U.S. Political Behavior

PSCI 2305 – Fall 2025

**Instructor:** Dr. Michael Greig

**Contact:** Canvas “inbox” only, please. Just click the inbox link on the left side of the screen on Canvas

Messages received M – Th will receive a response within 24 hours.

Messages received F – Sunday may take additional time.

**Office Hours:** In-person: Monday 12-2 & by appointment, 158 Wooten Hall

Remote (via Zoom) Wednesday 11-1 & by appointment

# Course Summary and Objectives:

This is a course about action. In the political science world, we call it “political behavior”: how the behavior (actions) of individuals and groups come together to form the political landscape. It is also a course about power. It is a course about the power that forces such as the media and interest groups hold over you. But it is also about your power—and the power of people like you—to create the political policies you want to see.

Many students say that politics doesn’t matter to them. But think about the things that do matter to you. Maybe that is school and the federal student loans that allow you to attend. Maybe that is immigration and the effect that has on your family. Maybe that is whether you will have a job when you graduate or whether you will be able to support your family with the money you make from that job. All of those things are affected by politics. If you care about those things, you care about politics, and you need to understand how you and other institutions come together to create those policies.

Students who complete this course will be able to

* explain the development and measurement of individual values, attitudes, and opinions about politics;
* interpret the role of individuals in the political process;
* explain the roles of linkage institutions (parties, interest groups, and media) in connecting individuals to institutions of government;
* demonstrate the relationship between electoral rules/institutions and outcomes; and
* explain the connection between the political process and the policies generated by that process.

# Required Course Materials:

The text required for this course is an electronic text:

*UNT 2305 Basic Bundle*, Soomo Publishing, ISBN 13: 978-1-954890-89-3.

There are two ways to purchase this textbook:

1. You can purchase an access code from the UNT Bookstore (either in person or via mail). The cost for purchase via the UNT Bookstore is $98.21.
2. You can purchase the textbook directly from the publisher via a link in our Canvas shell. The cost for purchase via Soomo Publishing is $68.75.

# Class Format:

This course is 100% online. There are no required in-person class meetings or other synchronous events. The course is not self-paced, however; course material is broken into 1-week modules, and work for each module must be completed during the specific calendar week the module is open.

Every week, you will do the following:

1. Watch/listen/read course content that has been prepared for the course.  These are 1 - 2 short lectures that last anywhere from 10 - 20 minutes each.  TOTAL ESTIMATED TIME:  1 hour
2. Read a chapter of our webtext and answer the questions embedded in that chapter.  TOTAL ESTIMATED TIME:  1 hour
3. Consolidate, synthesize, and rewrite your notes on this content.  TOTAL ESTIMATED TIME:  1 hour
4. Review your notes and complete the weekly quiz.  TOTAL ESTIMATED TIME:  1 hour

That totals approximately 4 hours of work per week. Weeks in which an Applications Assignment are due will take more time, although you can space work out on these assignments, if you wish. If you know you read more slowly, or if you need to listen to lecture content more than once in order to take good notes, or if you need extra time to formulate ideas before you craft a discussion board post, allow yourself an extra hour per week.

# Grading:

Your grade will be based on the following components:

Webtext Chapters (15) 30%

Applications Assignments (4) 30%

Quizzes (15) 30%

Final Exam 10%

100% total

Grades will be based on the usual scale (90% + = A, 80% + = B, 70% + = C, 60% + = D, below 60% = F). I use standard mathematical rounding with respect to your final point total, but will not otherwise manipulate grades. There is no extra credit in this class.

# Course Assignments

## Webtext Chapters

Your textbook (webtext) has questions embedded within the chapters. Most of these questions can be repeated if you get them wrong the first time; the goal is for you to learn from these assignments, so if you miss a question, think about ***why*** you missed it and try again. Note, however, that some questions can only be answered once. Please pay attention as you complete the chapters.

There are 15 webtext chapters which are collectively worth 30% of your grade. **Important note: the webtext assignments consist of the questions embedded in the assignment webtext chapters. You must purchase the webtext in order to be able to access and complete these assignments. Because these assignments are worth 30% of your course grade, it is not possible to earn more than a 70% in this class if you do not purchase access to the webtext and complete these assignments by their deadlines.**

## Applications Assignments

There are 4 written assignments to be completed at various points over the semester. These assignments connect to the concepts that we cover in our class by asking you to explore some topics in current U.S. politics. In Application Assignment 1, you will explore how media bias influences how news events are covered. In Application Assignment 2, you will learn about the elected officials that represent where you live. In Application Assignment 3, you will explore the Electoral College and conduct some simulated outcomes of presidential elections. In Application Assignment 4, you will use a budget simulator to make decisions on how to cut the U.S. federal budget.

