American Government: Process and Policies
Political Science 1050, Fall 2016
Tuesday/Thursday – 8:00 – 9:20 – University Lyceum

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Office Hours:  
T, 2:00 – 4:00;  
W, 12:00 - 2:00;  
and by appointment

TAs:

Last Names A-G  
Mr. Christopher Pace  
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Mr. Jeremy Brannon  
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M/W/F 8:00 – 9:00 AM

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Course Overview / Objectives

This is one of two courses on American and Texas politics required by state law and as part of UNT’s general education (“core”) requirements. The U.S. government is a representative democracy. That suggests a connection between the will of the people (you and me) and the policies implemented by government. In PSCI 1050, we trace that connection by looking at where individuals’ political values and attitudes come from, the mechanisms that connect individual beliefs to government action, and the outcomes of government policy.

This semester is special, as we are in the midst of a presidential election. In this class, we will undertake an effort to get out the vote on UNT’s campus, educating our colleagues and encouraging them to exercise their rights. This effort will take the form of a group project and individual reflection paper. You will have a choice of groups, each with a set of expectations. We will devote considerable class time to working on these group projects, but you must absolutely plan to be in class and working if you expect to get credit! Some activity outside of regularly scheduled class time will also be expected for every group.

Required Materials

There is one required text:


This book is e-only (there is no print version available). It is ESSENTIAL that you purchase the book because there is online homework that you will submit through the publisher’s website. You can either purchase an access code from the UNT bookstore, purchase the book directly from Soomo through the link in Blackboard, or use a free 3-chapter trial until your financial aid
money comes in (at which point you will need to purchase the textbook). If you have a hardship that prevents you from purchasing the text in a timely manner, you need to contact ME (not a TA) in writing before 8 AM on Friday, September 9.

You will also need to register for the REEF Polling system. This is a system that allows you to participate in class polls by using your laptop or smartphone. Please plan to bring that device with you to class. Registering for REEF is FREE. Instructions are available on Blackboard.

**Class Responsibilities and Grades**

All assignments and exams in this course will be graded as either “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory,” with the specifications required for satisfactory completion stated on each assignment. To achieve a mark of “satisfactory,” you need to do more than scrape right over the bar. Rather, you need to show that you have met the objectives of the assignment and shown a degree of mastery over the content. Either your work demonstrates that it has met the requirements or it does not.

The only letter grade you will receive in this class will be your final grade. That final letter grade will be based on satisfactory completion of “bundles” of assignments and thus will reflect the extent to which you demonstrate that you have met course learning objectives. Course grades should not be conflated with intelligence, effort, or personal worth. Rather, they are merely summary statements of your demonstration of learning in the course.

Note that this method of grading gives you significant latitude in choosing how much effort you want to put into the course (and, consequently, how much learning you wish to get out of the course). Given your particular interests, educational objectives, and other commitments on your time, you may opt to complete only the work necessary to achieve a grade of C. That’s a legitimate choice to make for some people, and I will not think less of you for making that choice. If you do strive for an A in the course (and I hope many of you will do that), the expectations of what it takes to get that A should be relatively clear. What you should **not** do is start the semester by taking this course lightly and then expect to earn an A at the end.

**Grading Bundles**

- **A Bundle**
  Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of A. Satisfactory completion of this bundle will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of course material as well as contribution to the class learning environment, and the ability to explain/analyze course concepts and apply them to a real world situation.
  
  o Satisfactorily complete the syllabus quiz
  o Satisfactorily complete the Civic Engagement project
  o Satisfactorily complete 2 exams OR the final exam
  o Satisfactorily complete 7 Get the Gist homework assignments by the assigned due dates
  o Satisfactorily complete 7 workbook assignments by their assigned due dates
  o Earn 85% of the available REEF polling points
  o Satisfactorily complete two 800 – 1000 word papers
• **B Bundle**
Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of B. Satisfactory completion of this bundle will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of course material as well as contribution to the class learning environment, and the ability to explain/analyze course concepts.

  o Satisfactorily complete the syllabus quiz
  o Satisfactorily complete the Civic Engagement project
  o Satisfactorily complete 2 exams OR the final exam
  o Satisfactorily complete 7 Get the Gist homework assignments by the assigned due date
  o Satisfactorily complete 7 workbook assignments by their assigned due dates
  o Earn 85% of the available REEF polling points

• **C Bundle**
Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of C. Satisfactory completion of this bundle will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of course material.

  o Satisfactorily complete the syllabus quiz
  o Satisfactorily complete the Civic Engagement project
  o Satisfactorily complete 2 exams OR the final exam
  o Satisfactorily complete 7 Get the Gist homework assignments by the assigned due dates
  o Satisfactorily complete 5 workbook assignments by their assigned due dates

• **D Bundle**
Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of D. Satisfactory completion of this bundle will demonstrate minimal knowledge and understanding of course material.

  o Satisfactorily complete 1 exam (a unit exam or the final exam)
  o Satisfactorily complete 7 Get the Gist homework assignments by the assigned due dates
  o Satisfactorily complete 3 workbook assignments by their assigned due dates

• **F Bundle**
Students failing to meet the requirements for the D bundle will receive a grade of F for the course.

