

US Political Behavior and Policy

PSCI-2305

Fall 2026

Online Asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Roman Hlatky; roman.hlatky@unt.edu

Office Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Office Hours: Thursdays, 2PM-5PM ([sign up here](#))

Teaching Assistant: ;

Course Overview

This is an introductory course in US Political Behavior and Policy. It explores how individuals, like you, form political opinions and engage in action to form the political American landscape. In other words, this course will familiarize you with some of the fundamental building blocks of American politics. In addition to its focus on “regular individuals,” the course will also consider the political behavior of other relevant actors like political parties and interest groups. Finally, the course will investigate the formation and realization of public policies – both domestic and foreign. While this is an introductory course in American politics, it will also familiarize you with the toolkit, both conceptual and methodological, of modern political science, providing an important stepping stone to other courses in the major (as well as in other disciplines).

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you 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. Analyze and interpret qualitative and quantitative data to support your arguments.
5. Demonstrate the relationship between electoral rules/institutions and outcomes
6. Explain the connection between the political process and the policies generated by that process

Required Text

There is one required text (webtext) for this course:

Political Behavior Workbook + Central Ideas in American Government + Texas Politics 15e
ISBN: 978-1-963859-41-6

- Access to the webtext can be purchased through Canvas or you can purchase an access code at the UNT bookstore.

- If you prefer to purchase a code, please use the official UNT bookstore rather than one of the other stores in Denton; there are many, many configurations of this textbook, all with the same title, so if you purchase a code from an off-campus bookstore, you may not have the correct version of the textbook.
- Some of the first chapters of the webtext are available as a free preview. You do not need to wait for financial aid to get started with your coursework. Please start right away!
- If you cannot afford to purchase the webtext contact me as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements.

Course Structure and Requirements

This is an online, asynchronous class – that means there are no regularly scheduled classes or lectures. All of the required class materials – readings and assignments – are accessible through the class Canvas page. To access the class materials, you can click on either the “Home” or “Modules” links on the left-hand side of the Canvas page. Besides exams, all necessary class materials take the form of the above-mentioned webtext.

The webtext has two types of assignments: (1) readings and (2) workbooks. In addition to these assignments, there are two exams in this course. Importantly, **this class is largely self-paced**, meaning that, for the most part, you complete the material at your own pace. Again, all assignments are completed directly on the course Canvas page.

There are only four deadlines in this course:

1. Chapters 1 through 8 of the webtext are due on October 12th 2026, by 11:59PM.
2. Exam 1 is due on October 19th 2026, by 11:59PM.
3. Chapters 9 through 18 of the webtext are due on December 3rd 2026, by 11:59PM.
4. Exam 2 is due on December 10th 2026, by 11:59PM

Each of the webtext assignments – readings and workbooks – is worth 100 points. Each exam is worth 600 points. In total there are 3000 points you can earn in this course. Your final grade will be calculated by dividing the number of points you have earned by 3000, and translating that percentage to a letter grade following the scale below.

Exams consist of 50 multiple-choice questions. You will have 75 minutes to complete the exam. If you have accommodations for extra time, this will automatically be reflected in the time you have to complete the exam. If this is not the case, please contact me immediately.

Once you open the exam, you cannot return to it at a later time. You can only attempt each exam once. You may not consult with other people while taking this test. Violating this rule will result in a grade of “F” for the course. You can, however, refer to your text and/or notes.

Grading Scale:

Grade	%
A	89.50 - 100
B	79.50 - 89.49
C	69.50 - 79.49
D	60.00 - 69.49
F	59.99 and below

Prerequisites

There are no required prerequisites for this course. However, in order to be successful in this course you will need to:

1. Access your textbook on Day 1 of the term.
2. Read the syllabus carefully.
3. Mark all due dates on your personal calendar.
4. Monitor due dates and assignments so you do not miss deadlines.
5. Pay thoughtful attention to current events and consider the way in which course content relates to those events.

Policies and Resources

Office Hours: I have scheduled office hours on Thursdays from 2:00PM to 5:00PM. **Office hours will be held virtually through Zoom. Please sign up for office hours in advance using this link:**

[Sign Up for Online Office Hours](#)

I am also available by appointment, so you can always email me to set up an alternate time to meet. I encourage you to sign up for office hours during the first couple of weeks of class and introduce yourself. Learning about your interests and goals helps me tailor the class and make it more useful for you.

Late Assignments: Assignment deadlines are not just for you. Deadlines give me sufficient time to provide you with thoughtful and thorough feedback on each of your assignments, and to return graded assignments to you in a timely manner. **Thus, late assignments will not be accepted in this class.** Please, if you anticipate being unable to meet an assignment deadline, let me know in advance so we can work together!

Technical Support: Neither the instructor nor the teaching assistants are technical support resources. 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.

