



U.S. Political Behavior and Policy



(PSCI 2305), Spring 2026
University of North Texas
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
Instructor: Dr. Leo Moradi





Welcome to
U.S. Political Behavior and Policy
 (PSCI 2305 Section 401)
 (Online Course)
 University of North Texas
 College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
 Spring 2026

Instructor: Dr. Leo Moradi
Email: Leo.Moradi@unt.edu
Office hours: M/W/F, 9am-10:30am
Office Location: Wooten Hall 134
Office Hour Booking page: [here](#)

Course Dates: Internet Course
Course Time: -
Course Location: -
Course Credits: 3

Student's last name begins with A-M:
Teaching Assistant: Ahmed Hamza
Email: AhmedHamza@my.unt.edu
Office hours: Tue/Thu, 3pm-4:30pm
Office Location: Wooten Hall 152

Student's last name begins with N-Z:
Teaching Assistant: Masoud Azarfam
Email: SeyyedMasoudAzarfam@my.unt.edu
Office hours: Mon /Tue, 10:00am- 12:00pm
Office Location: via Zoom
Office Hour Booking page: [here](#)

Note: For all course inquiries, you should always contact the teaching assistants first. Students should also attend the TA's office hours for help and support.



“We shall nobly save, or meanly lose [the Union], the last best hope of earth.”
Lincoln (December 1, 1862: Message to Congress)

I. Course Description

U.S. Political Behavior and Policy, one of the two American politics courses required by the State of Texas, is an introduction to the core elements of American political life, focusing on how citizens, groups, and institutions interact to shape governmental decisions and public policy outcomes. The course bridges the study of individual and collective political behavior with the processes through which policies are formulated, adopted, and implemented in the United States.

This course explores a set of enduring and timely questions about how American democracy functions in practice: Why do some Americans vote and participate actively in politics while others do not? How do people choose their candidates? What roles do political parties, interest groups, and the media play in organizing political actions, mobilizing voters, and structuring government?



As an American, Texan, or someone who lives in the United States, you should learn how American politics works. Such a civic education equips you with the knowledge to understand your powers, participate effectively in the democratic process, and hold leaders accountable, fostering an informed and engaged society.

II. Course Learning Outcomes

1. Students will understand key theories and concepts explaining individual and collective political behavior in the United States.
2. Students will be able to analyze the roles of institutions such as parties, media, and interest groups in influencing elections, participation, and policy outcomes.
3. Students will evaluate how public opinion, campaigns, and electoral processes connect to the development and implementation of public policy.



III. Required Course Material

The text required for this course is an electronic text:

- *UNT 2305 Department Bundle: U.S. and Texas Politics with 2305 Workbook*, 15th edition, by Jocelyn Evans / James R. Henson & The Texas Politics Project Soomo Publishing.



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 \$112.50.

2. You can purchase the textbook directly from the publisher via a link in our Canvas shell (Assignments). The cost for purchase via Soomo Publishing is \$78.75.

- All other required readings are available either through Canvas or on the web for free.
- In addition, students are expected to stay informed of the prevailing topics and issues of the day. Since we are living in an extremely polarized society, it is important to compare and contrast the news sources. All news outlets have editorial preferences. Below is a guide to political leanings of major news outlets:
 - **Republican and Conservative** leaning: Fox News, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Post
 - **Democratic and Liberal** leaning: CNN, ABC, CBS, NBC, MSNOW, The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Associated Press (AP), Politico, Axios, USA Today, Time Magazine
 - **Local and State:** Dallas Morning News, The Texan, The Texas Tribune, Fort Worth Star-Telegram

(You do not need to read all the sources; one or two from each category would suffice. Not everything they publish is always biased. However, it is crucial to be aware of the political preferences of their opinion pieces.)



IV. Course Assignments

1. Syllabus Quiz	10 %
2. Webtext Questions	40 %
3. Midterm Exam	25 %
4. Final Exam	25 %

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

1. Syllabus Quiz

Your very first quiz is the **Syllabus Quiz that will be due on Saturday, January 17 at 11:59 pm.** It is imperative that you read through the syllabus thoroughly a few times before you take the syllabus quiz as you can only take the syllabus quiz one time and I will not reopen it if you do not take it by the due date. The Syllabus Quiz is worth 10% of your final grade.

