

# PSCI 2305-002: U.S. Political Behavior and Policy

## SYLLABUS

Fall 2025

### Course Information

**Meeting Days, Time, Location:** TuTh, 8:00-9:20AM, ESSC 255

**Course Modality:**

Traditional Face-to-Face Courses

### Instructor and TA Information

**Instructor name:** Dr. Natasha Altema McNeely (she/her/hers)

**UNT e-mail:** natasha.altema@unt.edu

**Office location:** WH 144

**Office hours:** TuTh 11:30AM -12:30PM.

**TA:** Adriana Marcela Garcia Garcia

**UNT email:**

adrianamarcelagarciagarcia@my.unt.edu

**Office location:** WH 173A

**Office hours:** Thursdays from 12:00 to 03:00PM

**TA:** Shyami Jayawickrama

**UNT email:**

shyamijayawickrama@my.unt.edu

**Office location:** WH 131

**Office hours:** Wednesdays 11:00AM-2:00PM

Office hours will provide an opportunity for students to ask questions related to the course, topics discussed and any concerns. The discussions are confidential.

### *Response Time:*

Generally, I will respond to emails sent through my university email address within **24 hours** of receiving them during weekdays. However, it may take me up to 48 hours during weekends. If I plan to be away from my computer for more than a couple of days, I will let you know in advance. Any technical questions can be referred to Canvas Support.

I will update the online grades each time a grading session has been completed—Typically, 3 days after completing an activity. You will see a visual indication of new grades posted on your Canvas page under the link to this course.

## Welcome and Teaching Philosophy

Welcome to PSCI 2305-002: U.S. Political Behavior and Policy. My name is Dr. Natasha Altema McNeely. My preferred pronouns are she/her/hers. I am an Associate Professor in the department of Political Science. I started my career at UT-Pan American in 2013 and transitioned over to UTRGV in 2015. I am excited to be here. My teaching philosophy consists of three goals: first, I strive to present concepts in a manner that students understand. In all my courses I use strategies such as class discussions and reading assignments. I also engage students in discussions of current events in all my courses. My second goal has been to create an environment (both in person and online) that inspires respect among the students. I encourage the students to respect their peers' opinions, especially when they differ from their own. The third goal has been to push my students to move beyond their expectations for the courses. Specifically, I encourage them to aspire for more than just "passing the class," to apply themselves to see how well they could do.

## Course description

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. Satisfies one of the political science requirements of the University Core curriculum.

Prerequisites: None

## Learning Objectives (You will...)

- improve your understanding of how the United States government operates
- develop and improve knowledge of topics including political culture, political participation, elections
- identify and evaluate the processes by which federal domestic and foreign policy are made and executed.
- develop and improve upon your critical thinking and analytical skills

## Required Texts

- Course Readings available on Canvas **(CR)**
- Eshbaugh-Soha, Matthew. 2305 Online Soomo Workbook, 8<sup>th</sup> edition. Can be purchased from the university bookstore or directly from Soomo Publishing. **(WB)**  
**Title:** *2305 Workbook: U.S. Political Behavior and Policy 8e* **ISBN 13 :** 8220144129920  
Students can buy access the Soomo workbook by credit card. Soomo also offers a free 3-week trial period that allows students to access the first three chapters of the Soomo workbook. There is also a passkey that is available through the university bookstore.

## Assessment of Grade

Component	Weight
Completion of workbook chapters	30%
Exams (3 total): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Exam #1: 20%</li><li>- Exam #2: 25%</li><li>- Final exam: 25%</li></ul>	70%
<b>Total</b>	100.00%

### Exams (70%)

There are two exams and one final exam. All the exams will be completed online via Canvas. Each exam will have multiple-choice and true/false questions. You will submit each exam by the end of the exam period. The time allotted to complete the test is 70 minutes. After 70 minutes, the test will close and all answers will be recorded. Each question will be shown one at a time, *backtracking is not available on these exams*.

