

U.S. Political Behavior and Policy

PSCI 2305 Sec 401

Summer 2026 (3W1)

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Chad M. King
Contact: Chad.King@unt.edu
Office Hours: Virtually (Monday 9-10 AM)

Teaching Assistants & Office Hours:

Students should contact their assigned TA. TA's are assigned by last name

Students with last names A-L

TA: Sezen Tunali
Email: SezenTunali@my.unt.edu
Office hours: Wednesdays 1-3 pm

Students with last names M-Z

TA: Afolabi Toyé
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Office hours: Tuesdays 11 AM – 1 PM

Course Description

“Explores the connection between the will of the people and the policies implemented by government by focusing on individual political values and attitudes, the mechanisms that connect individual beliefs to government action (parties, interest groups, the media, and elections), the US Constitution, and the outcomes of government policy.” (From the UNT Course Catalog)

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to

1. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in American and Texas politics.
2. Analyze national, state, and local election processes.
3. Analyze issues and policies in US and Texas politics.
4. Students will develop skills in the areas of critical thinking, social responsibility, personal responsibility, and communications.

Required Course Materials

Textbook information

This course requires the purchase of a single electronic webtext and workbook by Jocelyn Evans, Kristy Michaud and James Henson that is titled “UNT 2305 Department Bundle” on the bookstore’s website. The access code for the webtext is available for purchase from both the University bookstore and directly from the publisher. This code will be entered within the course’s Canvas shell to gain access to the webtext. Directions on how to do this will be shared within Canvas.

Without this code, you will be unable to complete 40% of the course work, in addition to being unable to access the readings. Soomo provides students with free trial access for a limited time. (You will need to check with the publisher for details about the length of the free trial, but I believe it is the first three chapters). It is your responsibility to purchase this textbook, and assignments will not be reopened or extended due to not purchasing the text. I do not have free codes or coupons to hand out.

I will regularly refer to chapters in the textbook as SWC (and then a number) in the remainder of the syllabus. For instance, SWC 4 is a reference to Soomo Webtext Chapter 4. In addition to the required webtext, the instructor may assign online articles or links to supplement course material.

Technology Requirements

This class will use Lockdown Browser during exams. Students will need:

- A laptop or desktop computer with Lockdown Browser installed (no phones, tablets or iPads).
- Note that Lockdown Browser only works with Windows Computers, Mac Computers, and Chromebook Computers. iPads and other devices will not work. More information about this is provided in the course under “Important Information for Lockdown Browser”

Without meeting these technology requirements, students will be unable to access course exams. An explanation of how to install and test these applications will be provided in Canvas. Students will also be able to access an empty practice exam so they can see how Lockdown Browser. Please review the technical information for Lockdown Browser in advance of the exam to avoid missing deadlines, using the following link: <https://aits.unt.edu/support/lockdown-browser.html>.

Technology Requirements for Courses with Digital Materials

This course has digital components. Specifically, a large number of assessments can only be completed using the webtext so you must purchase and connect it to our course in Canvas. This also means you must have regular access to a computing device and a high-speed Internet connection to access course content and assignments. If circumstances change in any way, I will inform you, in a timely manner, of additional technical needs. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at Learn Anywhere (<https://online.unt.edu/learn>).

Course Format

This course is an asynchronous, online course with specific deadlines that utilizes a webtext along with some supplementary readings coupled with online assignments and exams completed through Canvas. The dates and deadlines for all course activities are listed below. Students should regularly check the course page on Canvas for reminders and important announcements.

Course Assignments, Grades Weights, and Due Dates

Below you will find a list of categories of graded assessments, their respective quantities, and the percentages of the final course grade.

Exams (60% of final course average)

Students will take three exams, each worth 20% and combined worth 60% of the final course average. All exams will include material from the assigned readings and supplementary material. All exams will consist of fifty multiple choice questions and students will have 60 minutes to complete each one.

These exams are closed books and closed notes. Students must have Respondus Lockdown Browser installed and enabled to access the exams. Please review the information provided above in the “Technology Requirements for Courses with Digital Materials” sections for information on how to do this. A course module within Canvas will provide more information about these requirements and offer a way to test computing devices in advance of the actual exams to make sure they will work. Missed exams will not be reopened, but there is a section below that discusses the process for requesting makeup exams.

