Welcome to UNT
As members of the UNT community, we have all made a commitment to be part of an institution that respects and values the identities of the students and employees with whom we interact. UNT does not tolerate identity-based discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. UNT’s full Non-Discrimination Policy can be found in the UNT Policies section of the syllabus.

Instructor information: Melissa McKay, Ph.D. (she/her)
Office: Hall Park A #125C
Office Hours: Tuesday 12:00 – 1:00 pm and via Zoom by appointment
Email: melissa.mckay@unt.edu (I will only email you on your university account)

Class Information: Meeting times: Tuesday and Thursday 2:30 pm – 3:50 pm
Hall Park A #132
Online classroom: https://unt.instructure.com

Course Description: The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the roles of the United States and Texas governments in the American political system. We will study the institutions, processes, and decisions of political actors that define American and Texas government. We focus particular attention on the United States and Texas constitutions, civil rights and liberties, and federalism, as well as the institutions that comprise the three branches of government.

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

1. Explain philosophical traditions that inform the U.S. and Texas constitutions
2. Evaluate the balance of power between the branches of government, state and national governments, and the people and the state
3. Evaluate constitutional and extra-constitutional powers of the three branches of government at both the Texas and national levels
4. Interpret the role of minority groups in U.S. politics
5. Evaluate the democratic nature and effectiveness of the U.S. and Texas institutions of government (including their constitutions)
Course Structure: Since we only meet twice a week as a class, the majority of the work for this class will be done outside of our in-person classes. This includes expectations that students will have read the assigned readings, completed any assigned homework, and are generally prepared for each day in the classroom.

Class Communications: You can send me a note via Canvas or email me directly at melissa.mckay@unt.edu. Please allow me around 24 hours to get back to you, but if it’s been longer and you haven’t heard back, don’t be shy about sending me a reminder. If you send a note on Friday-Sunday, please expect that I will not write you back until Monday.

Required Materials:

  - This is an ONLINE book and workbook combination. You can purchase this directly through the link in our Canvas classroom—OR—purchase a code from the UNT bookstore.
- Access to a popular and reliable podcast app (Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Play, etc.)
- Consistent and reliable access to the internet
- A laptop, desktop, or other reliable computer – our entire class is based on digital materials and you’ll need a reliable computer. If you do not have one, you can check out a laptop on campus for daily use, or your home high school may also have laptops to loan to students. Please reach out to me if you are having a hard time securing the use of a computer.

Technical Support Resources:

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

Please do not rely on me for technical support – I am not the person for that.

UIT Help Desk: [UIT Student Help Desk site](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm)

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu

Telephone Availability:

- Sunday: noon-midnight
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
- Friday: 8am-8pm
- Saturday: 9am-5pm

Laptop Checkout: 8am-7pm

Rules of Engagement: Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines:

- While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis 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 will not be tolerated.
• Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.
• Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for your instructor and classmates.
• Speak from personal experiences. Use “I” statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individual’s experiences.
• Use your critical thinking skills to challenge other people’s ideas, instead of attacking individuals.
• Avoid using all caps while communicating digitally. This may be interpreted as “YELLING!”
• Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.
• Avoid using “text-talk”
• Proofread and fact-check your sources.
• Keep in mind that online posts can be permanent, so think first before you type.

See these Engagement Guidelines for more information.

University and Class Policies:

 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. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Accommodation 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 at disability.unt.edu.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)
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.

Emergency Notification & 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 Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

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 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 University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at 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 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 or at (940) 565 2759.

Federal Regulation: Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses
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/). The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G).
Attendance

Attendance in class is vital to your success. Participation and engagement correlate with higher grades and better comprehension.

I understand there will be conflicts in student schedules and we all need to prioritize items based on what is best for them, and I do not take it personally if a class is missed. High school-related events are not considered university-approved absences, while this may not become an issue for assignment due dates for this class, please be aware it might be for your other classes.

Academic 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)
- Counseling and Testing Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- UNT Care Team (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care)
- Individual Counseling (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling)

Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

- UNT Records
- UNT ID Card
- UNT Email Address
- Legal Name

*UNT eulDs cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.

Pronouns

Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don’t assume someone’s name, we should also ask and not assume someone’s pronouns.

You can add your pronouns to your Canvas account so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:
What are pronouns and why are they important?

How do I use pronouns?

How do I share my pronouns?

How do I ask for another person’s pronouns?

How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?

Additional Student Support Services

- Registrar (https://registrar.unt.edu/registration)
- Financial Aid (https://financialaid.unt.edu/)
- Student Legal Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)
- Career Center (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)
- Multicultural Center (https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center)
- Counseling and Testing Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- Pride Alliance (https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance)
- UNT Food Pantry (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry)

Academic Support Services

- Academic Resource Center (https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)
- Academic Success Center (https://success.unt.edu/asc)
- UNT Libraries (https://library.unt.edu/)
- Writing Lab (http://writingcenter.unt.edu/)

Grading Policies:

Final grades are numerically based on the following weighted assignment types, ordered by weight:

**Essays:** 35% of total grade. In lieu of exams each student will be expected to complete a quiz centered around an essay or activity at the completion of each unit, applying the content we covered that week. You will be given an essay prompt or activity instructions that includes all of the expectations for each response.