Your submission for each assignment will submitted through the assignment link on Canvas by the deadline specified for that assignment.

* Application Assignment 1 – Due by Sunday, September 28th at 11:59pm CT
* Application Assignment 2 – Due by Sunday, October 12th at 11:59pm CT
* Application Assignment 3 – Due by Sunday, November 2nd at 11:59pm CT
* Application Assignment 4 – Due by Sunday, November 16th at 11:59pm CT

**Your Applications Assignments are worth a total of 30% of your total grade.**

## Quizzes

In each module, there is a quiz that covers the webtext and the content in the Canvas modules (text and videos). All questions are “objective” questions (multiple choice, multiple answer, fill in the blank, matching, etc.). There are 20 questions on each quiz, and you have 20 minutes to complete the quiz. Please note that you can only move forward within the quiz; after you move from Question 1 to Question 2, you cannot return to Question 1.

You are welcome to use your notes as you take the quizzes. However, you will not have time to look up every answer. That means you actually have to have notes, and you have to review them before you take the quiz. I promise you, if you just wing it, you will be sorely disappointed.

**There are 15 quizzes which are collectively worth 30% of your grade.**

## Final

During the final exam week, you will take a cumulative final for this class. The cumulative final consists of 100 objective questions. It must be completed within 90 minutes, and you may only move forward in the exam. The final exam is worth 100 points and 10% of your final course grade. As with the quizzes, you may use your notes as you take the final exam, but I strongly encourage you to study before you take the final. The final exam will be available beginning at 12am on Friday, December 5th until 11:59pm on Wednesday, December 10th. You may take the exam anytime that you wish during this period, but you may only take the exam once.

# Important Policies:

## Late Policy

Webtext chapters can be submitted late for credit until 11:59pm CT on Wednesday, December 3rd, but those late webtext assignments incur a 50% late penalty.

In order to permit some flexibility and forgiveness for late assignments, you may utilize our class token system. You start the semester with 5 tokens which can be used for course flexibility. At any point in the semester, you may redeem a token for:

* A one-week extension for a discussion board assignment;
* A one-week extension for a quiz;
* An opportunity to retake a quiz during that one week window; or
* A waiver of the 50% late penalty for a webtext chapter.

No other exceptions to our course calendar will be allowed. Tokens are there for illness, family emergencies, technical problems, travel, university-sponsored events, etc. Do not ask for an extension except through the token system on Canvas. The deadline to submit a token request is 11:59pm on Wednesday, December 3rd.

There are no extensions for the final exam. The final exam MUST be completed no later than 11:59 PM on Wednesday, December 10th in order for us to submit grades by the university deadline.

## Syllabus Change Policy

Under rare circumstances, it may be necessary to alter due dates or requirements as they are spelled out on this syllabus. All changes to the syllabus will be announced via an e-mail through the Canvas inbox e-mail system. Due dates will never be changed to an earlier date (changes will always involve an extension of time). Moreover, no tasks will be added to the syllabus unless they are for extra credit (which always takes the form of additional tokens).

## ADA Statement

### 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

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.

## Academic Integrity Standards and Sanctions for Violations

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. I take academic integrity very seriously, and I do not you to think for one instant that cheating is an acceptable risk. Accordingly, if I determine that you have cheated on an assignment in this course, you will fail the class.

NOTE: “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.”

University Policy 06.003(III)(F).

**IN THIS CLASS, you are allowed to use your own notes for assignments and exams. However, you are NOT allowed to use another student’s notes on your exams. Moreover, while AI is an integral part of our lives, you may NOT use a generative AI resource (such as ChatGPT) for exams, papers, or discussion board responses, and you are not allowed to have other individuals complete those assignments for you (whether you pay them or not).** This is not arbitrary. The goal of these assignments is to evaluate your ability to integrate the content of the course and to use your newfound knowledge to solve novel problems. If ChatGPT answers the discussion board prompt or an employee of writemypaper.com writes your paper, I cannot evaluate your comprehension of the course material.

