

PSCI 2306.005, Spring 2026
Tuesday: 6:30 pm - 9:20 pm
WH 112

Host: Eddie L. Meaders, J.D./M.A.

Office: WH 141
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***Note to Students:** Due to FERPA regulations, I cannot send academic information to non-UNT email addresses. Please contact me via your UNT email address only.

Office Hours:

Walk In, WH 141

Mondays: 10:30 am - 12:00 pm; 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Wednesdays: 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Thursday Afternoon Zooms

1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
<https://unt.zoom.us/j/84748691678>

If the posted hours are not good, let me know and we will set something else up.

Supplemental instructor:

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 been successful with 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. On average, students who attend supplemental instruction once a week earn a significantly higher course grade than those who do not attend. 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/si>

Supplemental Instructor:

Email:
Review times: TBA

Required Texts:

#1, UNT 2306 Workbook by matthew eshbaugh-soha et al. Edition: eighth
Publisher: SOOMO CC

ISBN 13: 8220144129913

2, Collier, Ken, Steven Galatas, Julie Harrelson-Stephens, Matthew Newton. Lone Star Politics, 9th Edition. CQ Press, 2024-12-26. VitalBook file.

3, Barbour, Christine, Gerald Wright. Keeping the Republic, 11th Edition. CQ Press, 2025-03-VitalBook file.

Your book is your friend. Buy a copy and read it! Thoroughly reading the assigned chapters is key for success on exams!

Course Description:

As you begin this course, you should keep two things in mind:

(1) Government matters to you. Regardless of your age, citizenship, race, religion, or gender, you value something in this world (your family, your education, your job, your health, faith ... whatever!). Chances are particularly good that government policy affects those things you value in some way. You may be taking this class because it is required, but the material we cover has real-world implications for your life and mastering this material can give you the tools to protect the things you value.

(2) Rules matter. Institutional structure and the rules by which they operate shape the outcomes of the governmental process. This class will introduce you to the institutions of government, the logic behind their structure and operation, and the rules that constrain their behavior (with particular emphasis on the U.S. Constitution).

Course Objectives:

Students who master the content of this course will be able to:

- ❖ Identify some of the questions to ask when examining the historical narrative of America's founding.
- ❖ Explain the competing narratives under the Articles of Confederation.
- ❖ Identify the competing narratives, goals, and compromises that shaped the Constitution.
- ❖ Explain the system of separation of powers, checks, and balances.
- ❖ Summarize the debate over ratification of the Constitution.
- ❖ Describe the political culture of Texas and its impact on Texas government.
- ❖ Discuss how the population of Texas has changed and continues to change.
- ❖ Discuss how Texas's identity is shaped by immigration.

- ❖ Explain what is meant when we say that the Constitution is the official rule book of the United States.
- ❖ Identify the ways in which federalism divides power between national and state governments.
- ❖ Demonstrate how the flexibility built into the Constitution has allowed it to change with the times.
- ❖ Describe the ways in which the national government can influence the states.
- ❖ Explain how Texas's current constitution reflects the preferences of Texans today.