Exam Dates

Exam	Covers	Opens at 11:59 AM	Closes at 11:59 PM
Exam 1	SWC 1-5	5/15/26	5/17/26
Exam 2	SWC 6-12	5/22/26	5/24/26
Exam 3	SWC 13-18	5/27/26	5/29/26

Make-up exams: Make-up exams are granted exclusively at my discretion. Any request for a make-up exam must be submitted in writing and include documentation explaining why the absence from the exam was legitimate. Requests without documentation will be rejected. Requests must be received within two calendar days of the missed exam date unless a student is physically unable to submit such a request. Legitimate reasons for requesting a make-up could include illness severe enough to require professional medical treatment, death of an immediate family member, participation in official University activities, or legal obligations. However, because these exams are open for multiple days, your excuse would need to cover the entirety of the examination period. Missing an exam due to forgetting the availability dates, technological issues, or simply not taking it will not constitute a legitimate reason for requesting a makeup. Please note that the reasons listed above do not guarantee a make-up exam. I will consider requests based upon their individual merits.

Workbook assignments (25% of course average)

Students will complete eight Workbook Chapter assignments from the SWC's, collectively worth 25% of the final course average. These assignments contain multiple choice questions that are designed to assess student learning from the mandated student learning outcomes identified by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The two lowest assignment grades are dropped from the class average. The due dates for these assignments are listed below. Assignments are due at 11:59 PM on these dates. For the first two Units, there is a late submission opportunity, but it comes with a 50% penalty. For Unit 3, because the term is over, there is no late submission opportunity.

List of Workbook Assignments
Unit 1: Due 5/17/26 for Full Credit, 5/24/26 for Half Credit
Chapter 2 Workbook: Public Opinion
Chapter 5 Workbook: Political Participation
Unit 2: Due 5/24/26 for Full Credit, 5/29/26 for Half Credit
Chapter 7 Workbook: The Mass Media
Chapter 9 Workbook: Interest Groups
Chapter 12 Workbook: Political Parties
Unit 3: Due 5/29/26 for Full Credit, No Half Credit Option

Chapter 14 Workbook: Elections and Campaigns
Chapter 17 Workbook: Domestic Policy
Chapter 18 Workbook: Foreign Policy

Webtext assignments (15% of course average)

Students will complete eleven webtext assignments from the SWC's, collectively worth 15% of the final course average. The three lowest assignment grades are dropped from the class average. The due dates for these assignments are listed below. Assignments are due at 11:59 PM on these dates. For the first Units, there is a late submission opportunity, but it comes with a 50% penalty. For Unit 3, because the term is over, there is no late submission opportunity.

List of Webtext Assignments
Unit 1: Due 5/17/26 for Full Credit, 5/24/26 for Half Credit
Chapter 1 Public Opinion
Chapter 3 Voting and Political Participation
Chapter 4 Texas: Elections, Voting, and Campaigns
Unit 2: Due 5/24/26 for Full Credit, 5/29/26 for Half Credit
Chapter 6 The Media
Chapter 8 Interest Groups
Chapter 10 Political Parties
Chapter 11 Texas: Political Parties
Unit 3: Due 5/29/26 for Full Credit, No Half Credit Option
Chapter 13 Elections and Campaigns
Chapter 15 Public Policy
Chapter 16 Texas: Public Policy

Late Work

The late work dates for assignments are listed above. Exams cannot be taken late or reopened, however, students can request a makeup exam using the process described above.

Final Letter Grades

Final letter grades will be based on the following scale.

A = 89.5%-100%

B = 79.5%-89.4%

C = 69.5%-79.4%

D = 59.5%-69.4%

F = 59.4% or below

Course Policies and Procedures

Communications

The primary way to reach me is via email. However, your first point of contact should be your assigned Teaching Assistant (TA), who can help with both course content and Canvas-related questions.

- Response time:
 - Emails sent Monday–Friday during business hours will be answered within 24 hours.
 - Emails sent after 5 PM Friday through Monday morning will be answered within 48–72 hours.
- When emailing:
 - Include your course number and section number in the subject line.
 - Provide a brief description of your question or issue.
 - Use a courteous and professional tone.
 - Send from your official University email address. Emails from third-party providers will not be answered.

Academic Integrity Standards and Sanctions for violations

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>), academic misconduct “means the intentional or unintentional action by a student to engage in behavior in the academic setting including, but not limited to: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic misconduct, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage.” The policy goes on to state that “cheating” is defined as “the use of unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise, including but not limited to: 1. Use of any unauthorized assistance to take exams, tests, quizzes, or other assessments; 2. Use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; 3. Use, without permission, of tests, notes, or other academic materials belonging to instructors, staff members, or other students of the University; 4. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor; 5. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage on an academic assignment.” Students who engage in academic misconduct can face various consequences including warnings, grade penalties, or expulsion from UNT. It is important for you to review the policy to make sure you understand it and ask questions if you do not. For this class, acts of academic misconduct could include using unauthorized aids to complete assignments or exams, unauthorized use of Generative AI (see next section) to complete assignments or exams, working together with other students when not authorized to do so, though this list is not exhaustive. You are allowed to study with your classmates, share written notes that you have taken, but the remainder of the course work must be done by you and only you.

