American Government: Process and Policies
Political Science 1040.003
Fall 2012

Class Meetings: T/Th 12:30 – 1:50, Lyceum

Instructor: Dr. Wendy L. Watson
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Office Hours: M/T/W 2:00 – 4:30;
and by appointment

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. In PSCI 1040, we explore the rules of the political game and the distribution of both power and responsibility among the various institutions of government

Students who complete this course will be able to

- explain and distinguish the concepts of federalism and separation of powers
- identify and understand key provisions of the U.S. Constitution
- describe the primary functions and structures of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government
- identify the liberties and rights afforded by the U.S. Constitution and illustrate their impact on our everyday lives
- compare and contrast the institutions of Texas government with those of the U.S. government

Course Readings

There are two books required for this class:

Fiorina et al. *New American Democracy with Texas Chapters, Volume II (Custom Edition)* (Pearson Learning Solutions) ("Text" on the syllabus).

Cox and Ruderman, *Processes and Policies in American & Texas Politics, 8th Ed.* (Pearson Learning Solutions) ("Workbook" on the syllabus).

You must also purchase a Turning Point response card ("RF" or radio frequency).

The Fiorina textbook is available as a looseleaf paper text (meaning you would need to put it in a binder). It comes shrinkwrapped with a code which provides you with access the Cox and Ruderman workbook (which is only available as an online text). This option costs $100.

You may also opt to go paperless, by purchasing the Fiorina text and the Cox and Ruderman workbook as online-only texts. This is by far the less expensive option ($51.60), but some students really like to have a paper textbook. It is your choice. If you want to purchase the online-only materials, there is a link on our course blackboard site (learn.unt.edu).

Class Responsibilities and Grades

In this class, you will be presented with a number of opportunities to earn points:

Quizzes:		10%
Workbook Exercises:	3 @ 5% each	15%
Clicker Use		15%
Exams:	3 @ 20% each	60%

		100%

At the end of the semester, your grade will be based on the number of points you have accumulated.

90+	= A
80-89	= B
70-79	= C
60-69	= D
< 60	= F

I round grades using mathematical rules. For example, an 89.5 rounds up to a 90, but an 89.4 rounds down to an 89. Do not ask or expect me to deviate from these rules. I know the cut-offs are arbitrary, but all cut-offs for grades are arbitrary. Similarly, it's arbitrary that Best Buy charges you $89.50 for an iPod rather than $89.49. You would not be able to buy a $89.50 iPod with $89.49, and you will not be able to "purchase" an A with 89.49%, even though it's "really close."

Team 1040

My office hours and those of your teaching assistants are YOUR TIME. You are free to stop by our offices without an appointment during these hours; come with questions, concerns, or even a desire for further discussion. There are four TAs in this class: Karl Boyd-Nafstad, Kevin Kearns, Brandon Stewart, and Melda Ozsut. Their office locations and hours will be posted on Blackboard as soon as possible.

For questions about your grade or class policies, you should first consult a TA. If the TA is unable to help you, you may contact me, including information about your interaction with the TA—including the TA's name—in your communication.

A Supplemental Instruction (SI) component is provided for all students who want to improve their understanding of the material taught in this course. SI sessions are led by a student who has already mastered the course material and has been trained to facilitate group sessions where students can meet to compare class notes, review and discuss important concepts, develop strategies for studying, and prepare for exams. Attendance at SI sessions is free and voluntary. Students may attend as many times as they choose. SI sessions begin the second week of class and continue throughout the semester. A session schedule will be announced in class. For information about the program, and session schedule/updates, visit: http://learningcenter.unt.edu/ . Your SI's name is Ben Vail, and his hours will be posted on Blackboard as soon as they are available.

Quizzes:

The quizzes are quizzes on the readings. Every quiz is a short assessment you will take via Blackboard. Quizzes must be completed by noon on the Tuesday we begin covering a topic. In other words, you need to read and take the quiz **before** we cover the material. You may take each quiz up to five times; your highest score will count. **If you do not make at least a 70%, however, I will lower your grade to a zero.** I will drop your two lowest quiz grades when calculating your final grade.

Workbook Exercises:

You will complete three graded exercises in this class, one for each test unit. Workbook exercises are completed online through Blackboard Learn (learn.unt.edu). Workbook assignments must be submitted online by noon on the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted (no excuses).

Each workbook assignment is worth a total of 5% of your final grade. In addition, questions from the workbook assignments are sure to find their way onto your exam, so be sure to go back and figure out what you missed and why.

Exams

There are three exams in this class as well as a cumulative final exam. Each is worth 20% of your final grade, and I will drop your lowest exam score. That means that you may skip the final if you are happy with your grade after exam three is completed. If you miss one of the three in-class exams for any reason at all (illness, family emergency, university activity, or simply oversleeping), you will need to take the final as your third exam.

Three important notes about exams. First, the exams are all multiple choice. You will need to bring sharpened #2 pencils to the exam, but I will provide the scantron form. Second, once a student submits a completed exam, I will not hand out any more blank exams. It is crucial that you arrive on time. Finally, you may not leave during the exam without turning in your test; make sure you go to the bathroom before the exam begins and bring tissue with you.

Clickers

We will use clickers in this class. It is your responsibility to purchase a clicker (new or used) or to rent one. You should keep an extra set of batteries on hand in case your batteries die. It is your responsibility to register your clicker through Blackboard and to have your clicker with you in class. Every class day (with the exception of review days) you have the opportunity to earn 5 points by using your clicker. You will get points for ringing in, even if you are wrong.