- ❖ Evaluate problems with the current Texas Constitution.
- ❖ Analyze the extent to which Texas's current constitution is consistent with Texan values.
- Explain why Americans have a love-hate relationship with Congress.
- Describe the tensions between local representation and national lawmaking.
- Explain how checks and balances work between Congress and the executive and judicial branches.
- Identify the ways that politics influences how congressional districts are defined and who runs for Congress.
- Summarize the central role that the parties play in Congress.
- Describe the process of congressional policymaking and its effect on citizens' views of Congress.
- Describe the structure and function of the Texas Legislature.
- Describe the qualifications and length of terms for members of the Texas Legislature.
- Explain trends in the demographic makeup of the Texas Legislature.
- Discuss how legislative districts are drawn and how the Texas Legislature is elected.
- Describe the leadership roles in Texas's legislative organization.
- Explain the process for a bill becoming law in the Texas Legislature.
- Explain the narrative of the president as the most powerful person in the world.
- Explain what the president's job entails.
- Compare the modern presidency with the founders' expectations for a limited executive.
- Identify strategies and tools that presidents employ to overcome the constitutional limitations of the office.
- Describe the organization and functions of the executive office.
- Evaluate the importance of leadership style and image as they relate to presidential power.
- Describe how the role of the governor evolved in Texas.
- Identify the formal powers of the Texas governor and how those powers have changed since 1876.
- Discuss the ways the governor can affect the legislature's agenda.
- Assess who wins and who loses under an increasingly stronger Texas executive.
- Explain the structure of the Texas plural executive and identify the roles of key members.
- Identify the roles of Texas boards and commissions.
- Explain why bureaucracies can be so important and so frustrating at the same time.
- Explain the measures in place for bureaucratic accountability.
- Describe how the characteristics and features of bureaucracy influence decision making.
- Outline the organization and roles of the federal bureaucracy.
- Describe power struggles between political appointees and professional bureaucrats.
- Outline the relationships between the federal agencies and the three branches of the federal government and between the bureaucracy and the public.
- ✓ Explain why laws are so important in any political society, but especially in a democracy.
- ✓ Describe the role that law plays in a democratic society.
- ✓ Discuss the role of Congress and the Constitution in establishing the judiciary.
- ✓ Explain how federalism plays out in the dual court system.
- ✓ Outline the institutional rules and political influences that shape the Supreme Court and the decisions it makes.

- ✓ Describe the relationship between citizens and the courts in America.
- ✓ Identify the different types of jurisdiction.
- ✓ Describe the different types of local courts.
- ✓ Explain how state-level courts differ from courts at the local level.
- ✓ Assess how Texas selects its judges.
- ✓ Analyze problems with the Texas judiciary.
- ✓ Define rights and liberties and their role in a democratic society.
- ✓ Discuss the ways that rights in a democracy can sometimes conflict.
- ✓ Explain how the Bill of Rights relates to the federal government and to the states.
- ✓ Describe how the First Amendment protects both church and state, as well as individuals' religious freedom.
- ✓ Explain the value of freedom of expression and how its protections have been tested.
- ✓ Give examples of different interpretations of the Second Amendment's meaning.
- ✓ Describe the protections afforded by criminal defendants under the Constitution.
- ✓ Discuss the extent of an individual's right to privacy.
- ✓ Compare the idea of civil rights with civil obligations.
- ✓ Discuss how inequality continues to be reflected in economic and social statistics, even though legal discrimination ended years ago.
- ✓ Outline the criteria used by the courts to determine when the law can treat people differently.
- ✓ Explain the different paths to equality taken by racial and ethnic groups.
- ✓ Recognize examples of marginalized groups that face discrimination.
- ✓ Explain how pluralism helped to realize the promise of civil rights.
- ✓ Explain the importance of civil liberties and rights in Texas's political system.
- ✓ Determine who wins and who loses in Texas's definition of its residents' civil liberties and rights.

Class Procedure: This class will be conducted in a lecture/discussion format. You are encouraged to actively participate in class discussions. **READ THE ASSIGNED CHAPTERS PRIOR TO CLASS!** Your views, opinions, and questions are valued. Politics these days are controversial, but please keep class comments on point as they pertain to the lecture material. Still, I like to know what you think about things. Warm bodies only fill up space and are not exciting unless you say something.

Course Expectations: A university course is a joint endeavor between instructor and students. We all have an important part to play.

As the instructor, I am responsible for

- providing course materials that will give you the opportunity to achieve our course objectives and providing you with the tools to learn,
- providing timely feedback on your work and explaining concerns you may have with grading,
- and being fair in my implementation of rules and policies in the course.

As a student, you are responsible for

- reading and completing all requirements of the course in a timely manner,
- working to remain attentive and engaged in the course and interact with your fellow students,
- regularly monitoring your grades on assignments,
- and assisting in maintaining a positive learning environment for everyone.

Online Assessment components:

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MONITOR ASSIGNMENT STATUS (POSTINGS & DUE DATES) REGULARLY IN THE SYLLABUS AND CANVAS COURSE CALENDAR!

You will have several weeks to get your assignments completed. Get your assignments completed early. Bad things happen when you put things off!

