**American Government: Process and Policies**

Political Science 1050 \* Spring 2013 \* MWF 2 - 2:50 \* ESSC 255

**Instructor:** Dr. Wendy L. Watson **Office Hours:** M, 10-1:30;

wendy.watson@unt.edu T, 9:00–12:00 and 1:30–5:00;

129 Wooten Hall W, 10:00-12:00;

and by appointment

**TAs:** There are three TAs for this course. Their names, contact information, and office hours are listed on this course’s Blackboard site: learn.unt.edu.

**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.

**REQUIRED Materials**

There is one required text for this class. It is a custom edition of *We the People* by Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, and Tolbert. The special edition for our class (which is three-hole punched and contains only the chapters required for this class) can be purchased at the UNT bookstore. I highly recommend you purchase this version of the book.

If you cannot obtain the custom edition of the text, you may want to find a used copy of *We the People,* 8th edition. This book will be a little out-of-date, but will do in a pinch. You will have to purchase the full book, but you can find it used. It is your responsibility to read the appropriate chapters.

In addition, you must purchase a Turning Point Response Card (radio frequency required, LCD preferred) (“Clicker” on the syllabus).

You can purchase the clicker at the UNT Bookstore (new for $42.75 or used for $32.25). If you have a Turning Point clicker from another class, you can use it here, but you should reregister the clicker ID number through Blackboard Learn.

**Class Responsibilities and Grades**

Your grade in this class will be based on the following components:

Reading Quizzes 10%

Clicker Questions 15%

Exams (3 @ 20%) 60%

Personal Ideology Paper 15%

Grades are based on the following distribution.

90+ = A

80 – 89.99 = B

70 – 79.99 = C

60 – 69.99 = D

< 60 = F

**Reading Quizzes:**

For each topic covered on the syllabus, you are expected to read material in the textbook BEFORE we cover the topic in class. To assure that you are adequately preparing for our time together, you will take a quiz over the readings . You will complete these quizzes on Blackboard. They are due at noon on the due date (the due date being the day we begin covering the topic in class).

You may take each quiz up to **5 times** before the due date; your highest score will be the one that counts. Please note that you may get different questions each time you take the quiz. Do not treat the quiz like a slot machine, where you keep pulling the lever trying to hit the jackpot. Take it thoughtfully (use your book!) the first time, get a perfect score, and move on.

You cannot take quizzes late, period. No exceptions. Your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped from your final grade calculation, so if you miss one or two, it will not affect your grade.

**Clickers**

You must purchase a TurningPoint “clicker” and bring it to class. For each of our “lecture” days, I will ask a number of clicker questions during the lecture. The first question will be within the first five minutes of class, and the last one will be just as class is ending. You will get a point for responding (whether you are correct or incorrect). Once you hit 100 points, you have full credit. If you get fewer than 100 points during the semester, you will not have full credit for this component of your grade. There is no extra credit for going over 100 clicker points.

Once you purchase your clicker, you will need to register it through Blackboard. There is a tab in Blackboard for this purpose. Please watch the videos and follow the instructions carefully. Clicker questions will begin on January 23. If you have purchased your clicker and SUCCESSFULLY registered it by January 23, you will receive one point of extra credit on the first exam.

Note that while I do not know how many clicker points will be available right now, I guarantee that you will have the ability to earn at least 120 points simply by responding to all questions. If you miss a day of class, forget your clicker, have a technical problem, or for any other reason miss a few questions, it’s not a big deal. One hundred is “perfect” … you can miss a couple of days and still get there.

We will also hold several “clicker competitions” that will count for extra credit on each exam. If you are not present when class starts (so you can pick a team), if you do not have your clicker, or if your clicker simply isn’t working, you cannot receive the extra credit.

**Exams**

There are three exams in this class, two during regular class periods and one during the final exam period. The exams are not cumulative. They are entirely multiple choice.

Please note a few rules about exams:

1. You cannot wear hats, headphones, or sunglasses during the exam.
2. You may not listen to music, answer your phone, or text during the exam. If we spot a portable electronic device, it will be confiscated and you will be asked to leave.
3. You may not leave the classroom and then return while the exam is in session. Please bring tissues and/or cough drops with you, and take care of personal matters before the exam begins.
4. We will not hand out any exams after the first one has been returned. If you arrive after the first completed exam is turned in, you are out of luck.

If you miss the either or both of the in-class exams for any reason (good or bad), you will take the make-up exam on May 1 during our class period. Note that Exam 3 is on the Friday of exam week; make your travel arrangements accordingly.

