

PSCI 3100.001

Gun Politics and Policymaking

Spring 2022

Welcome to UNT!

As members of the UNT community, we have all made a commitment to be part of an institution that respects and values the identities of the students and employees with whom we interact. UNT does not tolerate identity-based discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. UNT's full Non-Discrimination Policy can be found in the UNT Policies section of the syllabus.

Please let me or another professor know if you are having any problems with your safety, well-being, or access to educational or other resources during the pandemic, or if you know of another student who is having trouble. If you are in doubt about whether you should ask for help, please contact me. My colleagues and I care about your well-being and success and we are here to help you.

Instructor Contact

Dr. Elizabeth Oldmixon

Pronouns: she/her

Office Location: Wooten Hall 139

Office Hours: Mondays 2:00PM-5:00PM and by appointment. I will hold office hours in my office but will be available by [Zoom](https://unt.zoom.us/j/83658866899) (<https://unt.zoom.us/j/83658866899>) as well. Write me to set up an appointment if you cannot make my office hours.

Communication Expectations: I will communicate with you using the Canvas announcement tool, so be sure you are receiving notifications from Canvas. Please contact me if you have questions about the course material. 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!

Course Information

Location: BLB 245

Time: 12.30-1.50p

Zoom: Class sessions will be available via Zoom. I encourage you to access the class remotely via [Zoom](https://unt.zoom.us/j/84769631287) (<https://unt.zoom.us/j/84769631287>) if you are not feeling well. You must log in using your UNT account to access the class via Zoom.

Website: Most material, assignments, and communications are available through the Canvas [course page website](https://unt.instructure.com/courses/64873) (<https://unt.instructure.com/courses/64873>).

Course Description

We start with the premise that gun violence in the United States constitutes a policy problem and consider evidence supporting and undermining that proposition. From there we investigate and craft gun policy, paying special attention to the institutional, cultural, and mass-level factors that have shaped policy thus far.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. evaluate empirical data;
2. identify and assess policy responses to pressing issues;
3. explain the institutional, cultural, and mass-level factors that shape policymaking; and
4. think critically and communicate effectively about the course topics.

Materials

Spitzer, Robert. J. 2020. *The Politics of Gun Control*, 8th edition. New York, NY: Routledge. (Hereafter, Spitzer)

Additional materials are available via Canvas.

Syllabus Revisions

I reserve the right to revise the syllabus as necessary. Of course, if this happens, it will be clearly communicated to you as soon as possible via Canvas or UNT email.

Course Requirements

Assignment (All due dates and reading assignment links are listed in Canvas.)	Points Possible
iClicker Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none">iClicker questions will be asked on most class days. Students receive one point for each class session in which they answer at least half of the questions.	50 points
Reading Quizzes <ul style="list-style-type: none">Given via Canvas for each course unit10 points each, two lowest scores are dropped	70 points
Discussion Boards <ul style="list-style-type: none">4 Discussion Board Forums, 25 points eachPosts 2, 3, and 4 may be replaced by a replacement assignment - attendance at a range field trip and a short reflection essay	80 points
White Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none">A report written to provide guidance to someone in a position of authority that identifies a solution to some aspect of gun violence	100 points
Examinations <ul style="list-style-type: none">2 examinations, 100 points each, March 9, May 4Optional final to replace an exam score, cumulative	200 points
Total Points Possible	500 points

Grading

Final grades are based on the number of points accrued by each student and assigned according to the following schedule. Traditional rules of rounding apply.

A = 450-500

B = 400-449

C = 350-399

D = 300-349

F = 0-299

Topics and Readings

Unit 1: Does the United States Have A Gun Problem?

Weeks 1 and 2 (January 18-28)

- Spitzer, Chapter 1
- PBS Frontline, "After Newtown: Guns in America"
- Margaret Hartmann, "What Makes a Gun an Assault Weapon?" *Intelligencer*

- German Lopez, “America’s Gun Problem, explained”
- Christopher Ingraham, “New evidence confirms what gun rights advocates have said for a long time about crime,” *Washington Post*
- Looking at the data: familiarize yourself with these sources
 - Ben Casselman et al., “Gun Deaths in America,” *FiveThirtyEight*
 - Kim Parker et al., “The Demographics of Gun Ownership,” *Pew Research Center*
 - Small Arms Survey data on Global Firearms Holding and Global Violent Deaths
 - EveryTown, EverySTAT

