learn (learn.unt.edu). A typical learning module will include the related reading in the textbook, completion
of several MyPoliSciLab activities, and one or more additional online video clips. At the end of each learning module you will complete an online “reading quiz” (see below). The purpose of these activities and quizzes is to prepare you for class, so we can focus on the more difficult concepts and you will not be lost.

While it may seem like I am asking you to do a lot of additional work in this class, I’m actually not. I’m simply structuring the time you spend on your own, providing you with incentives to do the reading before class, study the material until you master it, etc. Completing this online work will actually make exams easier, so the work will definitely pay off.

(2) You will need to participate in class activities and work on group projects. While I hope these activities are fun, they are not just for laughs. These activities and projects are designed to help you learn the material in a richer, more meaningful way. If you are unwilling to participate, you should probably drop the class.

(3) Because you are expected to do work online and in groups, we will not meet as a whole class on every day. Most weeks, we will only meet on Mondays and Wednesdays, while Fridays will be set aside for you to work with your group on your group project.

**Attendance:**

While there is no line item in the grades for “attendance,” attendance is mandatory. Because we will be using clickers in class (and their use is graded) and engaging in group activities, I will know whether you are in class every day. I will keep a running tally of classes you miss. If you are sick, have a family emergency, etc., it is your responsibility to e-mail me IN ADVANCE to notify me of your absence so it may be excused. If you accumulate five or more UNEXCUSED absences during the semester, you will receive an “F” for the course.

Attending means more than just passing through sometime during the class hour. It means you show up on time, so that you are seated and ready to begin at exactly 2:00. It means you are quiet and attentive during the class period. It means that you do not start packing up your materials until we have officially ended class. If I ask you to leave class because you are disruptive, you will receive an unexcused absence.

**Exams:**

The three exams will include a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. They are not cumulative. The first two exams are on Feb. 15 and Mar. 28, both Wednesdays, during our regular class period. Our last exam is during the final exam period: Monday, May 7, from 1:30 pm to 2:20 pm, in our regular classroom.

You may not have any books or notes out from the time you pick up the exam until the time you leave; if I see notes out or a textbook open inside the classroom, it will be confiscated and I will assume you have been cheating. Hats with brims (such as baseball caps) may not be worn during exams. Cell phones and other electronic devices (including MP3 players) are strictly forbidden. If you have an electronic device out or headphones in your ears, they will be confiscated and we will assume you are cheating. You may not leave the classroom during the exam. Please take care of personal needs before the exam begins.
Please note: I will not hand out any exams after the first completed exam has been turned in. You should plan to arrive on time for the exam. If you are late, and one of your fellow students has already completed the exam, you will have to take the make-up at the end of the semester.

If you miss an exam for any reason, good or bad, you can take the make-up. The make-up exams will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer, just like the regular exams. While they are not significantly more difficult than the regular exams, they are at the end of the semester … which means you will have to reach back to remember old content. If you miss both of the first two exams, you will be in a bind, because you will need to take both make-ups in a single class period. Please do not miss an exam unless you absolutely cannot avoid it.

Reading Quizzes:

As noted above, you will take an online quiz over the readings and MyPoliSciLab activities nearly every week (a total of 10 quizzes). Quizzes are due by noon on Mondays.

You may retake quizzes up to five times (though the questions you “draw” from the pool on each attempt may be different). Your highest score will count. Remember, though, you have to complete the quiz (and all your attempts) by noon on the Monday we start talking about the topic. There are no make-ups for the quizzes. If you do not submit it on time (for any reason), you will get a “0” for that quiz.

Clicker Points:

We will be using clickers (student response systems) in class on a regular basis. We will use them for special activities such as Constitutional Jeopardy as well as for more regular “test your knowledge” and opinion questions. Unless otherwise specified, you will earn a point every time you respond to a question. Every now and then, you’ll get additional credit for answering a question correctly (or extra credit for being on the winning team in a team competition).

The exact number of clicker points available this semester may change, but I guarantee there will be a minimum of 115 clicker points available, and the maximum you can earn (a perfect score) is 100. If you miss a question because you are late or absent, or if your clicker malfunctions, that will be covered by that cushion of 15 or more points.

