

Instructor Dr. Elizabeth Oldmixon
Please contact via Canvas.
Office hours: Available by appointment via skype (eaoldmixon).

I won't be seeing you every week, but I am definitely available to you. Please contact me if you have substantive questions about the course material. I am available to meet with you (virtually) Monday through Friday between 11am and 4:00pm CST. Canvas email is an excellent way to set up a meeting or otherwise reach me. If you write me M-F during normal business hours, I should get back to you within 24 hours. If I don't, please feel free to send me a reminder!

Teaching Assistants If your last name begins with the letters A through L:
Ms. Gabriela Okundaye
Please contact via Canvas.
Office hours: Available by appointment via skype
(Gabriela.Okundaye@gmail.com).

If your last name begins with the letters M through Z:
Mr. Raúl Guerrero
Please contact via Canvas.
Office hours: Available by appointment via skype (raul.guerrero388).

If you'd like to meet with your TA, please email them to set up a meeting. Any problems you have with administration or procedural matters such as incorrect grades or problems with homework should be discussed first with your TA. If you need additional clarification, contact me after you have spoken to your TA to clarify the problem.

Course Description

This course explores the following topics: political culture, public opinion, participation, elections and voting, political parties, media, interest groups, and public policy. It partially fulfills legislative requirement "the university not award a baccalaureate degree or a lesser degree or academic certificate unless the student has completed 6 hours of credit in American Government." Please note that the instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the role of public opinion, interest groups, media, political parties, and elections in American politics.
- Identify and analyze political issues and policies.
- Demonstrate active participation in class.
- Describe how course topics affect personal and social responsibility.
- Think critically and communicate effectively about the course topics.

Required Materials

There is one required text for this course:

Central Ideas in American Government + 1050 Workbook, published by Soomo Publishing.

You can purchase a code for this text from the campus bookstore or you can purchase it directly from the publisher. If you are waiting for financial aid, please access the text through Canvas and choose the free trial of the text (three chapters). If you have an ongoing financial hardship, contact your instructor IMMEDIATELY. If you do not acquire access to the course materials in a timely fashion your grade may be irreparably harmed.

Technical Support

Neither the instructor nor the teaching assistants are technical support resources. If you experience any kind of technical problem, please contact:

Student Helpdesk:

Sage Hall 130

940-565-2324

helpdesk@unt.edu

If you are having difficulty with the Soomo product, please contact the publisher directly at <http://soomolearning.com/support>

Please note: If you experience a loss of internet connection, WIFI signal, or your browser freezes up during an assignment or exam, you must contact the UNT resources first, then send us an email with the problem you experienced and how you're addressing it. If you fail to complete an assignment or exam because of technical issues, there is nothing we can do if you do not tell us right away.

Technical Skill Requirements

While this is an online course, the necessary technical requirements are minimal. You will need to navigate our Canvas webpage, follow the link to our online textbook, complete multiple choice and short answer questions in the online textbook, follow links to videos and some external websites, upload/download Word and pdf documents, and post to/comment on discussion boards in Canvas. In addition, you will need Adobe Flash on your computer, and the ability to take screen shots (screen captures) of websites or your work that can be saved and uploaded to the course Canvas site.

Grading

All assignments and exams in the course will be assessed as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory, with the specifications required for Satisfactory articulated on each assignment. In general, Satisfactory should not be viewed as “minimally competent,” but rather as a mark of having achieved the assignment’s learning goals and specifications. An assignment meets the goals, or it does not—there is no gradation of assessment. The only letter grade that will be given in the course will be your final grade, and it will reflect the “bundles” of assignments and requirements you have satisfactorily accomplished in the class.

Built into this system is a good deal of choice as to how much you wish to learn and how hard you want to work to demonstrate and apply that learning. You might choose that passing the course with a C is sufficient for your goals—it is perfectly appropriate for you to make that choice, especially if it allows you to proactively allocate your time to other endeavors. If you strive to get an A in the course and maximize your learning, you should know that you are taking on that work and challenge yourself, and should make sure you are in a personal and academic situation to achieve that level of engagement.

Grading Bundles

A Bundle – Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of A. The work required to complete this bundle provides strong mastery of course material, and indicates that students can apply it to your own life and effectively communicate it in their own words.

- Satisfactorily complete 2 midterm exams OR the cumulative final
- Satisfactorily complete 7 Workbook Assignments
- Satisfactorily complete 7 “Get the Gist” Assignments
- Satisfactorily complete 6 discussion board posts
- Satisfactorily complete the Zip Code Quiz
- Satisfactorily complete the Completion Quiz

B Bundle – Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of B. The work required to complete this bundle provides good mastery of course material and indicates that students can apply it to your own life.

