

American Government: Processes and Policies
PSCI 1040.007
Fall 2012

Professor: Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha
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Class: TR 8-9:20am, Sage 116

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Course Overview

This course focuses on an introduction to the Constitutions and Institutions of American and Texas governments. We will study the structure of government, including its constitutional foundations and the branches of federal and Texas governments. We will pay particular attention to the constitutional issues of federalism, civil rights, and civil liberties. We will also apply our understanding of American and Texas government to current events and topics.

Course Goals

- 1) To develop a broad understanding of American and Texas governments, their institutions, Constitutions, and civil rights and civil liberties.
- 2) To develop a critical understanding of political events, both current and past.
- 3) To be able to explain and discuss critically the topics presented in this course.

Required Reading

Edwards, George C., Martin P. Wattenberg, and Robert L. Lineberry. 2011. *Government in America Brief Edition*, brief 11th edition. Pearson/Longman.

Student access card mypoliscilab psci 1040 blackboard for the University of North Texas*

Course Assignments

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|-------------------------|------|
| 1. Exam 1 | 25% |
| 2. Exam 2 | 25 % |
| 3. Exam 3 | 25 % |
| 4. Workbook Assignments | 20 % |
| 5. Other Assignments | 5 % |

Course Policies and Procedures

Grading: Grading will follow a standard scale: 90% is an A, 80% is a B, 70% is a C, and 60% is a D. ***I do not change grades unless I make a computational error.*** Moreover, I do not reveal grades via e-mail or telephone and ***there are no opportunities for extra credit***, except those mentioned herein or announced by me in class. We post exam grades on Blackboard, <http://learn.unt.edu>, usually within 48 hours after exam time. I will submit your final grades, for view at my.unt.edu, as soon as I grade final exams.

If you do poorly on any of the assignments, I advise you to see me as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to seek my help if you need it. Pleading for a higher grade after you complete all assignments will not avail you.

If you need me to sign a grade progress report for athletics or other extracurricular activities, please contact me outside of class so that I may calculate and assign you an accurate grade.

Communications: If you have questions about the class, please see me during my office hours or schedule an appointment to see me. You are more than welcome to e-mail me as well, but it is much easier to communicate about class in person. For security reasons, please specify a class-related subject on the subject line of your e-mail. Because I do not reveal grades or schedule makeup exams via e-mail you should see me in my office about these issues. If you choose to e-mail me, it is your responsibility to check e-mail frequently for my response. E-mail your teaching assistant at the e-mail provided on this syllabus. They are also available by appointment. The e-mail feature on Blackboard will not function for this course. Nevertheless, I may use the announcement feature in Blackboard or use eagle mail to communicate with the entire class at need.

Exams: The three in-class exams will test your understanding of assigned readings and lecture material. Each exam will have 50 multiple-choice questions. The third exam (**on 12/11**) is not a comprehensive exam, and will cover material after the second exam. You will have the entire class period to complete each exam. <http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/fall/final.html>.

We will give you a scantron on exam day; but you must bring a pencil to take the test. Once you receive your exam form, you must write in your name and form letter so that your exam may be graded accurately. You may put your name on the test form if you wish. ***If you arrive to the exam after the first exam is turned in, you will not be allowed to take the exam.*** I do not return exams. If you would like to review your exam, please stop by to see me before the next exam.

Make up exams will only be given in light of a university excused absence or at the discretion of the professor. If possible, provide specific, written documentation to verify the nature and legitimacy of your absence. **You must see me in person and in my office within two weeks** after the exam that you missed. When you see me in person, I will determine whether you are eligible to take a makeup exam. You will have one hour to complete the makeup exam, which consists of answering ***one essay question. Makeup exams 1 and 2 are to be completed during prefinals week.***

Exam Preparation: The optimal way to succeed in this class is to attend class regularly, take good notes, and keep up with the readings. As the exam material will be covered in lecture, I recommend

that you master your notes and rely on the textbook to build upon your understanding of the material. Your notes will alert you to the material that is most likely to be on the exam.

Workbook Assignments: Students must complete five of six workbook assignments; one may be skipped without penalty. Each assignment consists of a number of individual exercises. The exercises for the Workbook assignments are available by name (e.g., Workbook 1, Workbook 2, etc.), in the “content” tab in Blackboard. Simply begin, and then answer each question in the assignment. You may save your answers as you go along but must click “save and submit” to complete the assignment.