2. Webtext Questions

Your textbook (webtext) has questions and quizzes 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 18 webtext chapters (the lowest three grades are dropped at the end of the semester) that are collectively worth 40% of your grade. **These questions in each chapter must be answered any time before Saturday 11:59 pm of the week that chapter is assigned.** Webtext questions can be submitted late for credit but those late webtext assignments incur a 50% late penalty. **All webtext assignments must be submitted by March 1st at 11:59 pm for a 50% late penalty.**

3. Midterm Exam

There will be a midterm exam, which will be available from **Sunday February 1st at 11:59 pm until Wednesday, February 4th at 11:59 pm.** It means you have a 72-hour window to take the exam.

The exam consists of 100 objective questions (similar to chapter questions and quizzes) and must be completed within 90 minutes. **The Midterm Exam will cover Chapters 1-8 of the webtext.** It is worth 25% of your final grade. You may use your notes during the exam, but that means you must study the webtext thoroughly to have reliable notes. **The Midterm Exam will**



not be available after the due date, except for extraordinary family and personal issues according to UNT policies.

4. Final Exam

There will be a Final Exam, which will be available from **Sunday, March 1st at 11:59 pm until Wednesday, March 4th at 11:59 pm**. It means you have a 72-hour window to take the exam. The exam consists of 100 objective questions (similar to chapter questions and quizzes) and must be completed within 90 minutes. **The Final Exam is not cumulative, and it will cover Chapters 9-18 of the webtext**. It is worth 25% of your final grade. You may use your notes during the exam, but that means you must study the webtext thoroughly to have reliable notes.

The Final Exam will not be available after the due date, and all late assignments MUST be completed before the Final Exam by March 1st at 11:59 pm in order for us to submit grades by the university deadline. There will be no exceptions!

V. Grading Scale

Grades are based on the standard grading scale, with standard mathematical rounding.

90-100%	80-89%	70-79%	60-69%	below 60%
A	B	C	D	F

VI. Course Policies (Important)

- For all course inquiries, **you should always contact your teaching assistant first**. Students should also attend the TA's office hours for help and support.
- **Use Canvas message to reach out to me**. I will respond to messages within 48 hours during the weekdays. I will not respond to messages during weekends.
- Please make **appointments** for office hours. If you cannot make your meeting, please cancel your appointment, or inform me ahead of time. If there are no available slots, or you cannot make any of the available times, you should email me to set up a meeting over the Zoom.
- **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: UNT Helpdesk; Sage Hall 330; 940-565-2324; helpdesk@unt.edu

If you are having difficulty with the Soomo textbook, please contact the publisher [directly](#).



VII. UNT Policies (Important)

ADA Statement:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. To request accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) by completing an application for services and providing documentation to verify your eligibility each semester. Once your eligibility is confirmed, you may request your letter of accommodation. ODA will then email your faculty a letter of reasonable accommodation, initiating a private discussion about your specific needs in the course. You can request accommodations at any time, but it's important to provide ODA notice to your faculty as early as possible in the semester to avoid delays in implementation. Keep in mind that you must obtain a new letter of accommodation for each semester and meet with each faculty member before accommodations can be implemented in each class. You are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding your accommodations during office hours or by appointment. Faculty have the authority to ask you to discuss your letter during their designated office hours to protect your privacy. For more information and to access resources that can support your needs, refer to the Office of Disability Access website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>).

Academic Resources:

UNT strives to offer a high-quality education in a supportive environment where you can learn, grow, and thrive. As a faculty member, I am committed to supporting you, and I want to remind you that UNT offers a range of mental health and wellness services to help maintain balance and well-being. Utilizing these resources is a proactive way to support your academic and personal success. To explore campus resources designed to support you, check out mental health services (<https://clear.unt.edu/student-support-services-policies>), visit unt.edu/success, and explore unt.edu/wellness. To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to scrappysays.unt.edu.