Unit 2: Cultural and Legal Developments

Week 3 (January 31-February 4)

- Spitzer, Chapter 2
- National Constitution Center, *The Second Amendment (Common Interpretation and Matter of Debate)*
- Alia E. Dastagir, “The Gun Debate Isn’t about What You Think,” *USA Today*
- State Firearms Laws
- Sarah Grey, “Here’s a Timeline of Major Gun Control Laws in America,” *Time*

Unit 3: Violence and Armed Self-Defense

Weeks 4 and 5 (February 7-18)

- Spritzer, Chapter 3
- Jennifer Carlson, “From Gun Politics to Self-Defense Politics: A Feminist Critique of the Great Gun Debate,” *Violence Against Women*
- Dave Grossman, “On Sheep, Wolves, and Sheepdogs”
- Breanna Edwards, “Not Without a Fight: Black Women Are Taking Up Arms to Protect Themselves,” *The Root*
- David French, “What Critics Don’t Understand about Gun Culture,” *The Atlantic*
- Michael Hill, “In Response to Far Right, LGBTQ Gun Group Hits Firing Line,” *Associated Press*
- Katie McDonough, “‘Where There Are More Guns, More Women Die’: A Harvard Public Health Expert Breaks Down the Data on Firearms and Women’s Safety,” interview with Deborah Azrael, *Salon*

Unit 4: Insurrection and the Public Square

Weeks 6 and 7 (February 21-March 4)

- Watch: *A Good Day to Die*
- Joelle Polesky, “The Rise of Private Militia: A First and Second Amendment Analysis of the Right to Organize and to Train,” pp. 1593-1605
- Matt Valentine, “Tallying the Costs of Open Carry”
- Eliga Gould, “Why the Second Amendment Protects A ‘Well-Regulated Militia’ but Not a Private Citizen Militia,” *The Conversation*
- Timothy Hemmis, “The Founders Drew a Line between Peaceful Protest and Armed Insurrection,” *Washington Post*
- Reese Oxner, “Oath Keepers Founder Arrested in Texas for Role in Jan. 6 Insurrection, Charged with Sedition,” *Texas Tribune*

Unit 5: Policing and Race

Weeks 8 and 10 (March 7-11, March 21-25; No class March 9)

- Farris and Holman, “I Fought the (Gun) Laws: Why Sheriffs Oppose Gun Control,” *APSA*

- Saul Cornell and Eric M. Ruben, “The Slave-State Origins of Moderns Gun Rights,” The Atlantic
- Mississippi Black Codes (1865), “Certain Offences of Freedmen”
- Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet”
- German Lopez, “Police Shootings Are Also Part of America’s Gun Problem,” Vox
- David A. Graham, “Do African Americans Have a Right to Bear Arms?” The Atlantic
- Ron Avery, “Police Gun Control Survey: Are Legally Armed Citizens the Best Solution to Gun Violence?” Police1

Unit 6: Organized Interests and Voter Preferences

Week 11 (March 28-April 1)

- Spitzer, Chapter 4
- PBS Frontline, “NRA Under Fire”
- Gary Kleck et al., “Why Do People Support Gun Control? Alternative Explanations of Support for Handgun Bans,” Journal of Criminal Justice
- Nimal Eames-Scott, “A New Generation Calls for Gun Control,” The New Yorker
- Katherine Schaffer, “Key Facts about Americans and Guns,” Pew Research Center
-

Unit 7: The Constraints and Parameters of Policymaking

Weeks 12 and 13 (April 4-15)

- Spritzer, Chapter 5
- Eric Fleeger et al., “Firearms Legislation and Firearm-Related Fatalities,” JAMA Internal Medicine
- Donald Haider-Markel and Mark Joslyn, “Gun Policy, Opinion, Tragedy, and Blame Attribution: The Conditional Influence of Issue Frames,” Journal of Politics

Unit 8: Guns on Campus and School Shootings

Week 14 (April 18-22)

- Matthew Watkins, “With Texas Now a Campus Carry State, Here’s What You Need to Know,” Texas Tribune
- John Woodrow Cox et al., “More than 278,000 Students Have Experiences Gun Violence at School since Columbine,” Washington Post
- Ben Wofford, “How a group of students teamed up with the gun lobby to get firearms in the classroom at over 200 colleges - and counting,” Rolling Stone
- “Surviving an Active Shooter,” Ohio State University