- ***Keeping the Republic* Assignments (Sage Vantage) (10% of your grade):** **SAGE Vantage** is an intuitive digital platform that blends *Keeping the Republic* content with auto-graded assignments, all carefully designed to initiate student engagement and drive critical thinking. **These assignments will be completed through Canvas.**
- ***Lone Star Politics: Tradition and Transformation in Texas* (SAGE Vantage) (10% of your grade).** This set of assignments will not be available on Canvas! Canvas does not allow me to utilize two texts from one publisher. Access to these assignments will be available at the following link: <https://vantage.sagepub.com/MEADER-2444/JoinCourse>. The course ID is MEADER-2444.
- **Online Workbook (20% of your grade):** Each workbook chapter is organized around the four learning objectives adopted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (critical thinking, communication, personal responsibility, and social responsibility). Each chapter includes four essays that expound upon course concepts and give students an opportunity to apply those concepts. These multiple-choice questions can also be answered repeatedly until you get them all correct. So, aim to get the highest score you can! 100% correct should be your goal.

In Class Assessment:

- **Examinations (60% of your grade):** There will be THREE (3) of them. Exams, which are closed book/notes, consist of multiple choice and true-false questions. Exams are based on your textbook chapter readings and class lectures. Notify the instructor in advance if you cannot take the exam on the designated day. If you miss an exam, contact the instructor within 72 hours of the exam date so we can schedule makeup. Failure to do this means you will not be allowed to take a makeup.
 - The final is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 6th, at 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm, LIFE A117.** **Please do not ask to take the final early.** The final only covers Unit 3 material.

- If there is a grading question about any assignment or exam, please bring this to the attention of the instructor **NO LATER THAN 72** hours after the grade is posted in Canvas. Failure to do so means your right to appeal the grade assigned is waived. **Do not wait until the end of the term to question a score from earlier in the term!**

A range = 89.5-100, B range = 79.5-89.4, C range = 69.5-79.4, D range = 59.5 - 69.4

Your final grade is the culmination of work that you have done over the course of the semester. **It is not the product of bargaining for academic mercy at the end of the term.** Please do not ask for individual extra credit. Moreover, I cannot make an exception for one student without making it for all students, and that is never practical or fair. 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. Maximize your learning with our coaching staff at the Learning Center. Focus on areas where you are struggling in this course by attending scheduled study group sessions with me the week before each exam.

Attendance: ATTEND CLASS! Why pay for all this tuition if you are not going to come to class? I always take about a 15-minute break around 8:00 pm when I teach a night class. I will not be taking roll.

Specifically, for TAMS students: If you are absent for any reason, you are required to file an absence report with the TAMS Academic Office. In addition, as your professor, I will send periodic attendance reports to the TAMS Academic Office.

Technical Support: Your instructor is not wise in the ways of technical support resources. If you experience any kind of technical problem, please contact:

Student Helpdesk:
UNT Helpdesk
Sage Hall 330
940-565-2324

<https://aits.unt.edu/support>
helpdesk@unt.edu

Spring 2026 Helpdesk Hours
Walk-in Hours:
Monday-Friday: 8 a.m.- 5 p.m. (CST)

For additional support, visit **Canvas Technical Help**
(<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328>)

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

To report an issue with SAGE Vantage, get Tech Support Help, and view

Resources, visit <https://sagevantage.softwareassist.com>; or call (800) 818-7243 ext. 7080

Please note: If you experience a loss of internet connection, WIFI signal, or your browser freezes up on you during an assignment, you must contact the UNT resources first, then send me an email with the problem you experienced and how you are addressing it. In most cases, though, failing to complete an assignment or exam because of technical issues will not be reason enough to dismiss the grade or allow a retake. Remember, turn your assignments in early!

SB 17 Statement: Texas Senate Bill 17, the recent law that prohibits certain diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas, does not affect academic course instruction, including the content, teaching, or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. SB 17 does not alter existing expectations and academic freedom for teaching and related classroom discussion, including regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion topics.