<b><i>Exams to be completed in-class</i></b>
Sunday, September 28
Sunday, November 16
Tuesday, December 9

### Reading Assignments

ALTHOUGH THEY ARE NOT GRADED, THE READING ASSIGNMENTS ARE VERY IMPORTANT. THE READING ASSIGNMENTS ARE FIXED AS PER THE SYLLABUS, UNLESS I ANNOUNCE OTHERWISE. I WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ANNOUNCE CHANGES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT ULTIMATELY, STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH ME REGARDING CHANGES. COMPLETE EACH READING ASSIGNMENT BY THE DUE DATE SHOWN ON THE COURSE SYLLABUS.

## Canvas

*Check the course page on Canvas frequently (at least once a day).* Announcements and changes are communicated via Canvas. Written assignments should be uploaded to Canvas. Course readings including the workbook are accessible via Canvas. Students are responsible for checking UNT email/ Canvas for announcements, assignments, due dates, and changes.

## Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities are made available to the entire class at the discretion of the Professor. They can be offered for attending class as well as events outside of class. **Extra Credit will not be accepted after the due date or offered to individuals/groups of students under any circumstances.**

## IT Assistance

The professor and the TA are not an IT resource, we defer to the school experts at the UNT Student Helpdesk.

If you experience any kind of technical problem with UNT resources (e.g., Canvas), please contact the UNT Student Helpdesk at 940-565-2324 or [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu)

Please note UIT Helpdesk availability here: <https://it.unt.edu/helpdesk>

If you are having difficulty with the Soomo product, please get in touch with the publisher directly at:

<http://soomolearning.com/support>

## 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Lectures should be viewed on or before the date assigned in the syllabus.

- Readings should be done before or on the deadline assigned in the syllabus.
- Students are required to submit ALL assignments to receive a passing grade, even if they are worth no points towards the final grade.
- Class attendance is important. The best way to learn the material is to come to class. If you need to miss class due to a university-sponsored activity, then you must inform me of this in advance. If you need to miss class due to illness, then please email me before lecture and bring a signed doctor's note when you return to class. The doctor's note must be authentic and verifiable. If you must miss class due to the death of a relative, then you will need to bring a death certificate or document from the funeral home.
- Participating in class discussions is also important. Discussing subject material and completing reading assignments are ways of participating in class. Participation provides an opportunity for you to clarify uncertainties by asking questions and offer substantive contributions to the discussion.

## Course Policy on Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, Cheating, and Generative AI/Chatbots

This policy pertains to *all* assignments in this course that require writing. That includes – but is not limited to – papers and examinations. All written work you submit in this course must be your own, original work.

### What does that mean?

- You give appropriate credit to each and every source, and do so each and every time you use that source, irrespective of whether you paraphrase or quote that source. Failure to give appropriate credit means you present the work as your own.
- You do not use any material written by someone else or by generative AI – including, but not limited to chatbots such as ChatGPT – and present it as your own work.

### Why?

- According to the UNT Academic Integrity Policy ([UNT Policy 6.003](#)), any form of “unauthorized assistance” constitutes cheating. As a result, use of any artificial intelligence is not authorized for completion of assignments or exams in this course, unless specifically authorized by the instructor.
- Academic integrity is defined in [UNT Policy 6.003](#) and indicates that the following constitute violations of academic honesty: a student has another person/entity do the work of any substantive portion of a graded assignment for them, which includes purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, and/or using generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT).
- For additional information, consult [UNT Policy 6.003](#).

### What are the consequences?

- Violations will not be tolerated. Any suspected case of academic dishonesty will be handled in accordance with current University policy and procedures, as described at <https://vpaa.unt.edu/ss/integrity>.
  - If this is your first academic integrity violation, you can expect a failing grade on the assignment, and you will be reported to the university's Academic Integrity office.
  - Repeat violations will lead to stronger sanctions up to and including expulsion from UNT.
- These penalties will apply even if you did not knowingly intend to plagiarize or cheat. You must familiarize yourself with the rules of academic integrity and do your own original work – whether at UNT or later in your career – and ignorance is no excuse.