Unit 9: The Future Gun Policymaking

Weeks 15 and 16 (April 25-May 5; No class May 4)

- Spitzer, Chapter 6
- Tim Kreiger, “Go Ahead, Millennials, Destroy Us,” New York Times
- Sarah Binder, “No, Congress won’t pass gun background checks ‘like we’ve never had before.’ Here’s why,” Washington Post
- Ian Millhiser, “The One Good Thing That Could Come from Gavin Newsom Trolling the Supreme Court,” Vox

Course Policies

Face Coverings

UNT encourages everyone to wear a face covering when indoors, regardless of vaccination status, to protect yourself and others from COVID infection, as recommended by current CDC guidelines. Face covering guidelines could change based on community health conditions.

Attendance

My priority in teaching this class is providing you with the best possible educational experience while also protecting our well-being. Attendance is encouraged, of course, but it is not a component of your grade. If you show symptoms of illness or suspect that you have been exposed to COVID-19, please do not come to the in-person lecture or my in-person office hours. The newest variant of COVID-19 is highly contagious, even among asymptomatic people. Please err on the side of caution when deciding whether to attend class. If you think that you could be sick, you should assume that you are sick and stay home and use the recorded video lectures to cover the course material.

Late Work

If you need an extension on an assignment, please reach out to me ahead of time for an extension. Late assignments/exams will receive no credit without a University-approved excuse or an extension from your instructor. Of course, if you are having an unexpected emergency that can be verified with a documentation or by someone with the Dean of Students Office, that's another story. In that case, contact me or have somebody with the Dean of Students Office email me directly. If you are having computer or technology issues, you must call the Helpdesk before reaching out to me. The Helpdesk will issue a "remedy ticket number." Always have the Helpdesk fill out a remedy ticket and provide that information to me if technological problems make it difficult to hand something in on time. I will only consider accepting late assignments due to technological issues if I can verify the legitimacy of the issue. See the section called "Technical Assistance" for the Helpdesk's contact information.

Examinations

Each examination will be open book and open note, but students must complete each examination independently. Respondus Lockdown browser is NOT required. The final examination is optional. This will serve as the makeup exam for examinations 1 and 2. The optional final may also be taken to replace a low score on examinations 1 and 2.

Assignment Policy

All due dates are listed on Canvas. All assignments will be available and submitted through Canvas. Discussion Board posts may be analyzed using Turnitin. Extra credit will not be provided to students on an individual basis. There may, however, be extra credit opportunities available for all students. These will be announced on Canvas, should they occur.

UNT is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, I will extend the time windows and provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and contact the UNT Student Help Desk (helpdesk@unt.edu or 940.565.2324) and obtain a ticket number. The instructor and the UNT Student Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

UNT Policies

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Policy

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of 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 accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the [ODA website](https://disability.unt.edu/) (<https://disability.unt.edu/>).

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) 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 admission processes; 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.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

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 Dean of Students 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. Visit UNT's [Code of Student Conduct](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail [Eagle Connect](https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect) (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website](http://spot.unt.edu/) (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

Survivor Advocacy

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-5652648. 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.

Student Verification

UNT takes measures to protect the integrity of educational credentials awarded to students enrolled in distance education courses by verifying student identity, protecting student privacy, and notifying students of any special meeting times/locations or additional charges associated with student identity verification in distance education courses.

Use of Student Work

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) they create within a class, and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student's permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.
- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.
- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student's written permission.

Academic Support & Student Services

Student Support Services

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry)
- [Individual Counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling)

Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

- [UNT Records](#)
- [UNT ID Card](#)
- [UNT Email Address](#)
- [Legal Name](#)

**UNT EUIDs cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.*

Pronouns

Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don't assume someone's name, we should also ask and not assume someone's pronouns. You can [add your pronouns to your Canvas account](#) so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:

- [What are pronouns and why are they important?](#)
- [How do I use pronouns?](#)
- [How do I share my pronouns?](#)
- [How do I ask for another person's pronouns?](#)
- [How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?](#)

Additional Student Support Services

- [Registrar](https://registrar.unt.edu) (https://registrar.unt.edu)
- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (https://financialaid.unt.edu/)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)
- [Multicultural Center](https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center) (https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)

- [Pride Alliance](https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance) (<https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance>)
- [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>)

Academic Support Services

- [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources>)
- [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (<https://success.unt.edu/asc>)
- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (<https://library.unt.edu/>)
- [Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)