

PSCI 2305-708| US Political Behavior and Policy

Important Note:

The modality of this course has changed for this and future semesters. Students are **required** to enroll in **BOTH** this PSCI 2305.450 for the online learning content **AND** a once per week in-person class (called a “Recitation”) to practice the mastery of the content learned from the online materials. You will not be able to continue in this course if you are not also enrolled in an in-person supporting section.

Instructor & Teaching Assistants

Instructor: Natasha Altema McNeely

Wooten Hall 144 natasha.altema@unt.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00am-11am; Thursdays 9-10, or by Appointment. Office hours provide an opportunity for students to ask questions related to the course, topics discussed and any concerns. The discussions are confidential.

(Use the link below to book your meeting):

<https://calendly.com/natasha-altema-unt/15min>

TA: Shyami Jayawickrama	TA: Salimot Olawale

Course Description

This course explores how the will of the people shapes government policies by focusing on individual political values, attitudes, and civic responsibilities. It examines the civic mechanisms that connect personal beliefs to government action—including elections, political parties, interest groups, and the media—and how these processes influence public policy outcomes.

This is a course about action. In the political science world, we call it “political behavior”: how individuals and groups' behavior (actions) come together to form the political landscape. It's exciting, but it can sometimes be complex.

Course Objectives

Having successfully completed this course, students will be able to:

- Explain the development and measurement of individual values, attitudes, and opinions about politics (critical thinking, civil discourse)
 - Interpret the role of individuals in the political process (social responsibility, critical thinking, civil discourse)
 - Explain the roles of linkage institutions (parties, interest groups, and media) in connecting individuals to institutions of government (critical thinking, communication)
 - Demonstrate the relationship between electoral rules/institutions and outcomes (critical thinking)
 - Explain the connection between the political process and the policies generated by that process (critical thinking, social responsibility)
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Required Materials

Students are required to purchase the Central Ideas in American Government bundle from Soomo – this is an online text with embedded assignments. While you can purchase the access code from the UNT bookstore, it may be better to purchase through the link via Canvas after you have learned more. It is also slightly less expensive if purchased directly from the link in our course.

Final Grade

Because the online portion of 2305 (this class) is only one part of your overall grade for the course, your final grade will be a weighted combination of the totals from both this online section and your in-person class as follows:

60% final grade – online course assignments

40% final grade – in-person class assignments

Types of assignments

35% - Online reading and assignments

Read, Watch, and Engage Assignments include your assigned reading plus short activities built directly into the text – things like reflection questions or quick application prompts you'll complete as you read. You'll also find assignments tied to videos, podcasts, or other media that go along with the topic. Each piece connects to the others, so by the time you've worked through everything, you'll have engaged with the material in more than one way and from more than one angle.

40% - In-class activities

- In-class discussions
- In-class group activities
- Election Madness game (Michigan State election prediction game)
 - <https://election-madness.org/Links to an external site.>

25% - Two exams: midterm and final

- There are two in-class exams for this course. Exams will be completed during your in-person meeting. Exam dates will be announced in class.

Grading

Letter grades are assigned based on standard grade scales, using standard mathematical rounding to the nearest tenth where necessary:

A – 90-100%

B – 80-89%

C – 70-79%

D – 60-69%

F – 59 – under

Grading Policies

- Extra credit: If there is an activity that would be relevant it will be offered to the entire class.
- If you have any questions about how an assignment was graded, see a potential error in grading, or any other question regarding a recorded grade, you have 14 calendar days to request a meeting with your TA to raise the question or dispute a grade. After 14 days, we will not return to an older, closed assignment to regrade or reconsider.
 - You are expected to review the assignment details and reflect on the quality of the work you turned in. If you would like to meet, email your TA to set up a meeting (remember, we cannot discuss grades via email). You should come to the scheduled meeting with specific examples that demonstrate that you earned a higher grade than you received. If you miss your scheduled meeting, you forfeit your right to the grade dispute.

Late Homework Policy

- Due dates and times are clearly marked in Canvas for each assignment.
- All assignments are due by 11:59 pm Sunday evening.
- Please be mindful of potential overlapping class due dates and plan accordingly.
- Late reading and engagement activities will be accepted with a penalty of 5% per calendar day for up to 2 days. No credit will be given for late work after 2 days.
- Extensions and Make-ups: In general I do not allow extensions on assignments, alternate exam dates, or make-up exams. However, should you find yourself in an unavoidable situation where you will not be able to turn an assignment in on time or be present for an exam, please inform me of this as soon as you can, and not the day the exam is due or afterwards. In valid cases (such as events that count as university approved exceptions or where accommodations are requested) I will be happy to consider alternate arrangements.

Academic Integrity

The words “academic integrity,” entails a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.

