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.

Instructor information: Melissa McKay, Ph.D.
Office: Frisco Landing #353
Student Office Hours: Monday 7-8pm via Zoom and by appointment as needed.
Email: melissa.mckay@unt.edu
(I will only email you on your university account)

Class Information: This is an asynchronous online class, there is no in-person meeting requirement nor established days/times to convene online. All class activities will be done via Canvas: 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, federalism, and the institutions that comprise the three branches of government.
Course Objectives: Over the course of this semester, you will:

- Establish a foundational understanding of the political institutions that shape American and Texas governments.
- Examine the historical context, evolution, interactions, and dynamics between institutions, along with their roles in shaping policy and governance for both federal and state government.
- Equip yourself with the knowledge and skills to engage in informed discussions about political processes, policymaking, and the protection of civil rights and civil liberties.

Class Communications: You can send me a note via Canvas or email me directly at the address provided above. Please allow me at least 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 may not write you back until Monday.

Required Materials:

- *(Please note: this is an ONLINE (digital) book + ONLINE workbook)*
  - You can purchase a code for the textbook from the official campus bookstore or you can purchase it directly from the publisher by clicking on the textbook link in our course Canvas site.
  - I suggest you purchase it directly from the link in our Canvas class site to ensure you get the correct version.
  - If you are waiting for financial aid, please access the text through Canvas and choose the free trial of the text (three chapters).

If you do not acquire access to the course materials in a timely fashion your grade may be irreparably armed. **You cannot pass this course without obtaining the required materials.**

Technical Support: Part of working with digital content 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—trust me, 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

- **Soomo** Support: If you are having difficulty with the Soomo product, please contact the publisher directly at [http://soomolearning.com/support](http://soomolearning.com/support)

- **Internet Support:** If you experience a loss of internet connection, WIFI signal, or your browser freezes up on you during an assignment or exam, you must contact the UNT resources first, then send us an email with the problem you experienced and how you're addressing it. Technical difficulties do not guarantee that time on assignments or exams will be extended.

**Technical Requirements**

Since this is an online course, you are required to have regular access to the course materials and texts through a web interface. In addition, you will be asked to use Lockdown Browser for exams.

**Technical Skill Requirements**

While this is an online course, the necessary technical requirements are minimal. You will need to navigate our Canvas webpage, follow the link to our online textbook, complete multiple choice and short answer questions in the online textbook, follow links to videos and some external websites, upload/download Word and pdf documents, and post to/comment on discussion boards in Canvas.

In addition, you will need Adobe Flash on your computer, and you will need the ability to take screen shots (screen captures) of websites or your work that can be saved and uploaded to the course Canvas site.

**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).

**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](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center))
- **Counseling and Testing Services** ([https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services))
- **UNT Care Team** ([https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care))
- **UNT Psychiatric Services** ([https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry))
- **Individual Counseling** ([https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/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](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling) 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](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration))
- **Financial Aid** ([https://financialaid.unt.edu/](https://financialaid.unt.edu/))
- **Student Legal Services** ([https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services))
• Career Center (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)
• Counseling and Testing Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
• 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:

Unit Exams: 35% of total grade. There are two noncumulative exams in this brief semester, each clearly marked in the syllabus schedule and on Canvas. These exams are multiple choice, timed exams that require Lockdown Browser to be installed on your computer or device. These two exams count for 35% of the total semester grade.

There are no make-up exams offered, regardless of reason for missing the exam period. Exams are generally available for 24 hours or more in order for students to find the best time to dedicate for an exam. Instead of a make-up exam, students have the option to take a comprehensive 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.

Reading Questions and Investigations: 25% of total grade. Your online textbook has two types of chapters: Central Ideas in American Government (CIAG) chapters and Workbook chapters. The CIAG chapters have “study questions”, which are questions embedded at the end of each page. You need to complete these questions for each chapter. You can reset and repeat the questions until you get them all correct, so you should aim to get a perfect score! (Once the due date passes, though, don’t reset the questions because it will override your good score with a late score.)

Also in the CIAG reading chapters, you will also find breakout assignments called “Investigations.” These assignments allow you to dig deep and apply what you know to tougher problems. You only get one attempt at investigation questions; you cannot repeat them to try to do better.
The three lowest scores of your reading and investigation assignments will be dropped.

**Workbook Assignments: 25% of total grade.** The other type of chapter in your online textbook is called a workbook chapter. Each workbook chapter consists of four essays that explore some facet of the topic of the module, and the essays are followed by questions (usually multiple choice, but sometimes a “poll” where you can see the summary results of the class) or a short answer question. An “assignment” involves completing all the questions for all four essays. The lowest workbook grade will be dropped.