## 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. In an online course, denigration of the instructor or other students—whether in the course environment or in an external platform such as GroupMe—interferes with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class and other students’ opportunity to learn. Accordingly, 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 the online environment. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct).

## Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit 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. UNT’s Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim’s compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at [SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu](file:///C:\Users\jdl0126\AppData\Local\Temp\OneNote\16.0\NT\0\SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu) or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at [oeo@unt.edu](file:///C:\Users\jdl0126\AppData\Local\Temp\OneNote\16.0\NT\0\oeo@unt.edu) or at (940) 565 2759.

## Emergency Notification and 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 Blackboard 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 students’ 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.

## Student Perceptions of Teaching Effectiveness (SPOT)

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. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" ([no-reply@iasystem.org](mailto: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 at [www.spot.unt.edu](http://www.spot.unt.edu/) or email [spot@unt.edu](mailto:spot@unt.edu).

## Important Notice for F-1 Students Taking Distance Education Courses

***The 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](http://www.ecfr.gov/) (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.

***UNT 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](mailto:internationaladvising@unt.edu)) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

***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. See [UNT Policy 07-002 Student Identity Verification, Privacy, and Notification and Distance Education Courses](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002) (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002).

# Course Schedule

| **Dates** | **Topic** | **Assignments**  **(All assignments due at 11:59 PM Central time on the date listed)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 8/18-8/24 | Module 1: Public Opinion | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 8/31:   * Webtext Chapter 1 * Module 1 Packback Discussion * Module 1 Quiz |
| 8/25-8/31 | Module 2: Public Opinion (Workbook Chapter) | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 8/31:   * Webtext Chapter 2 * Module 2 Packback Discussion * Module 2 Quiz |
| 9/1-9/7 | Module 3: Voting and Political Participation | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 9/7   * Webtext Chapter 3 * Module 3 Packback Discussion * Module 3 Quiz |
| 9/8-9/14 | Module 4: Voting and Political Participation (Workbook Chapter) | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 9/14   * Webtext Chapter 4 * Module 4 Packback Discussion * Module 4 Quiz |
| 9/15-9/21 | Module 5: The Media | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 9/21   * Webtext Chapter 5 * Module 5 Packback Discussion * Module 5 Quiz |
| 9/22-9/28 | Module 6: The Media (Workbook Chapter) | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 9/28   * Webtext Chapter 6 * Module 6 Packback Discussion * Module 6 Quiz * Application Assignment 1 |
| 9/29-10/5 | Module 7: Interest Groups | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 10/5   * Webtext Chapter 7 * Module 7 Pack Discussion * Module 7 Quiz |
| 10/6-10/12 | Module 8: Interest Groups (Workbook Chapter) | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 10/12   * Webtext Chapter 8 * Module 8 Packback Discussion * Module 8 Quiz * Application Assignment 2 |
| 10/13-10/19 | Module 9: Political Parties | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 10/19   * Webtext Chapter 9 * Module 9 Packback Discussion * Module 9 Quiz |
| 10/20-10/26 | Module 10: Political Parties (Workbook Chapter) | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 10/26   * Webtext Chapter 10 * Module 10 Packback Discussion * Module 10 Quiz |
| 10/27-11/2 | Module 11: Elections | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 11/2   * Webtext Chapter 11 * Module 11 Packback Discussion * Module 11 Quiz * Application Assignment 3 |
| 11/3-11/9 | Module 12: Elections (Workbook Chapter) | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 11/9   * Webtext Chapter 12 * Module 12 Packback Discussion * Module 12 Quiz |
| 11/10-11/16 | Module 13: Public Policy | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 11/16   * Webtext Chapter 13 * Module 13 Packback Discussion * Module 13 Quiz * Application Assignment 4 |
| 11/17-11/23 | Module 14: Public Policy (Workbook Chapter) | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 11/23   * Webtext Chapter 14 * Module 14 Packback Discussion * Module 14 Quiz |
| 11/24-12/3 | Module 15: Foreign Policy (Workbook Chapter) | Due no later than 11:59pm CT on 12/3 **(note: assignments due on Wednesday this week)**   * Webtext Chapter 15 * Module 15 Packback Discussion * Module 15 Quiz |
|  | FINAL EXAM | Due no later 11:59pm CT on 12/10   * Final Exam will be available beginning on 12/5 |