**Tokens & Flexibility**

Every student starts the course with 5 virtual tokens that can be “exchanged” for some leniency or opportunity for revision. Using a token will allow a student to do the following:

- For 1 token: Submit a Get the Gist, workbook or campaign assignment up to 1 week late
- For 1 token: Earn credit for one missed day of REEF polling
- For 2 tokens: Be awarded “satisfactory” credit for one skipped Get the Gist, workbook, or campaign assignment
- For 2 tokens: Revise and resubmit an unsatisfactory essay
**Timing of Grading**

All work will be graded within one week of submission. In the event that you wish to revise and resubmit an unsatisfactory essay, you must do so within 2 weeks of the due date (i.e., one week after receiving feedback).

**Specifications for Grading**

- **Syllabus Quiz (required for A, B, and C bundles)**

  There is a short quiz on the syllabus. In order to pass the course with a grade of C or higher, you must complete it satisfactorily before 8 a.m. on September 6. In order to earn a “satisfactory” on the syllabus quiz, students must:
  
  - Earn a perfect score on the syllabus quiz (note that you can retake the quiz unlimited times)

- **Exams (required for all bundles)**

  There will be three exams in this course: two unit exams and a cumulative final exam. Exams will cover material from the textbook and workbook readings as well as in-class content. If you struggle with an exam (or miss it), you can make up for it by satisfactorily completing the final. Exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and matching questions. In order to earn a “satisfactory” on an exam, students must:

  - Earn 70% of the available points

- **Get the Gist Homework Assignments (required for all bundles)**

  Some of the chapters in our online text are actual text chapters (the others are labeled “Workbook”). For all the regular text chapters (7 in total), there are multiple-choice questions at the bottom of each page. These multiple-choice questions can be answered repeatedly until you get them all correct. In order to earn a “satisfactory” on a Get the Gist homework assignment, students must:

  - Complete the assignment by 8 AM on the due date
  - Answer 90% of the questions correctly

- **Workbook Assignments (required for all bundles)**

  There are seven workbook chapters. Each workbook chapter is organized around the four learning objectives adopted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (critical thinking, communication, personal responsibility, and social responsibility). Each chapter includes four essays that expound upon course concepts and give students an opportunity to apply those concepts. To earn a “satisfactory” on a Workbook assignment, students must:

  - Complete the assignment by 8 AM on the due date
  - Answer 70% of the questions correctly
• **Civic Engagement Project** *(required for A, B, and C bundles)*

This semester, our class will host a Civic Engagement Fair. Our objective is to educate people about the political process in general and the upcoming election in particular. To achieve that end, you will (in groups) develop an exhibit for the fair. The group will have four class days during which to work on the exhibit, though you may need some additional time outside of class. The fair will be Tuesday, October 4, from 1 – 4 PM in the Forum of Willis Library. Groups will be able to set up their exhibits during the class period on October 4, but will also need to make arrangements to “man” their stations during the afternoon. Several groups will be working with Julie Leuzinger, our political science librarian, on voter registration. Those groups will also organize the rest of the class to participate in dorm registration activities during the class period on Thursday, October 6.

In order to earn a “satisfactory” on this assignment, students must:

- Attend at least three of the four in-class work days for the project
- Produce a factually accurate presentation (with some A/V or interactive component) for the fair or the registration drive
- Spend at least one hour either setting up for or manning a station during the 10/4 fair OR participate in the voter registration drive on October 6 during class
- Be assessed by a majority of their group’s members as a substantial contributor to the group’s product

• **REEF Polling** *(required for A & B bundles)*

We will be using REEF Polling in this class. UNT has a site license for this classroom response system, so you do not need to purchase anything. Instead, you will simply need to read the directions on Blackboard, create an account, and link your account to our course. You will need to bring a laptop or smart-device to class with you. In order to get credit for REEF for a day, you must answer 75% of the questions asked (so if you are a few minutes late or have momentary technical issues, you’ll be fine). In order to receive a “satisfactory” students must:

- Earn 85% of the REEF points for the semester

• **Essays** *(required for A bundle)*

To receive an “A” for this course, you must satisfactorily complete two short essays. The first essay (due 10/25) should reflect on the group project; the second essay (due 11/22) should reflect on the results of the 2016 election.