You should only click in for yourself. Because there is credit associated with clicking, clicking in for a friend is a violation of UNT's academic integrity policy, and if a TA or I catch you with two or more clickers in your hand, we **will** report you for academic misconduct.

There are 20 days during which you can earn clicker points. On each of those days, a perfect score is 10/10 (that doesn't mean there will always be 10 clicker questions … some questions may be worth

more than 1 point each). I will drop your 4 lowest clicker scores (so you can afford to be late or even miss class 4 days without it negatively affecting your grade.

Extra Credit

There may be opportunities for extra credit. If so, I will announce them in class an on Blackboard. If you miss an announcement, that is your responsibility. If there is extra credit, it will be minimal; do not count on it to salvage your grade.

Class Policies

1. Lectures are not intended to regurgitate the material in the textbook. Rather, you should do the reading before class and come prepared to delve into the more difficult concepts covered in the text. You are ultimately responsible for the material in the readings and from class. If you are struggling with the reading, it is your responsibility to seek my help.

2. Class starts at 12:30 and runs until 1:50. I expect you to be in class, ready to roll, at 12:30, and I expect you to stay until 1:50. Moreover, I expect you to be attentive. Arriving late, leaving early, talking to your neighbor, surfing the web, or otherwise distracting your fellow students will not be tolerated. I will ask you to leave class. Repeated or egregious instances of classroom disruption will result in referral to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. 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.

3. On exam days, I expect students to fill in rows from the front of the class and moving back. Once a row is filled, I will hand out the exams for that row. You need to be on time. You may not wear hats, sunglasses, or earphones during exams. You may not eat or drink during exams. You may not answer your phone during an exam (it should be silenced, but if it rings you just let it ring). If we catch you with any class-related materials or electronic devices out during the exam, we will confiscate them and assume you are cheating.

4. All workbook assignments and quizzes will be turned in electronically, and late assignments will not be accepted. It is your responsibility to plan for possible computer problems and to contact the appropriate IT support person if you encounter problems with Blackboard.

5. I will communicate with the class via Blackboard and e-mail. You can set your Blackboard e-mail account to deliver messages to whichever e-mail address you regularly use. It is your responsibility to check that account regularly.

6. If you require an accommodation for a religious observance or for a disability, I am happy to oblige, but I will not do so on an ad hoc basis. If you require an accommodation for religious reasons, you must notify me in writing at least two weeks in advance. If you require an accommodation for a disability, you must provide me with appropriate documentation from ODA before I can assist you.

7. All work must be your own. That includes workbooks assignments.

8. You should direct questions first to the TAs and then to me. When you e-mail a TA or me, you should include a salutation (Dear Dr. Watson), include a subject line that specifies which class you are in (1040.003), and be polite. If you fail to abide by these rules, we will simply return your e-mail with a reference to Class Policy #8.

University of North Texas-Statement of ADA Compliance

The Political Science Department cooperates with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please present your written accommodation request on or before the sixth class day.

University of North Texas--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 the failure of all fields of the exam. Determination of cheating or plagiarism shall be made by the instructor in the course.

Cases of cheating or plagiarism in ordinary course work may, at the discretion of the instructor, be referred to the Undergraduate Studies Committee. 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 a decision under this policy by following the procedures laid down in the UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

Course Schedule

8/30		Intro*
9/4 – 9/6		U.S. Constitution
	READ:	Text Chapter 2; Workbook Chapter 1
	DUE:	Constitution Quiz Due Noon 9/4
		REGISTER CLICKER
9/11 – 9/13		Federalism
	READ:	Text Chapter 3; Workbook Chapter 4
	DUE:	Federalism Quiz Due Noon 9/11
9/18 – 9/20		Texas Constitution
	READ:	Text Chapter TX – 2; Workbook Chapter 3
	DUE:	Texas Constitution Quiz Due Noon 9/18
9/25		Exam 1 Review*
	DUE:	Workbook 1 Due Noon 9/25
9/27	**EXAM 1***	
10/2 – 10/4		Congress
	READ:	Chapter 12; Workbook Chapter 5
	DUE:	Congress Quiz Due Noon 10/2
10/9 – 10/11		Presidency
	READ:	Chapter 13; Workbook Chapter 6
	DUE:	Presidency Quiz Due Noon 10/9
10/16 – 10/18		Bureaucracy
	READ:	Chapter 14; Workbook Chapter 7
	DUE:	Bureaucracy Quiz Due Noon 10/16
10/23 – 10/25		Texas Legislature and Executive
	READ:	Chapters TX-3 and TX-4
	DUE:	TX Leg and Exec Quiz Due Noon 10/23
10/30		Exam 2 Review*
	DUE:	Workbook 2 Due Noon 10/30
11/1	**EXAM 2***	

11/6 – 11/8		Courts
	READ:	Chapter 15; Workbook Chapter 8
	DUE:	Courts Quiz Due Noon 11/6
11/13 – 11/15		Civil Liberties
	READ:	Chapter 16; Workbook Chapter 9
	DUE:	Civil Liberties Quiz Due Noon 11/13
11/20		Know Your Rights Competition*
11/22		Thanksgiving (No Class)
11/27 – 11/29		Civil Rights
	READ:	Chapter 17; Workbook Chapter 10
	DUE:	Civil Rights Quiz Due Noon 11/27
12/4		Exam 3 Review*
	DUE:	Workbook 3 Due Noon 12/4
12/6	**EXAM 3***	
12/13	**Cumulative Final Exam**	
	10:30 – 12:30	

*** No regular clicker points on days marked with asterisk.**