## University 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. [Insert specific sanction or academic penalty for specific academic integrity violation].
- 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](https://disability.unt.edu).
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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](http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct).
- Access to Information – Eagle Connect
  - Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: [my.unt.edu](http://my.unt.edu). All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail: [eagleconnect.unt.edu/](http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/)
- 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](mailto: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](http://spot.unt.edu) or email [spot@unt.edu](mailto:spot@unt.edu).
- 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](mailto: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 oco@unt.edu](mailto:oco@unt.edu) or at (940) 565 2759.

## Calendar of Activities

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**Important Note:** Activity and assignment details will be explained in detail within each week's corresponding content area. If you have any questions, please email me directly.



## Module 1: Introduction

The Founders, Perspective	August 19 and 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take Political Typology Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/quiz/political-typology/?group=ae2fe573de1ab74aa4537602ea104f1c">https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/quiz/political-typology/?group=ae2fe573de1ab74aa4537602ea104f1c</a></li> <li>Take screenshot of completion page and upload to Canvas</li> </ul> </li> <li>The Federalists, #10 (CR)</li> <li>People's History Chapter 4 (CR)</li> <li>powerpoint slides</li> </ul>	<p>Complete readings by 08/22, 11:59P M</p> <p>Screenshot due by 08/22, 11:59P M</p>
Political Culture	August 26 and 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America (CR)</li> <li>powerpoint slides</li> </ul>	Complete canvas reading by 08/29, 11:59P M
Public Opinion	September 2 and 4, 9 and 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Public opinion investigations and workbook chapter</b></li> <li>Zaller <i>Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion</i> Chapter 3 (CR)</li> <li>powerpoint slides</li> </ul>	Workbook chapters due 09/05, 11:59P M
Political Participation	September 16 and 18; 23 and 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Political participation workbook chapter</b></li> <li>Tocqueville Revisited: Participation in America in the Twenty-first Century Dalton (CR)</li> <li>Poor People's Movements (CR)</li> <li>Powerpoint slides</li> </ul>	Workbook chapter due 09/19; Canvas readings due 09/23, 11:59P M
<b>Exam #1: Online via Canvas. It will be available 12:00AM, Sunday, September 28 until 11:59PM that night. It will include the founders' perspective, political culture, public opinion, political participation and the media topics and chapters.</b>			

*Module 2*

The Media	September 30 and October 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>The mass media workbook chapter</b></li><li>- Mayhew: The Electoral Connection (CR)</li><li>- <b>Powerpoint slides</b></li></ul>	Workbook chapter due 10/3/25; Canvas reading due 10/5, 11:59PM
Interest Groups	October 7 and 9; 14 and 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Interest groups workbook chapter</li><li>- Interest groups: Who or what are they? (CR)</li><li>- Powerpoint slides</li></ul>	Workbook chapter due 10/10; canvas reading due 10/14, 11:59PM
Political Parties	October 21 and 23; 28 and 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Political Parties workbook chapter</li><li>- Lipset "What are Parties For?" (CR)</li><li>- Reread Federalist #10 (CR)</li><li>- Powerpoint slides</li></ul>	Workbook chapter due 10/24; canvas readings due 10/28, 11:59PM
Elections and Campaigns	November 4 and 6; 11 and 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Elections and campaigns workbook chapter</li><li>- Economic Theory of Voting (CR)</li><li>- Powerpoint slides</li></ul>	Workbook chapter due 11/7; canvas reading due 11/11, 11:59PM

**Exam #2: Online via Canvas. It will be available 12:00AM, Sunday, November 16 until 11:59PM that night. It will include the mass media, interest groups, political parties and elections and campaigns chapters.**

*Module 3*

Domestic Policy	November 18 and 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Domestic policy workbook chapter</li> <li>- Powerpoint slides</li> </ul>	Workbook chapter due 11/21, 11:59PM
<b>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK (NOVEMBER 24-28)</b>			
Foreign Policy	December 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Foreign Policy workbook chapter</li> <li>- Powerpoint slides</li> </ul>	Workbook chapter due 12/4, 11:59PM
<b>Final exam: Online via canvas. It will be available at 12:00AM, Tuesday, December 9, until 12:00PM It will include the domestic and foreign policy workbook chapters.</b>			