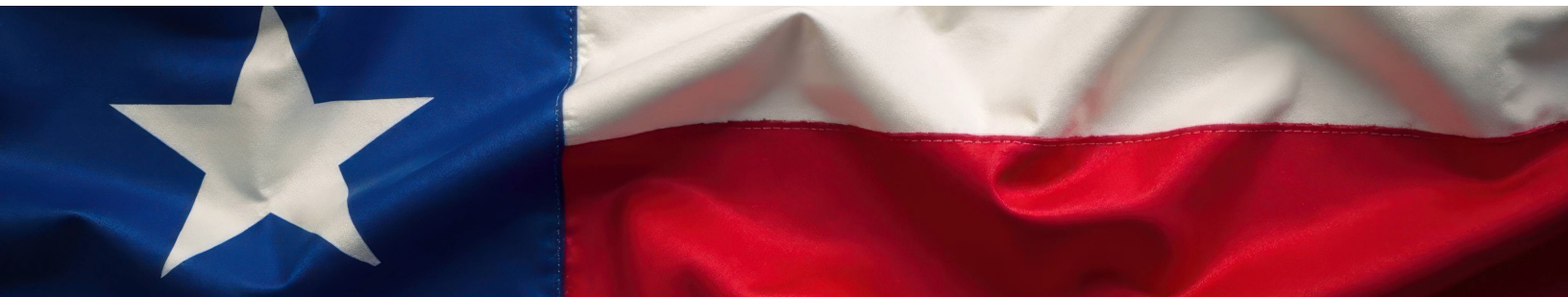




U.S. & Texas Constitutions & Institutions



(PSCI 2306), Fall 2025
University of North Texas
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
Instructor: Dr. Leo Moradi





Welcome to
US and Texas Constitutions and Institutions
(PSCI 2306 Section 007)
University of North Texas
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
Fall 2025

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: M/W
Course Time: 2:00pm-3:20pm
Course Location: Physics 102
Course Credits: 3

Teaching Assistant: Morgan Poe
Email: MorganPoe@my.unt.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays 11am-2pm
Office Location: Wooten Hall 173B
Office Hour Booking page: [here](#).

Note: For all course inquiries, you should always contact the teaching assistant 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

The United States Constitution's Preamble reads: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." The Constitution then proceeds to establish three branches of government, the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary, to carry out these goals. All these six, high-minded but vague, goals of the Preamble are, and have been, the source of controversies over what they mean and how to achieve them. For instance, there is no clear-cut distinction between which powers belong to the federal government and which to the states. The Texas Constitution thus begins with declaring the independence and sovereignty of the state: "Texas is a free and independent State, subject only to the Constitution of the United States, and the maintenance of our free institutions and the perpetuity of the Union depend upon the preservation of the right of local self-government unimpaired to all the States" (Article I, section 1). As a result, political conflicts occur not only over *what* government should do, but *who* should do it. The three branches of the federal government are defined by the *separation of powers* and *checks and balances*. However, they too often come into conflict over what those six goals mean and what laws and policies are *necessary and proper* to fulfill them.

In this course, one of the two American politics courses required by the State of Texas, we will investigate American and Texan Constitutions, their governing institutions, American political life and culture, and political relationships through both the contemporary portrait and the American political development.

As an American, Texan, or someone who lives in the United States, you should learn and preserve philosophic, democratic, and American values such as the rule of law, the Bill of Rights, elections, checks and balances, equality under the law, trial by jury, civil rights and liberties. Such a civic education equips you with the knowledge to understand your rights, participate effectively in the democratic process, and hold leaders accountable, fostering an informed and engaged society.

II. Course Learning Outcomes

1. Students will gain knowledge of core beliefs, theories, and ideologies in American political culture and Constitution shaping the political opinions and actions of Americans.
2. Students will be able to explain how the American and Texan governing institutions have changed over time, how they work today, and how the Congress, the presidency, and the federal judiciary engage with each other, on the one hand, and with states and the economy, on the other.



3. Students will understand how campaigns, elections, and the media work, and how political parties, movements, and lobbies influence public opinions and American politics.

III. Required Course Material

The text required for this course is an electronic text:

- *UNT 2306 Department Bundle: U.S. and Texas Politics with 2306 Workbook 15e*, 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, MSNBC, 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 bias of their opinion pieces.)



IV. Course Assignments

1. Attendance	5 points (extra)
2. Webtext Questions	40 %
5. Midterm Exams (2)	$2 \times 15 \% = 30 \%$
6. Final Exam	30 %

1. Attendance

Attendance will be taken during of each class. You are responsible use iClicker to register your attendance. If you forget or don't join via iClicker, it is assumed you missed that session. To use iClicker, you must be physically present in class; you cannot register your attendance remotely. If you attend **all sessions**, you will earn all 5 extra points. There are no partial points; for instance, if you attend all but miss one, you won't get 4 points. Unless absence is UNT authorized according to [Policy 06.039 Student Attendance and Authorized Absences](#).