UNT Academic Integrity Policy: 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. Using GenAI tools without attribution or relying on them to complete assignments violates academic integrity and will be addressed according to our policy. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Political Science Department Policy on Cheating & Plagiarism: Perish the thought and do not give in to temptation and the easy way! The Political Science Department adheres to and enforces UNT's policy on academic integrity. Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be managed 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>. Review the policy!

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.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault: UNT has procedures in place that aim to be aware of the needs of those who make an institutional report of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Procedures include informing individuals about their right to file criminal charges as well as the availability of counseling, health, mental health, victim advocacy, legal assistance, visa and immigration assistance and other services on and/or off campus, as well as additional remedies to prevent contact between a complainant and a respondent, such as housing, academic, transportation and working accommodations, if reasonably available. The University will make such accommodations, if the victim requests them and if they are available, regardless of whether the complainant chooses to report the crime to the UNT police department or local law enforcement.

Anyone can report prohibited conduct by notifying the [Dean of Students Office](mailto:940.565.2648) (940.565.2648), [the Title IX Coordinator](mailto:940.565.2759) (940.565.2759) or the UNT Police Department 940.565.3000. The online reporting form is found at <http://report.unt.edu>.

Student Success: If you are struggling with the class, feel free to discuss course issues either with the instructor or the TA's during office hours. Additional resources may be found at:

- UNT Learning Center: <http://learningcenter.unt.edu/home> or <http://success.unt.edu>

Disabled Students: The University of North Texas 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 you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs on a course. You 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 Office of Disability Accommodation website at: <https://disability.unt.edu/> You may also contact them by phone at (940) 565 - 4323.

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 Canvas regarding assignments, exams, field trips, and other items that may be impacted by the closure.

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)

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 based on 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.

Additional Student Support Services:

- [Registrar](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration) (https://registrar.unt.edu/registration)
- [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)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- [Food Pantry | University of North Texas](#)

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/)

Final Exam: The final is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 6th, 2025, from 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm, WH 112.** Please do not ask to take the final early. The final covers Unit 3 material only.

Schedule Changes: I reserve the right to change any of the exam times, quizzes, or assignments by providing you with at least 48-hour notice of such changes. You are responsible for any changes that may occur during the semester. Any changes will be announced at the beginning of each class and posted in Canvas.

Coming Attractions
(More or less)

Unit 1

All Assignments are Due on February 17th at 6:30 pm

- Week 1: January 13th: Texas Today, LSP Chapter 1, pp. 21-33.
- Week 2: January 20st: the Politics of the American Founding, KTR Chapter 2.
- Week 3 January 27th: Texas Constitutions, LSP Chapter 2.
- Week 4 February 3rd: Federalism, KTR Chapter 3
- Week 5 February 10th: Federalism continued
- Week 6 February 17th: **Exam 1 (first hour)**

Unit 2

All Unit Assignments are Due on March 31st at 6:30 pm

- February 17th: Congress; KTR, Chapter 6.
- Week 7 February 24th: Congress continued; the Texas Legislature, LSP Chapter 3
- Week 8 March 3rd: The Presidency & Texas Governors, KTR Chapter 7, LSP Chapter 4
- Week 9 March 10th: **Spring Break, No Class**
- Week 10 March 17th: The Presidency & Texas Governors continued; The Plural Executive and Bureaucracy in Texas, LSP Chapter 5
- Week 11 March 24th: The Bureaucracy, KTR, Chapter 8.
- Week 12 March 31st: **Exam 2 (First hour).**

Unit 3

All Unit Assignment are Due on May 5th at 6:30 p.m.

- March 31st: Federal Courts, KTR Chapter 9
- Week 13 April 7th: Federal courts continued; Texas Courts, LSP Chapter 9.

- Week 14 April 14th: Texas Courts continued; Fundamental American Liberties, KTR, Chapter 4; Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in Texas, LSP Chapter 7
- Week 15 April 21st: Fundamental American Liberties continued. The Struggle for Equal Rights, KTR, Chapter 5
- Week 16: April 28th: The Struggle for Equal Rights continued
- Week 17: **May 5th: Final Exam, 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm, WH 112.**The final exam only covers material from Unit 3.