Submissions are expected to be a well thought out, thoroughly articulated response to all aspects of the prompt using proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Specific information is included in each unit’s activity on Canvas. There are no make-up opportunities for these essays or activities.

*Make up quizzes:* There will be no make-up exams offered, regardless of reason for missing class on the day of an exam. Instead, students will have the option to take a final exam at the end of the semester to replace a missed exam. The final exam may also be taken by students who want to try to replace a low exam score.

**In-class Activities - 20% of total grade.** During in-class discussions, students are expected to participate in simulations, polls, discussions, and
other interactive engagement activities introduced by the instructor. These activities may be monitored, collected, and reported through mobile apps or other interactive tools such as iClicker or activities submitted to the instructor in class. Grades and assessments on each in-class activity is determined by the assignment parameters and objectives.

There are no make-up opportunities for in-class activities and simulations.

**Discussion and Other Homework Assignments - 15% of total grade.**

Being able to articulate thoughts and perspectives, as well as being capable of applying concepts to real-world events is a vital skill. We’ll develop and focus on this skill by using discussion posts throughout the semester. Students will be provided a prompt and explicit instruction for each discussion assignment. To receive full credit students are expected to post a well-thought-out response to the prompts as well as two (2) responses to classmates.

From time to time, students are expected to complete assignments outside of the classroom. These assignments will be made clear in Canvas with explicit instructions within the appropriate Canvas module.

**Investigation Assignments – 15% of total grade.** In the CIAG chapters, you will also find breakout assignments called “Investigations.” These assignments provide a deeper dive into the topic and help you apply what you’ve learned to different problems. There are a total of 22 available investigations, the lowest five grades will be dropped.

**North Texas Now! Integrated Project – 10% of total grade.** All of the North Texas Now dual credit courses are integrated around a themed ‘wicked problem’ project. This class has assignments that tie directly into the project, as well as support concepts and skills from other classes. The weighted grades on crossover assignments and the final project contribute to 10% of the student’s grade in this class.

**Engagement - 5% of total grade.** This is an interactive class and it requires commitment and engagement from everyone involved. Your class attendance as well as in-class participation is noted and contributes to your overall grade. You will begin the semester with 100 percent for your participation grade. **Points will be deducted** if you fail to meet expectations for participation in this class. This includes **but is not limited to** the following: participating in class discussions, arriving to class on time, remaining in class for the entire class period, abiding by classroom policies, treating others with respect, approaching assignments with a serious effort, etc. 

**Points removed from engagement grade are not eligible to be made up.**

**Core Assessment Writing Assignment – 5% of total grade.** The required assignment for all students enrolled in PSCI 2306. You will draft a letter to your legislative or executive-branch policymaker in which you identify yourself as one of the politician’s constituents, identify the political issue about which
you are concerned, clearly state a position on that issue (what should the policymaker do or not do); and provide an explanation for your position that will persuade the policymaker to agree with you. You will submit the letter as the body of an e-mail addressed to your policymaker.

Get the Gist Assignments – The CIAG chapters are considered our textbook and are assigned as the readings for each topic and have “Get the Gist” questions at the end of each page. You can repeat the questions until you get them all correct, so you should aim to get a perfect score. These questions are not directly graded for your overall grade.

Although Get the Gist assignments do not count toward the final overall grade, students who compete these questions embedded in the reading chapters with an average at least 90% correct on all chapters can choose to replace the lowest unit essay grade with their Get the Gist average.

Letter grades are assigned based on standard grade scales:
A – 90-100%
B – 80-89%
C – 70-79%
D – 60-69%
F – 59 - under

Important Notes:
• All assignments are due no later than the posted due date. Late submissions are eligible to earn up to 50% of original grade if submitted within seven (7) days of the due date. After seven (7) days, no credit will be given for late submissions.
• Please do not request extra credit. If there is an activity that I feel would be relevant I will offer it to the entire class. I cannot and definitely will not provide extra credit opportunities for individual students.
• If you have any questions about the way an assignment was graded, if there is an issue with a potential error in grading, or any other question regarding a recorded grade on an assignment or exam, you have seven (7) days to raise the question or dispute a grade in writing via Canvas “Inbox” communications. After seven days, I will not return to an older, closed assignment to re-grade or reconsider. (please do not ask me before or after class).
• If you feel like your grades are slipping or you are falling behind, please reach out to me immediately. Too many students wait until their semester progress is a lost cause, but if we catch it early enough we can most likely work together on a plan of action.
## Class Schedule Summer 2022*

All reading and investigations are due the night before we are scheduled to talk about them in class unless otherwise specified. This schedule is likely to change as determined by our pace and outside factors.