In order to receive a “satisfactory” for an essay, it must:

- Be between 800 and 1000 words long, appropriately divided into at least 5 paragraphs
- Provide an introductory paragraph with a clear thesis statement
- Reference at least one topic covered in the textbook, workbook, or class
- Reference at least one observation from the fair/registration drive or the 2016 election
- Connect the observation to course material
- Be written in the student’s own words
- Contain no more than 3 surface errors (grammar/spelling)
- Provide a conclusion that is supported by the observations and argumentation in the paper
Class Policies:

**ADA Statement**: The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

**Cheating and Plagiarism**: Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an “unsatisfactory” 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. After receiving a warning about inappropriate behavior (or in the case of behavior deemed harmful or threatening to any member of the UNT community), 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](http://www.unt.edu/csrr)
# Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Read/Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/30 – 9/1</td>
<td>Political Culture</td>
<td>Read the syllabus / complete syllabus quiz</td>
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<td>Register for REEF Polling</td>
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<td>Introduce yourself to Civic Engagement Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/6 – 9/8</td>
<td>Public Opinion</td>
<td>Read Chapters 1 &amp; 2</td>
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<td>Syllabus quiz due (8 a.m. 9/6)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete Get the Gist for Chap. 1 (8 a.m. 9/6)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete Workbook for Chap. 2 (8 a.m. 9/6)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Civic Engagement Groups discuss topics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sign up for Exam 1 and Exam 2 times</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/13 – 9/15</td>
<td>Political Participation</td>
<td>Read Chapters 3 &amp; 4</td>
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<td>Complete Get the Gist for Chap. 3 (8 a.m. 9/13)</td>
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<td>Complete Workbook for Chap. 4 (8 a.m. 9/13)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/20 – 9/22</td>
<td>Group Work</td>
<td>Civic Engagement Groups work on projects</td>
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<td>during class</td>
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<td>May meet in Lyceum or Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/27 – 9/29</td>
<td>Group Work</td>
<td>Civic Engagement Groups work on projects</td>
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<td>during class</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May meet in Lyceum or Library</td>
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<td>10/4</td>
<td>Civic Engagement Fair</td>
<td>Forum of Willis Library</td>
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<td>Set Up: 8 – 9:20</td>
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<td>Fair: 1 – 4</td>
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<td>10/6</td>
<td>Voter Registration Drive</td>
<td>UNT Campus Dorms</td>
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<td>7:30 – 9:20 or TBA</td>
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<td>10/7</td>
<td>DROP DEADLINE</td>
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<td>10/11 – 10/13</td>
<td>Parties</td>
<td>Read Chapters 5 &amp; 6</td>
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<td>Complete Get the Gist Chap. 5 (8 a.m. 10/11)</td>
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<td>Complete Workbook for Chap. 6 (8 a.m. 10/11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/18 – 10/20</td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>This Week in 330C Sage Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/25 – 10/27</td>
<td>Mass Media</td>
<td>Read Chapters 7 &amp; 8</td>
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<td>Complete Get the Gist Chap. 7 (8 a.m. 10/25)</td>
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<td>Complete Workbook for Chap. 8 (8 a.m. 10/25)</td>
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<td>First Reflection Essay due (8 a.m. 10/25)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
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<td>11/1 – 11/3</td>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>Read Chapters 9 &amp; 10&lt;br&gt;Complete Get the Gist for Chap. 9 (8 a.m. 11/1)&lt;br&gt;Complete Workbook for Chap. 10 (8 a.m. 11/1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/8 – 11/10</td>
<td>Electoral College&lt;br&gt;Election Re-Cap</td>
<td>No additional reading&lt;br&gt;Deadline for revision of First Essay (8 a.m. 11/8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/15 – 11/17</td>
<td>Interest Groups</td>
<td>Read Chapters 11 &amp; 12&lt;br&gt;Complete Get the Gist Chap. 11 (8 a.m. 11/15)&lt;br&gt;Complete Workbook Chap. 12 (8 a.m. 11/15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/22</td>
<td>Collective Action Game</td>
<td>No additional reading&lt;br&gt;Second Reflection Essay due (8 a.m. 11/22)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/29 – 12/1</td>
<td>Public Policy</td>
<td>Read Chapters 13 &amp; 14&lt;br&gt;Complete Get the Gist Chap. 13 (8 a.m. 11/29)&lt;br&gt;Complete Workbook Chap. 14 (8 a.m. 11/29)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/6 – 12/8</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>This Week in 330C Sage Hall&lt;br&gt;Deadline for revision of Second Essay (8 a.m. 12/6)</td>
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**Tuesday, December 3, 9 AM: Final Exam in the Lyceum (NOT Sage Hall)**

You must be on time for the final exam. Once one student submits a completed exam, we will not hand any more exams out.
Keeping Track of Your Grade

Print out this sheet and check off items you have completed as you have completed them. Remember that an extra check under “A” work will not compensate for a missed check under “D” work.

**D Work**

- □ Get the Gist 1  □ Get the Gist 5  □ Workbook 2
- □ Get the Gist 2  □ Get the Gist 6  □ Workbook 3
- □ Get the Gist 3  □ Get the Gist 7  □ Exam 1
- □ Get the Gist 4  □ Workbook 1

**C Work**

- □ Workbook 4  □ Exam 2
- □ Workbook 5  □ Group Project

**B Work**

- □ Workbook 6  □ Workbook 7  □ REEF Points

**A Work**

- □ Essay 1  □ Essay 2

**Tokens Used**

Check off tokens as you use them

□ □ □ □ □ □ □