PSCI 1050.002, *American Government: Processes and Policies,* Fall 2014

M, W, F: 11:00 am - 11:50 am; Sage 116

Host: Eddie L. Meaders, J.D., M.A.

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Office Hours: M & W: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm  
 T: 10:30 am – 12:00 pm; 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Feel free to drop by. No appointment is needed during office hours. If the

posted hours are no good, let me know and we’ll set something else up.

Teaching Assistants:

Callie Walker

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Office Hours: M, W: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

R: 9:00 am – 11:00 am

Supplemental Instructor:

Deva Kellam

E-mail: [deva.kellam@gmail.com](mailto:deva.kellam@gmail.com)

Required Texts:

Text: We The People: Introduction to American Politics/State of Texas (V2), 10/e, Thomas E. Patterson (READ THE ASSIGNED CHAPTERS!!!!)

Newspaper: *New York Times*. Current political events are important and give practical applications to what is discussed in class. The paper will also be the source for bonus questions on exams and the source of current events quizzes. Ordering information can found at the Times’ website: www.nytimes.com/collegerate.

Course Topics: This is an introductory American government course emphasizing two major areas. The first area involves an examination of various aspects of American style political process including public opinion, the role of the media in politics, political participation, political parties, interest groups, and campaigns & elections. The second area involves an examination of the policy making process and various public policies including economics, social welfare, healthcare, education, and national security/international relations.

Course Goals:

1.1. Explain the methods and process of political behavior and American and Texas politics.

1.2. Explain and recognize the importance of examining political behavior and ideology.

1.3. Survey key components of political behavior by examining the dynamics of public opinion, the media, interest groups, and the campaign and election process.

2.1. Explain the process of political socialization in American and Texas politics.

2.2. Explain the role of public opinion in a democratic society

2.3. Provide critiques about non-scientific and scientific methods of public opinion measurement.

3.1. Explain the process and dissemination of information by the media in American and Texas politics.

3.2. Analyze the process of media regulation.

3.3. Examine the relationship between the roles of the media in American democratic society.

4.1. Explain the dynamics of interest group formation in American and Texas politics.

4.2. Explain the influence interest groups and lobbyists have on governments.

5.1. Explain the role of political parties in American and Texas politics.

5.2. Analyze key components of political participation.

5.3. Analyze key components of elections and campaigns.

5.4. Examine the voting process and voter participation in American and Texas politics.

6.1. Analyze and critically assess the policymaking process in American and Texas politics and examine salient public policy issue areas.

6.2. Analyze the evolution and current role of the U.S. in the global arena in terms of both the economic and foreign policy domains.

Class Procedure: This class will be conducted in a lecture/discussion format. Students are encouraged to actively participate in class discussions. **READ THE BOOK AND PREPARE FOR CLASS IN ADVANCE!** Your views, opinions, and questions are valued no matter how insignificant or controversial you may feel them to be. This is a class on politics and folks get stirred up from time to time on the issues. Warm bodies only fill up space and are not very exciting unless you say something. I do ask that you keep your comments on point as they pertain to the lecture material. Still, I like to know what you think about things.

Assessment components:

* Online Assignments: Every chapter will have a LearnSmart assignment (LSA) that corresponds to each of the assigned chapters in the textbook. Every chapter may have additional online assignments that you will be able to complete in Blackboard.
  + **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MONITOR ASSIGNMENT STATUS REGULARLY IN BLACKBOARD**! You get two attempts at taking each assignment, but keep in mind the second score is the one that is recorded. Be careful what you ask for in trying again. If you get an 85 on the first attempt and you think you can do better and retake the assignment and end up with a lower score of 75, the 75 is counted.
  + ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY THE DUE DATE AND TIME. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN A SCORE OF 0 FOR THAT ASSIGNMENT. LATE WORK IS NOT ACCEPTED!
  + If there is a scoring question about your assignment, please bring this to the attention of the instructor NO LATER THAN 48 HOURS after the score is posted in Blackboard. Since assignments are automatically graded at the due date and time, the 48 hour clock will usually start at the due date and time. Failure to notify me of a problem within a timely manner constitutes your waiver of the right to appeal the score assigned. Do not wait until the end of the term to question an assignment score from earlier in the term.
* *NY Times* quizzes (individual and group) will cover current events as they relate to local, state, and national politics. Quizzes will consist of 10 multiple choice questions on current U.S. political events during a fixed time period. Students will take the quiz twice; individually and then again in groups. You will get an individual grade and a group grade. You will know at the completion of each quiz your individual and group score. Missed individual quizzes cannot be made up! If you know you will be absent on a quiz day, please inform the instructor of this at least 24 hours in advance to schedule a time to take the quiz.
* Examinations: There will be THREE (3) of them. Exams, which are closed book/notes, will consist of multiple choice and true-false questions. The exams are non-cumulative in the sense that they focus on the specific topics and reading assignments delineated by each section. If there is a grading question about your exam, please bring this to the attention of the instructor NO LATER THAN 48 hours after the grade is posted in Blackboard. Failure do so constitutes your waiver of the right to appeal the score assigned. If you know you will be absent on an exam day, please inform the instructor of this at least 24 hours in advance to schedule a time to take the quiz.

