Welcome to US Political Behavior and Policy, although this is a required core class I hope you’ll find this course enjoyable, relevant, and find yourself able to uncover the areas in everyday life where the concepts from this class come in to play.

Instructor Contact:

Melissa McKay, Ph.D.
Office - Wooten Hall 154
Office hours - T/Th 2:00-3:30pm (and available by appointment)
Email – melissa.mckay@unt.edu

Teaching Assistants:
Mahdi Amirisefat - MohammadAmirisefat@my.unt.edu
Post Basnet – PostBasnet@my.unt.edu

The Teaching Assistants are here to answer basic course questions, help clarify course content, and generally help you navigate our course in the best way possible. They are your first lines of communication with questions about assigned readings or syllabus questions (due dates, requirements, how to navigate Canvas, etc...). These gentlemen are NOT tutors or extra credit vending machines so please be mindful of what you ask of them. To make things easier for us all, I’ve assigned the TA’s to groups of students, please note TA has been assigned to you:

• If your last name begins with A-M, Mr. Amirisefat is your Teaching Assistant
• If your last name begins with N-Z, Mr. Basnet is your Teaching Assistant.

Course Description
This course explores the connection between the will of the people and the policies implemented by government by focusing on individual political values and attitudes, the mechanisms that connect individual beliefs to government action (parties, interest groups, the media, and elections), and the outcomes of government policy.

This is a course about action. In the political science world, we call it “political behavior”: how the behavior (actions) of individuals and groups come together to
form the political landscape. It’s exciting, but it can sometimes be complex. I urge you to utilize the many formats of communication available to use through Canvas if you have any questions about the course content, current events, or government in general.

Pre-requisites
There are no prerequisites for this course.

Course Objectives
Students who complete this course will be able to:

(1) explain the development and measurement of individual values, attitudes, and opinions about politics.
(2) interpret the role of individuals in the political process;
(3) explain the roles of linkage institutions (parties, interest groups, and media) in connecting individuals to institutions of government
(4) demonstrate the relationship between electoral rules/institutions and outcomes
(5) explain the connection between the political process and the policies generated by that process

Required Materials:

1. Central Ideas in American Government
2. 1050 Workbook, published by Soomo Publishing

(please note: this is an ONLINE (digital) book + ONLINE workbook – purchased together)

You can purchase a code for this text 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. 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 have an ongoing financial hardship, contact your instructor IMMEDIATELY. If you do not acquire access to the course materials in a timely fashion your grade may be irreparably harmed.

4. Access to a popular and reliable podcast provider (Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Play, etc....
5. Consistent and reliable Internet connection
6. Functioning webcam on computer to be utilized in conjunction with required exam software

**Technical Support**

Neither the instructor nor the teaching assistant are technical support resources. If you experience any kind of technical problem, please contact:

Student Helpdesk:
UIT Helpdesk
Sage Hall 130
940-565-2324
helpdesk@unt.edu

If you are having difficulty with the Soomo product (online textbook + workbook), please contact the publisher directly at [http://soomolearning.com/support](http://soomolearning.com/support)

**Please note:** 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 me an email with the problem you experienced and how you’re addressing it. If you fail to complete an assignment or exam because of technical issues, there is nothing we can do if you do not tell us right away.

**Technical Skill Requirements**

Since this is an online course, the necessary technical requirements may be more than expected in traditional face-to-face classes. 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.

The exam application within Canvas requires Respondus Lockdown Browser with an active webcam. The application is a free add-on that is easily integrated by each student on their own computer. Additionally, the webcam function is mandatory. If your computer does not have one built in and you do not wish to purchase one, I suggest you use a library or testing center computer for our exams.