Code of Conduct:

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 <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/dean-of-students/>.



Academic integrity expectations and consequences (UNT Policy 06.003):

The University of North Texas strictly prohibits academic misconduct, including cheating (e.g., using unauthorized aid in exams or assignments), plagiarism (using others' work without proper citation), fabrication (falsifying data), forgery (altering grades or records), facilitating academic dishonesty (helping others cheat), and sabotage (disrupting others' work). These actions violate UNT's commitment to trust, honesty, and fairness.

Instructors may address single violations by imposing penalties such as verbal/written warnings, additional coursework, partial or no credit for assignments, grade reduction, or course failure. All incidents are reported to the Academic Integrity Database. For major or multiple violations, the Academic Integrity Officer may impose severe sanctions, including probation (up to two semesters with conditions), suspension (up to one year), expulsion (permanent removal), or degree revocation. Students may appeal penalties, with final decisions made by the department chair for single violations or the provost for major/multiple violations.

IN THIS COURSE, 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, 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. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the policy available here.

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): **Campus Closures Policy** (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006>). 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 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.

Incomplete grades

An Incomplete Grade ("I") is a non-punitive grade given only during the last one-fourth of a term/semester and only if a student (1) is passing the course and (2) has a justifiable and documented reason, beyond the control of the student (such as serious illness or military service), for not completing the work on schedule. The student must arrange with the instructor to finish the course at a later date by completing specific requirements. These requirements must be listed on a Request for Grade of Incomplete form signed by the instructor, student, and department chair; and also entered on the grade roster by the instructor. Grades of "I" assigned to an undergraduate course at the end of the Fall 2007 semester and later, will default to "F" unless the instructor has designated a different automatic grade. See also Removal of "I" policy. For more information, look here.

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) 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 Evaluation:

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course. **If over 75 percent of the class completes the SPOT, each student will receive one percent extra credit.**

Course Schedule on next page!



VIII. Course Schedule

- Under rare circumstances and based on current events, I may reorder the syllabus, add, or remove readings, or change lecture topics and due dates. Due dates will only be extended, never moved to an earlier date. Any syllabus changes will be communicated via email through the Canvas inbox system.

Week	Topic	Assignments
1	Introduction Chapter 1: Public Opinion Chapter 2: Workbook: Public Opinion	Syllabus Quiz webtext questions (Chapters 1-2) Due Sa 1/17 at 11:59 pm
2	Chapter 3: Voting and Political Participation Chapter 4: Workbook: Political Participation	webtext questions (Chapters 3-5) Due Sa 1/24 at 11:59 pm
3	Chapter 5: The Media Chapter 6: Workbook: The Mass Media Chapter 7: Interest Groups Chapter 8: Workbook: Interest Groups	webtext questions (Chapters 6-9) Due Sa 1/31 at 11:59 pm
Midterm: Sunday, February 1st at 11:59 pm until Wednesday, February 4th at 11:59 pm (Chapters 1-8)		
4	Chapter 9: Political Parties Chapter 10: Workbook: Political Parties Chapter 11: Texas: Political Parties	webtext questions (Chapters 10-12) Due Sa 2/7 at 11:59 pm
5	Chapter 12: Elections and Campaigns Chapter 13: Workbook: Elections and Campaign Chapter 14: Texas: Elections, Voting and Campaigns	webtext questions (Chapters 13-14) Due Sa 2/14 at 11:59 pm
6	Chapter 15: Public Policy Chapter 16: Workbook: Domestic Policy	webtext questions (Chapters 15-16) Due Sa 2/21 at 11:59 pm
7	Chapter 17: Workbook: Foreign Policy Chapter 18: Texas: Public Policy	webtext questions (Chapters 17-18) Due Sa 2/28 at 11:59 pm
8	Final Exam: Sunday, March 1st at 11:59 pm until Wednesday, March 4th at 11:59 pm (Chapters 9-18)	