- Satisfactorily complete 2 midterm exams OR the cumulative final
- Satisfactorily complete 6 Workbook Assignments
- Satisfactorily complete 6 “Get the Gist” Assignments
- Satisfactorily complete 5 discussion board posts
- Satisfactorily complete the Zip Code Quiz
- Satisfactorily complete the Completion Quiz

C Bundle – Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of C. The work required to complete this bundle provides fair mastery of course material.

- Satisfactorily complete 2 midterm exams OR the cumulative final
- Satisfactorily complete 5 Workbook Assignments
- Satisfactorily complete 5 “Get the Gist” Assignments
- Satisfactorily complete the Zip Code Quiz

D Bundle – Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of D. The work required to complete this bundle provides minimal mastery of course material.

- Satisfactorily complete 1 midterm exam OR the cumulative final
- Satisfactorily complete 4 Workbook Assignments
- Satisfactorily complete 4 “Get the Gist” Assignments

Students failing to Satisfactorily complete at least the D Bundle will receive a final course grade of F.

Tokens & Flexibility

Every student starts the course with 3 virtual tokens that can be “exchanged” for some leniency or opportunities for revision. Contact your TA via Canvas to use a token. Using a token will allow a student to do the following:

- Resubmit a Workbook Assignment or Get the Gist Assignment deemed Unsatisfactory;
- Submit either of the above up to 48 hours late.
- For 2 tokens: Be awarded “satisfactory” credit for one skipped Workbook Assignment, Get the Gist Assignment, or Discussion Post.

Assignments and Examinations

Workbook Assignments

There are seven workbook chapters. Each chapter is organized around the four learning objectives adopted by Texas's Higher Education Coordinating Board. Workbook assignments are denoted WB on the schedule. Due dates are listed on the schedule. To be considered Satisfactory, Workbook Assignments must:

- Be completed by 11.59p on the due date;
- Earn 70% of the possible points.

Get the Gist

Every page of each textbook chapter includes a set of “Get the Gist” questions that are designed to help students check their comprehension of the page's content. Note: If you miss the Get the Gist questions, you can clear your answers and attempt them again! To be considered Satisfactory, Get the Gist Assignments must:

- Be completed by 11.59p on the due date;
- Earn 70% of the possible points.

Examinations

Three exams will be given—two midterm exams and a cumulative final exam. Exams will be comprised of objective questions—multiple choice, true/false, and matching, for example. In order to Satisfactorily complete an exam, students must:

- Earn 70% of the available points;
- Be completed on time.

No make-up exams will be given unless you have a university-excused absence or a family or medical emergency which is documented and verifiable. Students who will miss an exam due to travel with UNT teams or performance groups, or for observance of a religious holiday should make arrangements to take their exams prior to their absences.

Discussion Posts

Students will post in discussion boards with the same group of people all semester. For each of the seven topics, I will post a prompt, and students will respond. Satisfactory posts must:

- Be responsive to the prompt or a student response;
- Be written in at least four complete sentences;
- Be respectful;
- Be submitted on time;
- Include two of the following four elements:
 1. Compliment – I like that ...
 2. Comment – I agree with that, I disagree because ...
 3. Connection – I also thought ...
 4. Question – I wonder why ...

Course Schedule

	Due Date	Completed Module/Assignment
Week 1	July 9	Read the syllabus and Preliminary Material on Canvas
	July 10	Module 1: Public Opinion
	July 11	Module 2: Public Opinion
	July 12	Discussion #1
	July 13	Module 3: Media
Week 2	July 16	Module 4: Media Discussion #2
	July 17	Module 5: Voting and Political Participation
	July 18	Module 6: Voting and Political Participation
	July 19	Discussion #3
	July 20	Module 7: Political Parties
Week 3	July 23	Midterm Exam 1
	July 25	Module 8: Political Parties
	July 26	Discussion Forum #4
	July 27	Module 9: Interest Groups
Week 4	July 30	Module 10: Interest Groups
	July 31	Discussion Forum #5
	August 1	Module 11: Campaigns and Elections
	August 3	Module 12: Campaigns and Elections
Week 5	August 6	Module 13: Public Policy
	August 8	Module 14: Public Policy
	August 9	Midterm Exam 2
	August 10	Comprehensive Final Exam

Class Policies

For course drop information, see schedule at: essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/scheduleclass.html.

Americans with Disabilities Act 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.

Academic Misconduct: Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University Policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written

admonition to a grade of “F” in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. You will find the policy and procedures at: <http://facultysuccess.unt.edu/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: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment & Assault: UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. UNT’s Dean of Students’ website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their needs: http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0. Renee McNamara is UNT’s Student Advocate and she can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students’ office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

Emergency Notification & Procedures: UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at www.my.unt.edu. Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) ensuring you know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas, determining how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and identifying where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, your instructor will communicate with you through Blackboard regarding assignments, exams, field trips, and other items that may be impacted by the closure.

Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

Federal Regulation

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations website at <http://www.ecfr.gov/>. The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G).

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

University of North Texas Compliance

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 experience 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.