Make sure to follow Canvas for additional due dates and activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics Covered</th>
<th>At-home work (do before we meet)</th>
<th>In-class work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug 30</td>
<td>Introduction to the class</td>
<td>No pre-work required</td>
<td>Preview semester and set expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sep 1</td>
<td>The Social Contract</td>
<td>Make sure to purchase Soomo webtext</td>
<td>Discuss social contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Common Good</td>
<td>No pre-work required</td>
<td>Explore the common good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What Is Government</td>
<td>Read “What is Government” module</td>
<td>In-class activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Political Cultures</td>
<td>Read “Political Cultures” module</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sep 8</td>
<td>Evolution of US Government</td>
<td>Read Chapter 1: The Founding and the Constitution</td>
<td>Unit Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Listen to required podcast (Canvas)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete Till We Have Suffrage Investigation</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Block One: Introduction, Founding of the US Government**

**Block Two: US and Texas Constitutions and Federalism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics Covered</th>
<th>At-home work (do before we meet)</th>
<th>In-class work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sep 13</td>
<td>US Constitution</td>
<td>Complete Comparing Constitutions Investigation</td>
<td>Class discussion and activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Dr. McKay reserves the right to change the terms and materials contained in this document at her discretion*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 15</td>
<td>US Constitution Bill of Rights</td>
<td>Make sure reading and investigations are completed</td>
<td>Class discussion and activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 20</td>
<td>Texas Constitution</td>
<td>Read Chapter 2: The Texas Constitution Complete Propping Up the Constitution Amendment</td>
<td>Unit Quiz - Founding and Constitution * Class discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 22</td>
<td>Texas Constitution and Amendments</td>
<td>Texas Amendments Assignment</td>
<td>Class activities – Texas amendments * If time, work on research for NTN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 27</td>
<td>Federalism</td>
<td>Read Chapter 3: Federalism Complete McCulloch v Maryland Investigation Complete Half Baked Investigation</td>
<td>Unit Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 29</td>
<td>NTN Research Project Work Day Double block for PSCI</td>
<td>Near final draft of research proposal should be brought to class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Federalism, cont’d.</td>
<td>Listen to required podcast (Canvas)</td>
<td>Class discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 6</td>
<td>Legislative Branch: US Congress</td>
<td>Read Chapter 4: Congress Complete Drawing Political Lines Investigation Complete Setting the Legislative Agenda Investigation</td>
<td>Unit Quiz - Federalism * Class discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Legislative Branch: US Congress, cont’d</td>
<td>Listen to required podcasts (Canvas) Read Chapter 5: Texas Legislature</td>
<td>Class Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>Additional Activities</td>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Oct 13 | Executive Branch: US Presidency            | Read Chapter 6: The Presidency  
Listen to required podcast (Canvas)                                      | • Unit Quiz – Legislative Branches  
• In-class discussion |
| 8      | Executive Branch: US Presidency, cont’d     | Complete Eavesdropping on the Oval Office  
Complete The Broken Presidency Investigation | • In-class discussion |
| Oct 20 | Executive Branch: US Bureaucracy           | Read Chapter 7: The Bureaucracy  
Complete Implementing the ACA Investigation  
Complete Old MacDonald had a Farm investigation | • In-class discussion |
| 9      | Executive Branch: Texas Executive Branch   | Read Chapter 8: Texas Executive Branch  
Read Chapter 9: The Governor | • In-class discussion |
| Oct 27 | Executive Branch: Texas Plural Executive   | Complete The Sun Also Sets Investigation  
Complete Whose Emergency? Investigation | • Boards and Commissions discussion |
| 10     | Judicial Branch: US Court System           | Read Chapter 10: The Judiciary  
Listen to required podcast (Canvas) | • Unit Quiz – Executive Branches  
• In class discussion |
| Nov 3  | Judicial Branch: US Court System, cont’d   | Complete Marbury v Madison Investigation  
Complete The Path to Marriage Equality Investigation | • In class discussion |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Election Day Double Block day (all PSCI)</td>
<td>In class activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov 10</td>
<td>MEET FOR ART, no PSCI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>Judicial Branch: Texas Court System</td>
<td>Read Chapter 11: Texas Judicial Branch</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete Judge for Sale? Investigation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>In class discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nov 17</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>Read Chapter 14: Texas Local Government</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete Banning the Ban Investigation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unit Quiz – Judicial Branches</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In class discussion/activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Week – asynchronous work today (see Canvas module for</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>assignment instructions)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov 24</td>
<td>Thanksgiving – no assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Block Four: Civil Rights and Liberties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nov 29</td>
<td>Civil Liberties</td>
<td>Read Chapter 12: Civil Liberties</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete Mean Girls vs. First Amendment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Investigation</td>
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<td>Complete Older than the Bill of Rights</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Investigation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unit Quiz: Local Government</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>In Class Discussions and Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>Civil Rights</td>
<td>Read Chapter 13: Civil Rights</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete Brown v Board Investigation</td>
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<td>Complete Till We Have Suffrage: The Movement</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Investigation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In Class Discussions and Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dec 6</td>
<td>Class Activity</td>
<td>Core Assessment Letter to Policymaker</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Due</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Class Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Finals Week</td>
<td>Dec 14 9:00am</td>
<td>Final Exam for students who need to make up for a missed quiz or trying to replace a low score on a previous quiz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Subject to change at instructor’s discretion*