Attendance: **ATTEND CLASS**! Why pay all this tuition money of you are not going to come to class? If you are not in class, you should at least read your book!

***Specifically for TAMS students: If you are absent for any reason, you are required to file an absence report with the TAMS Academic Office. In addition, as your professor, I will send periodic attendance reports to the TAMS Academic Office.***

Disabled Students:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic reasonable 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](tel:940.565.4323).

Final Exam: The final is scheduled for Monday, December 8, 2014, from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm in Sage 116. It will not be comprehensive! Please do not ask to take the final early.

Grades: Earned and not given! Your grade will be determined based on your scores on the following activities:

Exams (3): to be determined by the class, but at least 50% of your grade

Individual online assignments & quiz scores: to be determined by the class, but at least 15% of your grade.

Group scores on group quizzes: to be determined by the class, but at least 10% of your grade.

Group participation score: to be determined by the class, but at least 5% of your grade.

If the class fails to reach a consensus on the grade weights, the default weights are as follows:

Exams (3): 60%

Individual online assignments and quiz scores: 20%

Group scores on quizzes: 10%

Group participation score: 10%

**Grades are not discussed by phone or in e-mails. See the instructor during office hours for questions!**

Student Success: If you are struggling with the class, feel free to discuss course issues either with either the instructor or the TA’s during office hours. My best advice is read your book in a timely manner and come to class. Additional resources may be found at: <http://success.unt.edu>

Academic Integrity, Plagiarism and Cheating: No Cheating!

University of North Texas -- Department of Political Science

POLICY ON CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

The UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline defines cheating and plagiarism as the use of unauthorized books, notes, or otherwise securing help in a test; copying others' tests, assignments, reports, or term papers; representing the work of another as one's own; collaborating without authority with another student during an examination or in preparing academic work; or otherwise practicing scholastic dishonesty.

Normally, the minimum penalty for cheating or plagiarism is a grade of "F" in the course. In the case of graduate departmental exams, the minimum penalty shall be failure of all fields of the exam. Determination of cheating or plagiarism shall be made by the instructor in the course, or by the field faculty in the case of departmental exams.

Cases of cheating or plagiarism on graduate departmental exams, theses, or dissertations shall automatically be referred to the departmental Graduate Studies Committee. Cases of cheating or plagiarism in ordinary coursework may, at the discretion of the instructor, be referred to the Undergraduate Studies Committee in the case of undergraduate students, or the Graduate Studies Committee in the case of graduate students. These committees, acting as agents of the department Chair, shall impose further penalties, or recommend further penalties to the Dean of Students, if they determine that the case warrants it. In all cases, the Dean of Students shall be informed in writing of the case.

Students may appeal any decision under this policy by following the procedures laid down in the UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

University of North Texas -- Department of Political Science

POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Political Science Department adheres to and enforces UNT’s policy on academic integrity (cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and sabotage). Students in this class should review the policy (UNT Policy Manual Section 18.1.16), which may be located at <http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf>. Violations of academic integrity in this course will addressed in compliance with the penalties and procedures laid out in this policy. Students may appeal any decision under this policy by following the procedures laid down in the UNT The UNT Policy Manual Section 18.1.16 “Student Standards of Academic Integrity

***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](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).

Miscellaneous Poop:

**PLEASE TURN CELL PHONES OFF (or at least silence) DURING CLASS! RINGING, BEEPING, CHIRPING, AND OBNOXIOUS MELODIOUS TUNES CAUSE DISTRACTIONS. IF THIS HAPPENS, I MAY ANSWER YOUR PHONE FOR YOU, OR AT LEAST CONFISCATE IT FOR THE DURATION OF THE CLASS PERIOD! NO TEXTING OR WEB SURFING! PAY ATTENTION IN CLASS!**

**BONUS OPPORTUNITY**: since the missed homework and quiz policy is a bit harsh, you may participate in two (2) community service projects during the semester. Please check the volunteer center website, <http://www.unt.edu/volunteer/>, for service opportunities. Service opportunities do not need to be affiliated with UNT. Complete the service, show written proof of your completion (if obtainable), and write a paper (no longer than 2 pages long, **TYPED**, 12 point font, double spaced, standard margins, Chicago or APA manual of style compliant) about your experience and how it contributes to the common good. Each project is worth 100 points credit to replace a missing quiz or homework assignment. Projects, documentation, and papers must be completed and turned in on **December 3rd** at the start of class. No exceptions!

Schedule Changes: I reserve the right to change any of the exam times or assignments by providing you with at least a 24 hour notice of such changes. You are responsible for any changes that may occur during the course of the semester. Any changes will be announced in class and posted in Blackboard.

Coming Attractions

(More or Less)

Week 1: August 25, 27, 29 (Ch.2 - Public Opinion)

**LSA Ch. 2 and Online Assignment #1 (opinion)**

Week 2: September 3 & 5 (more public opinion)

Week 3 : September 8, 10, 12 (Ch. 3 - Political Participation)

**LSA Ch. 3 and Online Assignment # 2 (participation)**

***NY Times* Quiz # 1 on the 12th**

Week 4: September 15, 17, 19 (Ch.7 - the News Media)

**LSA Ch. 7**

***NY Times* Quiz # 2 on the 19th!**

Week 5: September 22, 24, 26

**Online Assignment # 3 (media)**

**Exam 1 on the 26th!**

Week 6: September 29, October 1, 3 (Ch. 4 - Political Parties)

**LSA Ch. 4 Online Assignment # 4 (parties)**

**Online Writing Assignment # 1**

Week 7: October 6, 8, 10 (Ch. 13 - Political Parties in Texas) (Ch. 5 - Groups and Interests)

**LSA Ch. 13, Online Assignment # 4-a (Texas parties)**

**LSA Ch. 5**

Week 8: October 13, 15, 17 (Ch. 14 - Interest Groups and Lobbying in Texas)

**Online Assignment #5 (interest groups)**

**LSA Ch. 14**

***NY Times* Quiz # 3 on the 17th!**

Week 9: October 20, 22, 24 (Ch.6 - Elections, Campaigns and Voting)

**Online assignment # 5-a (Texas groups)**

**LSA Ch. 6**

***NY Times* Quiz # 4 on the 24th!**

Week 10: October 27, 29, 31 (Ch. 12 - Voting and Political Participation in Texas)

**Online Assignment # 6 (campaigns and elections)**

**LSA Ch. 12**

Week 11: November 3, 5, 7(Ch. 8 - Economic and Environmental Policy)

**EXAM 2 on the 3rd!**

**LSA Ch. 8**

Week 12 November 10, 12, 14 (Ch. 9 - Welfare and Education Policy)

**Online assignment # 7 (economic & environmental policy)**

**LSA Ch. 9**

**Online Writing Assignment # 2**

Week 13 November 17, 19, 21 (Ch. 16 - Public Policy in Texas)

**Online assignment # 8 (welfare and education)**

**LSA Ch. 16**

***NY Times* Quiz # 5 on the 21st!**

Week 14 November 24, 26 (Ch. 17, Financing State Government)

**LSA Ch. 17**

**Online Assignment # 9 (Texas public policy)**

Week 15 December 1, 3 (Ch. 10, Foreign Policy)

**LSA Ch. 10**

**Online assignment # 10 (foreign policy)**

**Community service bonus due on the 3rd!**

Week 16 December 8

**Final Exam, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm, SAGE 116**

PSCI 1050.002, Fall 2014

Student Information Sheet

(Please Print)

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone:( )\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Hometown:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Year in School:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Transfer (if so, which school):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Major:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Minor:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies and interesting things you like to do:

This certifies that I have read the syllabus and understand the requirements for the course, including the Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism. I agree to abide by the academic integrity policy. As such, I verify that all work done in this class will be my own.

Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_