A More Perfect Union:

Group projects are rarely popular, but there are two important reasons to assign them:

1. If you want to be prepared for the real world, you need to learn to collaborate with your peers, coordinate opportunities to work together, delegate tasks, compromise and communicate. Group projects give you the opportunity to develop those skills.

2. Group projects force you to manipulate the course material, communicating it to one another, in a way that ordinary class discussion does not. That manipulation and communication help you understand the material in a richer, more meaningful way.

This semester, you will be working in groups to draft a Constitution for the New USA (the US as it is being rebuilt following the zombie apocalypse – see below for more details). You will meet regularly with your group to discuss this process, to divide work, and to actually get work done. The document itself will be drafted within a “wiki” in Blackboard Learn. That means that each member of the group
can work on the document—adding, deleting, and editing the text—without needing to share files or keep track of the most up-to-date version of the document. It also means that I will be able to look at all the iterations of the document to see who contributed what to the final version.

At the end of the term, we have two days set aside for group presentations (our “constitutional convention”). Your presentation must be at least 10 minutes but no more than 15 minutes long. It should include a handout of some sort as well as a visual component (a poster, video, slide show, something …). In your presentation, you should focus on your overall goals in drafting your constitution and highlight the most important provisions of your constitution.

One of the great concerns with group projects is how grades will be assigned. Here’s how this will work:

1. Your presentation will be evaluated by all of the students who are NOT in your group; they will rate your constitution on a scale of 1 – 10.
2. I will evaluate each of the wikis using a rubric that will consider (a) the organization and mechanics of the constitution; (b) the completeness of the document; (c) the clarity and insight of your explanations for your decisions; and (d) your creativity in crafting and updating the original.
3. Your group grade will be a combination of the average peer evaluation (30%) and my evaluation (70%).
4. All of the members of your group will evaluate your performance as a percentage, with 100% being the most anyone in the group contributed. For example, if your group divided up the work pretty evenly, but you did a bit more than the others, your groupmates might give you a 100% and everyone else in the group a 97%. Or if your group divided up the work evenly, but “Chester Student” didn’t contribute much, you might give everyone in the group 100% but only give Chester 60%.
5. I will drop the lowest percentage and average the rest. Your individual grade will be that average percentage of the group grade. In short, the most you can get is the group grade. But if you do not contribute to the group effort, you may end up earning a lower score. Free riders are not allowed!
6. Please note that I will be able to see the actual edits of the wiki, and I am asking groups to keep records of attendance of group meetings. But please be sure to keep a journal of your own contributions, as well.

“Beauty Pageants”:

Three times during the term your group will be asked to do a short presentation (no more than 5 minutes) on an assigned topic. In the first, your group will report on the governance of a state; in the second, your group will report on an administrative agency; and in the third your group will report on one of the provisions in the Bill of Rights. More information on these short presentations will follow.

Extra Credit:

There may be opportunities to earn extra credit this semester, but those opportunities will be made to ALL students in the class. You should not count on extra credit or assume it is coming, and there is no point in asking for extra credit if I don’t offer it.
ADA Statement: The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) as amended, pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at www.unt.edu/oda. Also, you may visit the Office of Disability Accommodation in the University Union (room 321) or call (940) 565-4323.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, which may impose a further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