If you are having difficulty with the webtext, please contact the publisher directly at <http://soomolearning.com/support>. If you experience a loss of internet connection or a browser freezes during an exam, you should contact UNT support FIRST (to start a help ticket) and then contact your instructional staff (a TA or your professor). Do both immediately. When you contact us, explain the problem and the steps you have taken to address it. If you fail to complete an

assignment on time or complete an exam because of technical issues, there is nothing we can do if you have not attempted to resolve your issue before the appropriate deadline.

Appeals: If you believe a grade does not reflect your performance, you are welcome to dispute the grade. I ask that all grade appeals be made in writing. In the memo, explain why you should receive a higher grade on the assignment. This should be done within a week after the grade is announced and submitted in office hours. After I read your memo, we will schedule a meeting to discuss why the grade does or does not warrant a change.

Religious Observances: By university policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss an assignment in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Academic Integrity: Each student in the course is expected to abide by the University of North Texas' Student Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found [here](#). If any of the policies therein are unclear to you, or if you have any others questions, please come see me during office hours. Plagiarism is taken very seriously at UNT. Therefore, if you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. To meet the learnings goals of this class, every student should have equitable opportunities in the classroom. Likewise, every student should feel comfortable engaging with the material, their peers and their instructor. To ensure that this is the case, I outline some policies and resources that help achieve this goal.

Statement on Learning Success: Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we will develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. I also encourage you to reach out to the student resources available through UNT. Many are listed on this syllabus, but I am happy to connect you with a person or Center if you would like.

Triggering and Challenging Material: In this course, we may discuss material that can be triggering or emotionally challenging. Each of us brings to class our unique personal experiences, making it difficult to predict how the material will affect you. If you anticipate that certain material might be triggering, please come meet with me so that we can discuss possible strategies to put in place that will allow you to engage in the course to your fullest potential.

Services for Students with Disabilities: This class respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities. If there are circumstances that make our learning environment and activities difficult, if you have medical information that you need to share with me, or if you need specific arrangements in case the building needs to be evacuated, please let me know. I am committed to creating an effective learning environment for all students, but I can only do so if you discuss your needs with me as early as possible. I promise to maintain the confidentiality of these discussions.

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

Access (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, refer to the Office of Disability Access website at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>. You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Counseling and Mental Health Center: Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep, and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful. If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>.

The UNT Learning Center: Did you know that more than one third of UNT undergraduate students use the Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance? All students are welcome to take advantage of the Learning Center's classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring. For more information, visit <https://learningcenter.unt.edu/> or email LearningCenter@unt.edu.

The UNT Care Team: The UNT Care Team is a collaborative interdisciplinary committee of university officials that meets regularly to provide a response to students, staff, and faculty whose behavior could be harmful to themselves or others. To learn more about the Care Team go to: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care-team>. If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or Professors, let the Care Team know. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn't feel right it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

Additional Resources:

- Undergraduate Writing Center: <https://writingcenter.unt.edu/>
- Libraries: <https://library.unt.edu/>
- ITS: <https://aits.unt.edu/support>
- Student Emergency Services: <https://www.unt.edu/safety-emergency>
- Career Center: <https://careercenter.unt.edu/>
- Intramural Sports: <https://recsports.unt.edu/programs/intramurals>
- Study Abroad: <https://studyabroad.unt.edu/>

Title IX Reporting

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UNT is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When sexual misconduct occurs in our community, the university can: (1) Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating; (2) Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation; (3) Investigate and discipline violations of the university's relevant policies (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/16-005>).

Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Senate Bill 212 requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, to report any information to the Title IX Office regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive any information of this type (including, but not limited to, writing assignments, class discussions, or one on one conversations) must be reported.

I am a Responsible Employee and must report any Title IX related incidents that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one on one. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee.

If you would like to speak with someone who can provide support or remedies without making an official report to the university, see here for a list of resources marked confidential <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/survivor-advocate/get-help>.

Course Outline

The following chapters (1-8) are due on October 12th 2026, by 11:59PM

- Chapter 1: Public Opinion
- Chapter 2: Workbook: Public Opinion
- Chapter 3: Voting and Political Participation
- Chapter 4: Workbook: Political Participation
- Chapter 5: The Media
- Chapter 6: Workbook: The Mass Media
- Chapter 7: Interest Groups
- Chapter 8: Workbook: Interest Groups

***** Exam 1 is due on October 19th 2026, by 11:59PM. It covers the above chapters (1-8). *****

The following chapters (9-18) are due on December 3rd 2026, by 11:59PM

- Chapter 9: Political Parties
- Chapter 10: Texas: Political Parties
- Chapter 11: Workbook: Political Parties
- Chapter 12: Elections and Campaigns
- Chapter 13: Texas: Elections, Voting, and Campaigns
- Chapter 14: Workbook: Elections and Campaigns
- Chapter 15: Public Policy
- Chapter 16: Texas: Public Policy
- Chapter 17: Workbook: Domestic Policy
- Chapter 18: Workbook: Foreign Policy

***** Exam 2 is due on December 10th 2026, by 11:59PM. It covers the above chapters (9-18). *****