**Netiquette**

The online environment invites thoughtless and unkind behavior. Please keep in mind that this is a community of scholars, even though we are geographically dispersed. When interacting with your fellow student and instructors - be polite. When in doubt, pause for five minutes before you hit “submit.” Consider whether...
you would say something to a person’s face before saying it to them in an electronic format. Also remember that electronic communication does not convey tone well; a well-intentioned comment may be perceived as harsh or offensive. Whether you are the communicator or the recipient, please keep that in mind. All of this is particularly important in a class on politics. We will, inevitably, touch on topics that are touchy under the best of circumstances.

Course Requirements
Assignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get the Gist Assignments (6)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigation Assignments (10)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workbook Assignments (6)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Posts (6)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Club (5)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Exams (3)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following scale:
A  90 – 100%
B  80 – 89%
C  70 – 79%
D  60 – 69%
F  Below 60%

I use standard mathematical rounding, but I will make no other adjustment of grades. Please remember that your final grade is the culmination of work that you have done over the course of the semester. It is not the product of bargaining at the end of the term. Moreover, I cannot make an exception for one student without making it for all students, and that is never practical. You may have a very sad case, but there may be another similarly situated student who did not think to ask for an exception.

With respect to all homework, late work will be accepted up to one week late with a 50% penalty. After one week, it will not be accepted. 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.

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,
- and, 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.

Course Components

Get the Gist Assignments: Your online textbook has two types of chapters: (1) Central Ideas in American Government (CIAG) chapters and (2) Workbook chapters. The CIAG chapters have “study questions” or “Get the Gist” questions 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.) (please note: If you attempt to game the system and enter gibberish or one-word responses to these questions, I will change your grade for the entire chapter to 0).

There are 7 Get the Gist Assignments. The lowest grade gets dropped, so the highest 6 grades will constitute 10% of your final grade.

Investigation Assignments: In the CIAG chapters, you will also find some breakout assignments called “Investigations.” These assignments allow you to dig deep and apply what you know to tougher problems. You only get one crack at investigation questions; you cannot repeat them to try to do better.

There are two investigation assignments in each CIAG chapter for a total of 14 investigations. The lowest four grades get dropped, so the highest 10 grades will constitute 15% of your final grade.

Workbook Assignments: 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 of the questions for all four essays. There are 7 workbook assignments. (*please note: If you attempt to game the system and enter gibberish or one-word responses to these questions, I will change your grade for the entire chapter to 0*).

The lowest grade gets dropped, so the highest 6 will constitute 15% of your final grade.

**Discussion Board Posts:** You will be posting in a discussion board with the same group of people all semester (based on your last name). You will be prompted (and required) to post 7 times during the semester (once for each topic we cover). An acceptable post will respond specifically to the prompt, will be written in at least five full sentences, and will be respectful. Each week, you must respond to at least one post from one of your group-mates. Your response must engage the original post on a substantive level (no “I agree” or “good point”), consist of at least three full sentences, and be respectful. Because we all understand that things happen, you may miss one post and one response without suffering a grade penalty. Accordingly, your top 6 grades will constitute 10% of your final grade.

**Dr. McKay’s Totally Mandatory Book Club:** Reading actual books seems to be a lost or at least dying concept, and success in college wholeheartedly depends on your ability to read, comprehend, and interpret your assigned readings. I like to try to incorporate reading relevant and topical books where I can. Throughout the semester we will be reading *Charlie Wilson’s War* together. In true book club fashion, we will all read the same chapters at a specified time and be required to answer questions based on those chapters and discuss the book within our assigned group. There are 5 book club discussion “meetings”, and you may miss one assignment without it affecting your grade, therefore your 4 highest book club grades will constitute 10% of your grade.

**Unit Exams:** There are three unit exams in this course. They are multiple choice and not cumulative. Each exam is worth 15% of your total grade.

**Policies**

**Academic Integrity:** [https://vpaa.unt.edu/fs/resources/academic/integrity](https://vpaa.unt.edu/fs/resources/academic/integrity)

**ADA Policy**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their
eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable 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 reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at https://disability.unt.edu You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

**Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses**

**Federal 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 at http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov. The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at "Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G)" and can be found buried within this document.