- If work is found to be academically dishonest, we reserve the right to reassess past assignment submissions and regrade past assignments accordingly.
- If we discover or are made aware of any kind of cheating, plagiarism, or any other type of academic dishonesty, the assignment or exam will automatically receive a zero with no opportunity for resubmission. For definitions of these terms and concepts, see the by [UNT Student Academic Integrity Policy](#).
[06.003Links to an external site.](#)
- Academic integrity is paramount, especially in courses such as this one. Your instruction team will take cheating and any other academic integrity violation seriously, most likely by filing an Academic Integrity Violation report with the Office of the Provost.
 - This includes any AI-generated content submitted as the student's own, or any other unauthorized use of AI.

AI Policy

The AI policy for this online class is very simple:

Any attempt to represent GenAI (or other artificial intelligence) output as a student's own work will be considered plagiarism, fabrication, and/or cheating and will be subject to an academic integrity violation report.

AI Disclaimer: in many cases, Dr. McKay utilized Claude.ai (various versions) to assist with the creation of template code for consistent online content organization, rubrics and/or information formatting. All content included is written by Dr. McKay or another UNT educator.

Course Policies and Procedures

- I expect each person to conduct themselves in a respectful manner. I will not tolerate profane language, or any comments that disrespect your peers or professor.
- If you anticipate having to leave class early, please tell me ahead of time.
- Turn off all cell phones, PDAs, iPods or other gadgets before coming to class. Laptops can be used during class for note taking purposes only.
- Contacting me: Email me before you come to my office hours. If you are not able to meet with me during office hours, then request an appointment. If you prefer to email your questions or concerns, then please allow a grace period of 24 hours during the week and 48 hours during the weekends. Indicate in your email if you need to receive a response sooner than 24 or 48 hours. **Please do not email me through Canvas.**

University Policies

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Course Safety Procedures (for Laboratory Courses)

While working in laboratory sessions, students enrolled in **[insert class name]** are required to follow proper safety procedures and guidelines in all activities requiring

lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that UNT is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance. Brochures for student insurance are available in the UNT Student Health and Wellness Center. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention at the Student Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If students have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, they should be sure that the plan covers treatment at this facility. If students choose not to go to the UNT Student Health and Wellness Center, they may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. Students are responsible for expenses incurred there.

4. 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 the UNT Learning Management System (LMS) for contingency plans for covering course materials.

5. 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 Blackboard 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 student's 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. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

6. 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.

7. Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 [insert administration dates] of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu.

8. Survivor Advocacy

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.

Course Summary:

Course Summary		
Date	Details	Due
Sun Aug 23, 2026	Assignment How Do Political Polls Work? Video Quiz	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Political Ideologies Video + Quiz	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Political Socialization Video + Quiz	due by 11:59pm
	Quiz Fall 2026 Course Introduction and Policies Quiz	due by 11:59pm
Sun Aug 30, 2026	Assignment Political Participation Examples in US Video Quiz	due by 11:59pm
Sun Sep 6, 2026	Assignment Electoral Dysfunction Video Quiz	due by 11:59pm
Sun Sep 13, 2026	Assignment Media Bias Resource - Adfontes Interactive Media Tool	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Media Bias Resource - Allsides.com	due by 11:59pm
Sun Sep 20, 2026	Assignment Elon Musk Can't Sell His Teslas in Texas	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Elon Musk Can't Sell His Teslas in Texas	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment The Lobbyist's Playbook Video & Quiz	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 4, 2026	Assignment Chapter 1 Public Opinion	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Chapter 2 Workbook: Public Opinion	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Chapter 3 Voting and Political Participation	due by 11:59pm

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Date	Details	Due
	Assignment Chapter 4 Workbook: Political Participation	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Chapter 5 The Media	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Chapter 6 Workbook: The Mass Media	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Chapter 7 Interest Groups	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Chapter 8 Workbook: Interest Groups	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 18, 2026	Assignment Independents Podcast	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment What Are Political Parties? Video Quiz	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 25, 2026	Assignment Lawsuit: Texas forces out third parties to benefit GOP and Democrats	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment New political party arrives in Texas	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 1, 2026	Assignment Campaign Financing Video + Quiz	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 15, 2026	Assignment Policymaking Applied - Banning TikTok	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Salient Issues Fall 2026	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 22, 2026	Assignment Applied Policymaking in Texas	due by 11:59pm
Sun Nov 29, 2026	Assignment Civil Discourse Assessment	due by 11:59pm
Thu Dec 3, 2026	Assignment Chapter 10 Texas: Political Parties	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Chapter 11 Workbook: Political Parties	due by 11:59pm

Course Summary

Date	Details	Due
	Assignment Chapter 12 Elections and Campaigns	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Chapter 13 Texas: Elections, Voting, and Campaigns	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Chapter 14 Workbook: Elections and Campaigns	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Chapter 15 Public Policy	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Chapter 16 Texas: Public Policy	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Chapter 17 Workbook: Domestic Policy	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Chapter 18 Workbook: Foreign Policy	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Chapter 9 Political Parties	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Final Exam (Chapters 9-18)	
	Assignment Midterm Exam (Chapters 1-8)	