**Personal Ideology Paper**

This is a short, five page paper, but it will require you to do a little research and think critically about the course material. Here’s what you do:

1. Go to http://www.idealog.org/ and carefully play Idealog. If you take the exercise seriously it should determine what political ideology best reflects your view of the appropriate role of government. You need to go through the steps until you are taking the quiz yourself and find yourself on the ideological spectrum.

2. After playing the game, you will write a five-page paper (no less than 4.5, no more than 6.5) that addresses these areas:

A. Explain why Idealog classified you as it did in terms of the three dimensions: freedom, order and equality. How close were you in guessing your ideological position?

B. Pick one of the following political issues and analyze it in terms of your identified ideological type: allowing concealed hand guns on campus, legalizing gay marriage, raising taxes on people making over $250,000 per year, or helping opposition groups overthrow non-democratic regimes. Remember, you’re not just explaining why your position is right; you’re explaining how your position relates to your beliefs about freedom, order, and equality.

C. Using the same political issue, contrast your political ideology with its "opposite" (for example, if you’re pro-choice, explain the pro-life position). Explain what in particular you find most objectionable in this ideology.

PLEASE NOTE: All pages of the paper should be double-spaced, numbered, printed in 12 point type with no greater than one inch margins on all four sides.

PLEASE NOTE: All papers must be uploaded to Turn-it-in via Blackboard. You should NOT turn in a paper copy of your paper, but you should keep the electronic file of your essay on hand.

**Extra Credit:**

There are very specific and limited opportunities for extra credit. No other extra credit will be offered, so take advantage of what is here:

(1) Registering your clicker, bringing it to class, and USING it on January 23 gives you one point of extra credit on your first exam.

(2) Participation in the “Current Events Jeopardy” clicker competition can earn you up to 2 points of extra credit on the first exam.

(3) Participation in the Ideology clicker competition can earn you up to 2 points of extra credit on the second exam.

(4) Participation in the Collective Action Game can earn you up to 3 points of extra credit on your third exam.

(5) Participation in the Red/Blue clicker competition can earn you up to 2 points of extra credit on the third exam.

**Some Important Information:**

Course drop information: see schedule at

<http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/scheduleclass.html>

Policies on academic dishonesty:

<http://www.vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>

**Department 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 (beginning of the second week of classes).

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**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.

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**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).

**Course Schedule**

**Date(s) Topic Reading/Due**

Jan 14 Introduction n/a

Jan 16-18 Government 101 n/a

**UNIT 1: What Government Does**

Jan 23-Feb 1 Money, Money, Money Chapter 16

(Economic Policy) Jan 23: EC for registering/

bringing clicker

Jan 23: Quiz due by noon

Feb 4-8 What Have You Done for Me Lately? Chapter 17

(Social Policy) Feb 4: Quiz due by noon

Feb 11-16 You Dropped a Bomb On Me Chapter 18

(Foreign Policy) Feb 11: Quiz due by noon

Feb 18 Current Events Competition (EC)

Feb 20 Exam Review

Feb 22 First Exam

**UNIT 2: Individuals and Ideas**

Feb 25-Mar 1 A New Attitude Chapter 6

(Public Opinion) Feb 25: Quiz due by noon

Feb 25: Play Idealog

Mar 4-Mar 8 What’s the Frequency, Kenneth? Chapter 7

(Media) Mar 4: Quiz due by noon

Mar 11-Mar 15 SPRING BREAK

Mar 18-Mar 22 Vote for Mr. Rhythm Chapter 8

(Participation and Voting) Mar 18: Quiz due by noon

Mar 25 Ideology Competition (EC) Personal Ideology Paper Due

(Uploaded Through BB)

Mar 27 Exam Review

Mar 29 Second Exam

Apr 1-Apr 5 The Strangest Party Chapter 9

(Political Parties) Apr 1: Quiz due by noon

Apr 8-Apr 12 Please, Please, Please Let Me Chapter 11

Get What I Want Apr 8: Quiz due by noon

(Interest Groups) Apr 8: Collective Action Game (EC)

Apr 15-Apr 24 One Cat, One Vote, One Beer Chapter 10

(Campaigns and Elections) Apr 15: Quiz due by noon

Apr 26 Red/Blue Competition (EC)

Apr 29 Exam Review

May 1 Make-Up Exams (for Exam 1 and Exam 2)

**Final Exam Friday, May 10, 1:30 – 3:30**