Acceptable Student Behavior: Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr
### COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/16 – 1/20</td>
<td></td>
<td>Intro</td>
<td>Group Groundwork</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/23 – 1/27</td>
<td>U.S. Constitution</td>
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<td>Groups Meet</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/30 – 2/3</td>
<td>Federalism</td>
<td></td>
<td>Groups Meet</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/6 – 2/10</td>
<td>Spotlight on Texas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Groups Meet</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/13 – 2/17</td>
<td>State Beauty Pageant</td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/20 – 2/24</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td></td>
<td>Groups Meet</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/27 – 3/2</td>
<td>Presidency</td>
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<td>Groups Meet</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/5 – 3/9</td>
<td>Bureaucracy</td>
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<td>Groups Meet</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/12 – 3/16</td>
<td>Texas Legislature and Executive</td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/19 – 3/23</td>
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<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/26 – 3/30</td>
<td>Bureaucracy Beauty Pageant</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/2 – 4/6</td>
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<td>U.S. &amp; Texas Courts</td>
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<td>4/9 – 4/13</td>
<td>Civil Liberties</td>
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<td>Make –Up Exams</td>
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<td>4/16 – 4/20</td>
<td>Civil Rights</td>
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<td>Groups Meet</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/23 – 4/27</td>
<td>“First 10” Pageant</td>
<td>Groups Meet</td>
<td>Groups Meet</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/30 – 5/4</td>
<td>Constitutional Convention</td>
<td>Reading Day</td>
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<td>5/7</td>
<td>Exam 3 (1:30 – 2:20 PM)</td>
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### Key

- **Yellow**: Topic Days (Dr. Watson Leads)
- **Orange**: Exams
- **Green**: Group Presentations
- **Pink**: Small Group Meetings (per Group Contract)
- **Purple**: No Class (Groups MAY Meet, but Not Required)
A More Perfect Union

The year is 2112, and a zombie apocalypse has wiped out a considerable portion of the population of the United States and led to the disintegration of our national political institutions. While the apocalypse took a heavy social toll, it left many of our resources (notably, communication, transportation, and manufacturing facilities) intact. We have adequate food, water, and power; but (like today) we are aware that these resources are finite.

Individual states have survived, and are now seeking to join forces for protection against the growing threat of a Canadian invasion. Moreover, the states desire the greater bargaining power (with respect to both trade and diplomatic relations) they will have if united. In short, the time has come to rebuild the United States and that means drafting a new governing document ... a new constitution.

You will, over the course of the semester, develop a governing document for this new, modern U.S. You may use concepts and elements from our original constitution, but you should update them by putting them into language that a typical citizen could understand. You are also free, of course, to change features of the constitution. Perhaps your group believes that a unicameral legislature would be better than a bicameral legislature. Or perhaps you don't believe a legislature makes sense at all. Use the comment feature of the wiki to explain the rationale behind your decisions.

While you are free to add to the constitution, there are a few items your constitution MUST address:
1. the key principles guiding the creation of your constitution (in the form of a preamble)
2. the mechanism for adopting and modifying the constitution
3. the role of the state governments
4. the structure, powers, and selection mechanism for the national legislature
5. the structure, powers, and selection mechanism for the national executive
6. the structure, powers, and selection mechanism for the national judiciary
7. limitations on the powers and decisions of the national government (both internal and external)
8. fundamental rights of citizens (including defining citizens)

You should organize your constitution around "Articles" (parts), with each Article getting its own page on the wiki. Your “main page” of your wiki should include the preamble for your Constitution (the set of guiding principles).

Be creative and have fun!

Important Dates:

March 19: I will visit all the wikis to make sure you have an overall structure for your Constitution in place, your preamble is written, and you have begun to flesh out the important components of the wiki.

April 30: I will turn off the editing feature of the wiki so you will not be able to make any more changes. Whatever you have written at noon on April 30 is what I will evaluate.

April 30 and May 2: We will hold our Constitutional Convention in class. Groups will do their presentations (3 per day). I will randomly select the order in which the groups will present, so you need to come prepared on April 30.

May 7: Bring your peer evaluation sheets with you to the exam.
Group Contract

Our group will meet on all nine group meeting days; one member of the group will turn in the group attendance sheet(s) to Dr. Watson during the next regularly scheduled class meeting.

Our group will use the Blackboard group discussion board and file sharing features to continue our group work outside of those meetings.

Our group will be called:

On group meeting days, our group will meet:

The members of this group will contact one another via:

_____ Bb e-Mail _____ Non-Bb e-Mail _____ Text Message

_____ Phone _____ Facebook Group (Created by ____________________)

Members of the Group (and Relevant Contact Information)

1. ____________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________________________

4. ____________________________________________________________

5. ____________________________________________________________

6. ____________________________________________________________

7. ____________________________________________________________

8. ____________________________________________________________