Each assignment is due at 8am on the listed due date. You may, of course, finish assignments early and as soon as the assignment window opens, but late assignments will be accepted only with a 10 percentage-point penalty for each calendar day they are late. Blackboard will indicate precisely when you submit the exercise for each assignment and late penalties will be assigned by your TA. Do not wait until the last minute to attempt these assignments as Blackboard may be slow or unresponsive at times. All discrepancies concerning workbook grades must be addressed prior to the due date of the next assignment, so check grades regularly. ***These are not group projects, so do your own work.***

* You will need to purchase an access code for the eWorkbook either from the bookstore or through Blackboard. To do so in Blackboard, enter this class and click on “Pearson Content”. Then click “Pearson Login” and then “purchase.” The cost of the eWorkbook is \$37.50. Next, if you have a Pearson account, click yes, and login with your Pearson username and password. If you have not previously registered with Pearson, click no to create a username and password. Once you have registered, you will proceed to purchasing access to the 1040 eWorkbook. If you have purchased an access code from the bookstore, click “register” on the “pearson login” page and follow the instructions. You will then create a username and password. Once you register and purchase access, you will need to login (also on the pearson login page) with your username and password so that you can access the eWorkbook chapters. The easiest way to do this is to click on an individual chapter and you will be asked to provide your username and password. If this is unclear, please ask.

Extra Credit: If you complete all six workbook assignments, your lowest grade will be counted as extra credit, up to 2.0%. If your lowest workbook assessment grade is 75%, for example, then we will add an extra 1.5% ($.75 * 2.0$) to your final grade.

Other Assignments: There are three other assignments unrelated to the workbooks: a syllabus quiz (worth 1 percent of your grade), and two video quizzes (worth 2 percent each). The due dates for these assignments are listed in the course schedule and will be available for you to complete on blackboard in the content folder.

Attendance: Attendance is expected, but not required for this class. Attending class will help your course performance, just as *you are responsible for all materials covered in class.*

Dropping Courses: It is your responsibility to determine when and what forms you need concerning drops, withdraws, and other administrative actions. For assistance visit: <http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/fall/calendar.html> .

Course Evaluations: You will be provided two opportunities at the end of the semester to evaluate this course. First, I ask that you complete an in-class evaluation required by the political science department. Second, the University asks you to complete the Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE). This survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, through my.unt.edu, and may be completed outside of class. Consistent with unofficial University policy, if over 60 percent of the class completes the survey, each student will receive one percentage point of extra credit.

Americans with Disabilities Act Statement: The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, you must contact the Office of Disability Accommodation before accommodations can be given.

Students who wish to utilize the testing center must first complete an Alternative Test Request form from the Office of Disability Accommodations that must be signed by the instructor for each course and exam that he or she wishing to take at ODA Testing Center. The form must then be turned in to ODA's main office at the University Union Suite 322A at least 72 hours prior to any regularly scheduled exam and 1 week before a final exam. Please see <http://www.unt.edu/oda/index.html>.

Academic Misconduct: Academic integrity emanates from a culture that embraces the core values of trust and honesty necessary for full learning to occur. As a student-centered public research university, the University of North Texas promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic environment and undermines all scholarship. For detailed information about the policy, please visit:

http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf

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 www.unt.edu/csrr.

Please be considerate of others. Do not disturb or distract your classmates, whether by surfing the web, chatting with friends, or snoring. Students who have complaints about others' disruptive behavior should first talk to the classmate who is disruptive and then see me.

Course Materials and Copyright Statement: The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By "handouts," I mean all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, in-class materials review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission.

Course Schedule

INTRODUCTION

August 30 Course Introduction

September 4 Introduction to American Government
Read: Edwards, Chapter 1

September 6: *Syllabus Quiz due*

CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS

September 6-13 U.S. Constitution
Read: Edwards, Chapter 2; eWorkbook, Chapters 1 and 2

September 11: *Workbook Assignment #1 due*

September 18-20 Federalism
Read: Edwards, Chapter 3; eWorkbook, Chapters 3 and 4

September 18: *Workbook Assignment #2 due*

September 25 Texas Constitution

September 27 EXAM 1, IN CLASS

CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

October 2-16 Civil Liberties
Read: Edwards, Chapter 4; eWorkbook, Chapter 9

October 4: *Civil Liberties Video Quiz due*

October 9: *Workbook Assignment #3 due*

October 18-23 Civil Rights
Read: Edwards, Chapter 5; eWorkbook, Chapter 10

October 23: *Workbook Assignment #4 due*

October 25 Texas Civil Rights and Liberties

October 30 EXAM 2, IN CLASS

POLICYMAKING INSTITUTIONS

November 1-6 Congress
Read: Edwards, Chapter 11; eWorkbook, Chapter 5

November 8-13 Presidency
Read: Edwards, Chapter 12; eWorkbook, Chapter 6

November 8: *Workbook Assignment #5 due*

November 15-20	The Federal Bureaucracy Read: Edwards, Chapter 13; eWorkbook, Chapter 7 November 15: <i>Bureaucracy Video Quiz due</i>
November 27-29	The Federal Courts Read: Edwards, Chapter 14; eWorkbook, Chapter 8 November 27: <i>Workbook Assignment #6 due</i>
December 4	Texas Institutions
December 6	Course Conclusions and Review
<i>December 11</i>	<i>EXAM 3, 8:00am in SAGE 116</i>