**University of North Texas 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
*Dr. McKay reserves the right to change the terms and planned materials contained in this document at her discretion.

Course Schedule* - All assignments are due by 11:59pm on the Sunday of the relevant week (unless otherwise noted)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Canvas Modu</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</table>
| 1 Jan 13-19 | 1: Public Opinion | Chapter 1 Chapter 2 | • Chapter 1 Get the Gist  
• Discussion Board # 1  
• Am I Blue ... Investigation  
• Exit Poll Investigation  
• Chapter 2 Workbook |
| 2 Jan 20-26 | 2. Voting and Political Participation | Chapter 3 Chapter 4 | • Chapter 3 Get the Gist  
• Discussion Board # 2  
• We the Protesters Investigation  
• License to Vote Investigation  
• Chapter 4 Workbook |
| 3 Jan 27 – Feb 2 | 3. The Media | Chapter 5 | • Chapter 5 Get the Gist  
• Discussion Board #3  
• Making the News Investigation  
• #Divide Investigation |
| 4 Feb 3-9 | 4. The Media 2 | Chapter 6 Canvas resources & Crile 1-6 | • Chapter 6 Workbook  
• Book Club #1 (Crile Chapters 1-6) |
| 5 Feb 10-16 | Review Exam #1 | Chapters 1-6 Canvas resoures | Unit Exam 1  
Available Feb 13-14 |
| 6 Feb 17-23 | 5. Interest Groups | Chapter 7 Chapter 8 | • Chapter 7 Get the Gist  
• Evil Lobbyists Investigation  
• The American Pizza Community Investigation  
• Chapter 8 Workbook |
| 7 Feb 24 – Mar 1 | 8: Parties 1 | Chapter 9 | • Chapter 9 Get the Gist  
• Discussion Board # 4  
• Third Wheels Investigation  
• 2016 Party Platforms Investigation |

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Chapter Numbers</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 Mar 2-8</td>
<td>9: Parties 2</td>
<td>Chapter 10 &amp; Crile 7-13</td>
<td>• Chapter 10 Workbook</td>
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<td>• Book Club #2 Crile Chapters 7-13</td>
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<td>9 Mar 16-22</td>
<td>10: Elections and Campaigns</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
<td>• Chapter 11 Get the Gist</td>
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<td>• The Year of the Women Investigation</td>
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<td>• Getting into the Electoral College Investigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Mar 23-29</td>
<td>11. Elections and Campaigns 2</td>
<td>Chapter 12 &amp; Crile 14-21</td>
<td>• Chapter 12 Workbook</td>
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<td>• Discussion Board # 5</td>
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<td>• Book Club #3 Crile Chapters 14-21</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Mar 30-Apr 5</td>
<td>Review and Exam #2</td>
<td>Chapters 7-12</td>
<td>Unit 2 Exam</td>
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<td>Available April 2-3</td>
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<td>12 Apr 6-12</td>
<td>12. Public Policy</td>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
<td>• Chapter 13 Get the Gist</td>
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<td>• Discussion Board #6</td>
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<td>• Health Care Quality Investigation</td>
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<td>13 Apr 13-19</td>
<td>13. Domestic Policy</td>
<td>Chapter 14 Crile Chapters</td>
<td>• Chapter 14 Workbook</td>
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<td>• Discussion Board #7</td>
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<td>• Book Club #4 Crile Chapters 22-27</td>
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<td>14 Apr 20-26</td>
<td>14: Foreign Policy</td>
<td>Chapter 15 Crile</td>
<td>• Chapter 15 Workbook</td>
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<td>• Chapter 13Bombing for Peace Investigation</td>
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<td>Book Club #5 Crile Chapters 28 - Epilogue</td>
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<td>15 April 27-May 2</td>
<td>15. Contemporary Political Campaigns &amp; Review</td>
<td>Chapters 12-15</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
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*subject to change