For the purposes of exams, use of any materials (notes, textbooks, the Internet, AI, phones/tablets/other devices, etc.) is prohibited. Lockdown Browser is intended to ensure that students are not using any of these prohibited resources during the examination periods.

Gen AI Use

Prohibited Use: In this course, students need to work on their own to engage the material, readings, and overall course content to hone mastery of the material, critical thinking skills, and communication skills. For this reason, use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools such as ChatGPT and similar tools is not permitted when it comes to completing coursework. Using GenAI to complete any coursework (exams, assignments) will be considered a violation of academic integrity rules and will be addressed according to the Academic Integrity policy discussed above. If you are unsure whether you can use something, ask the instructor.

Extra Credit

There is no extra credit planned for this course, so please do not ask (this is why I drop a specified number of low assignments).

Additional Important Course Policies

Attendance and Participation

Because this course is online, there is no attendance requirement. Assignments and exams have due dates that students must meet.

How to Succeed in this Course and at the University

Grades are based upon a mastery of the presented material, and you are responsible for your own success. I encourage you to find opportunities to learn with and through others. Explore Navigate360's Study Buddy (<https://navigate.unt.edu>) tool to join study groups. You can also use the coaching staff at the Learning Center.

You are also encouraged to meet with me or your TA during office hours if you are struggling. Simply put, I cannot help you if you do not seek out that help. One on one, assistance is usually the best way to overcome course-related challenges.

UNT offers a range of mental health and wellness services to help maintain balance and well-being. If you need these types of support to help your academic and personal success, then do so.

Mental health services: (<https://clear.unt.edu/student-support-services-policies>)

Success services: (<https://www.unt.edu/success>)

Wellness services: (<https://www.unt.edu/wellness>)

Syllabus change policy

This syllabus is a guide. Sometimes circumstances or events, or even class progress, require tweaks or modifications to a course syllabus during the semester. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in advance. No additional work will ever be assigned, nor will deadlines ever be moved to earlier than stated in the syllabus (unless an egregious error is found in the syllabus or Canvas).

ADA Statement

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. To request accommodations, students must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) by completing an application for services and providing documentation to verify a student's eligibility each semester. Once eligibility is confirmed, a student may request a letter of accommodation. ODA will then email faculty a letter of reasonable accommodation, initiating a private discussion about students' specific needs in the course.

Students can request accommodations at any time, but it is important to provide ODA notice to faculty as early as possible in the semester to avoid delays in implementation. Keep in mind that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for each semester and meet with each faculty member before accommodations can be implemented in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding their accommodations during office hours. Faculty have the authority to ask students to discuss the letter during their designated office hours to protect student privacy. For more information and to access resources that can support learning needs, refer to the Office of Disability Access website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>) or contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

The University of North Texas prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admissions process; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Creating an Inclusive Environment

Every student in this class has the right to learn and engage within an environment of respect and courtesy from others. All discussions should be civil and respectful. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are not acceptable. By working together, the class can ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all. If a student ever feels like this is not the case, please contact me to discuss this. Students are encouraged to review UNT's student code of conduct so that they start with the same baseline civility understanding (Code of Student Conduct) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>.)

Campus Closure

UNT is committed to the safety and security of the campus community and recognizes the value of maintaining university operations. However, in the event university operations are disrupted due to an emergency or other hazardous conditions threatening the safety, health, or welfare of the campus community, UNT may be required to cancel classes, suspend operations, or close the campus in its entirety. Students will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class.

Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experiences integral to the completion of this course. If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

(1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course. (2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose. Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

Recommended Reading Schedule

Below is the recommended schedule for the assigned readings for the Soomo Webtext Chapters. The abbreviation "SWC" followed by a number indicates a specific chapter(s) out of the Soomo Webtext that you need to read. The instructor may assign short articles or news stories at times via class announcements.

Dates	Topic	Reading Assignment
	Unit 1	
5/11	Public Opinion	SCW 1 & 2
5/12	Voting and Political Participation	SWC 3
5/13	Texas: Elections, Voting, and Campaigns	SCW 4 & 5
5/14	The Media	SCW 6
5/15	The Media	SCW 7
5/15-5/17	Exam 1	
	Unit 2	
5/18	Interest Groups	SWC 8
5/19	Interest Groups	SWC 9
5/20	Political Parties	SWC 10
5/21	Texas: Political Parties	SWC 11
5/22	Political Parties	SWC 12
5/22-5/24	Exam 2	
	Unit 3	
5/25	Elections and Campaigns	SWC 13 & 14
5/26	Public Policy, Texas: Public Policy	SWC 15 & 16
5/27	Domestic Policy, Foreign Policy	SWC 17 & 18
5/27-5/29	Exam 3	