The best way to succeed in this course and learn American and Texan governments, is to read the material and discuss it with others in a formal setting. Discussions help you to better remember ideas.

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 19 webtext chapters (the lowest four 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 the **Friday 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.

3. Midterm Exams

There will be two midterm exams. Each exam consists of 50 objective questions (similar to chapter questions and quizzes) and must be completed within 50 minutes, and you may only move forward in the exam. The exams will be conducted during the class, and it's closed book; **you cannot use your notes during the exam**. Bring your laptops. The Exams are not cumulative:

Midterm 1: Monday 9/15: Chapters 1-5

Midterm 2: Monday 10/20: Chapters 6-10

Each exam worth 50 points and the two exams together worth 30 % of your final grade.



4. Final Exam

During the final exam week, you will take a non-cumulative final for this class. The final exam consists of 100 objective questions. It must be completed within 90 minutes, and you may only move forward in the exam. It's open book; **you can use your notes during the exam**, but I strongly encourage you to study before you take the final.

Final Exam: Monday, December 8, due at 11:59pm: Chapters 11-19.

The final exam is worth 100 points and 30% of your final course grade.

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)

- The use of cell phones during class is **not** permitted. Silence them before class begins. They should NOT be out.
- Please bring your laptops to the class for class activities. You can use your laptops for taking notes during the class. But do NOT use it for surfing the internet or chatting with others.
- Come to class on time; stay the entire time. Listen and participate meaningfully and respectfully. Take notes. Keep bathroom breaks to a minimum.
- I permit drinking (sodas, coffee, tea, water) in class but **EATING is NOT** permitted (the noise and smells are very distracting).
- For all course inquiries, **you should always contact the teaching assistant first**. Students should also attend the TA's office hours for help and support.
- I will respond to emails within 48 hours during the weekdays. I will not respond to emails 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 assistant is 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](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-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) (<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 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, 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 to familiarize 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](#).

Course schedule: 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	Dates	Topic	Assignments
1	M 8/18 W 8/20	Introduction to the course Chapter 1: The Founding and the Constitution	None
Friday, August 22: Last Day to Add a Class or Swap Sections			
2	M 8/25 W 8/27	Chapter 1: The Founding and the Constitution Chapter 2: Workbook: The U.S. Constitution	webtext questions (2 chapters) Due F 8/29 at 11:59 pm
Friday, August 29: Last Day to Drop a Class Section Without a W			
Monday, September 1: Labor Day (no classes, university closed)			
3	W 9/3	Chapter 3: Texas: The Constitution	webtext questions Due F 9/5 at 11:59 pm
4	M 9/8 W 9/10	Chapter 4: Federalism Chapter 5: Workbook: Federalism	webtext questions (2 chapters) Due F 9/12 at 11:59 pm
5	M 9/15 W 9/17	Midterm 1: Monday 9/15 (until chapter 5) Chapter 6: Congress	webtext questions Due F 9/19 at 11:59 pm
6	M 9/22 W 9/24	Chapter 7: Workbook: Legislatures	webtext questions Due F 9/26 at 11:59 pm
7	M 9/29 W 10/1	Chapter 8: Texas: The Legislature	webtext questions Due F 10/3 at 11:59 pm
8	M 10/6 W 10/8	Chapter 9: The Presidency	webtext questions Due F 10/10 at 11:59 pm
9	M 10/13 W 10/15	Chapter 10: Workbook: The Presidency	webtext questions Due F 10/17 at 11:59 pm
10	M 10/20 W 10/22	Midterm 2: Monday 10/20 (chapters 6-10) Chapter 11: Texas: The Executive Branch	webtext questions Due F 10/24 at 11:59 pm
11	M 10/27 W 10/29	Chapter 12: Bureaucracy Chapter 13: Workbook: The Bureaucracy	webtext questions (2 chapters) Due F 10/31 at 11:59 pm
12	M 11/3 W 11/5	Chapter 14: The Judiciary Chapter 15: Workbook: The Courts	webtext questions (2 chapters) Due F 11/7 at 11:59 pm



Friday, November 7: Last day to drop a course with a grade of W			
13	M 11/10 W 11/12	Chapter 16: Civil Liberties Chapter 17: Workbook: Civil Liberties	webtext questions (2 chapters) Due F 11/14 at 11:59 pm
14	M 11/17 W 11/19	Chapter 18: Civil Rights Chapter 19: Workbook: Civil Rights	webtext questions (2 chapters) Due F 11/21 at 11:59 pm
November 24-30: Thanksgiving Break (no classes)			
15	M 12/1 W 12/3	Review and Conclusion Sample questions for the final exam	None
16	December 8	Final Exam: Due at 11:59 p.m.	