**“Why this Matters” Discussion Participation: 15% of total grade.** For each unit covered this semester there is a discussion forum to discuss in our own words why these topics matter. The instructor will start of the conversation each week and students are expected to submit, in their own words, a summary of why the topic is important for us to know, to study, to apply, or to be able to understand in general. For full credit, students are expected to extend the conversation of at least one other classmates’ discussion posts by responding in a detailed manner. Further details are in Canvas, along with specific topics. The lowest discussion grade will be dropped.

Because of the number of students enrolled in this class, students will be broken into discussion groups, organized by first initial of last name. Please post in your assigned discussion group and respond to those in your group only.

**Letter grades are assigned based on standard grade scales:**

Your final grade will be based on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>89.5 – 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>79.5 – 89.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>69.5 – 79.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>59.5 – 69.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 60%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Important Notes:**

- Final grades will be based on the weighted outcomes of the assignments above. I use standard mathematical rounding if necessary.
- 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 will not provide extra credit opportunities for individual students.
- 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.
Late Work and Missed Work Policy

- CAIG, Workbook, and Investigation Assignments will be accepted up to five (5) days late with a 10% penalty per day. After five days, it will not be accepted.
- Discussions will not be accepted late.
- There are no make-up opportunities for a missed exam unless you have worked it out at least 3 days in advance with me with a legitimate excuse.

Please note that it does not matter why the work is late; this policy is uniform. If you DO have an issue such as a family emergency or illness, your grade will not necessarily suffer. At least one grade is dropped for each type of homework, so having a penalized grade or even a missing grade is not the end of the world. Extreme situations will be given consideration if documented and as appropriate.

Course Expectations

A university course is a joint endeavor between instructor and students. We all have an important part to play.

As the instructor in this course, I am responsible for
- providing course materials that will give you the opportunity to achieve our course objectives and providing you with the tools to learn,
- providing timely feedback on your work and explaining concerns you may have with grading,
- being fair in my implementation of rules and policies in the course.

As a student in this course, you are responsible for
- reading and completing all requirements of the course in a timely manner,
- working to remain attentive and engaged in the course and interact with your fellow students,
- and, assisting in maintaining a positive learning environment for everyone.
Class Schedule

All weeks below begin on Monday and end on Sunday at 11:59pm. Unless otherwise stated, assignments are due each week no later than 11:59pm on Sunday.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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</table>
| 1    | Constitutional Creation and Federalism | Read through course syllabus and modules  
• Founding of American Government  
• US Constitution  
Take syllabus quiz  
Purchase Soomo webtext  
Chapter 1 Reading and Investigations |
| 2    | 3/25 – 3/31 |  
M2 & M3  
• US Constitution, cont’d  
• Texas Constitution  
Chapter 3 Workbook  
Chapter 2 Reading and Investigations  
Why It Matters Discussion |
| 3    | 4/1-4/7 |  
M4 & M5  
• Federalism  
Exam 1  
Chapter 4 Reading and Investigation  
Chapter 5 Workbook  
Why It Matters Discussion  
Exam 1 |
|      | Unit 2 – Government Institutions – establishment, powers, restraints |  
M6 & M7  
• US Congress  
• Texas Legislature  
Chapter 6 Reading and Investigations  
Chapter 7 Reading and Investigations  
Chapter 8 Workbook  
Why It Matters Discussion |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4/15 – 4/21</td>
<td>M8 &amp; M9</td>
<td>Chapter 9 Reading and Investigations, Chapter 10 Workbook, Chapter 11 Reading and Investigations, Chapter 12 Workbook, Why It Matters Discussion</td>
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<td>US Presidency US Bureaucracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4/22 – 4/28</td>
<td>M10 &amp; M11</td>
<td>Chapter 13 Reading and Investigations, Chapter 14 Reading and Investigations, Chapter 15 Workbook, Why It Matters Discussion</td>
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<td>Texas Executive US Judiciary</td>
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<td>Last day to drop with a “W” – 4/26</td>
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<td><strong>Unit 3 – Individual Rights and Liberties</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4/29 – 5/6</td>
<td>M12</td>
<td>Chapter 16 Reading and Investigations, Chapter 17 Workbook, Chapter 18 Reading and Investigations, Chapter 19 Workbook</td>
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<td>Civil Liberties Civil Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5/7 -5/10</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
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<td><strong>May 10</strong></td>
<td>OPTIONAL Final Exam</td>
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*Dr. McKay reserves the right to change the terms and materials contained in this document at her discretion*