American Government 1040.008

GAB 105

MW 2:00 – 3:20

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| **Spring 2014**  Professor: Rafael Major, Ph.D.  Honors College: Sage Hall 259G  1155 Union Circle, #310529  University of North Texas | Phone: 940-369-5323  Email: [RafaelMajor@my.unt.edu](mailto:RafaelMajor@my.unt.edu)  Office Hours: MWF 9-10, 1-2; TTh 12-2  Also available by appointment. |

**TA:** Rodney Gill

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**Description**: This course is an introduction to Government through the study of the political theory and constitutional practice of the United States of America and the state of Texas. As a citizen or resident of the U.S. there are very few subjects that are of greater importance for your future. As we discuss various topics this semester your opinions are welcome as long as you are prepared have them criticized by others.

**Syllabus:** This syllabus is not an unchangeable contract and assignments will be altered if circumstances require.

Supplemental Instruction

A Supplemental Instruction (SI) component is provided for all students who want to improve their understanding of the material taught in this course.  SI sessions are led by a student who has already mastered the course material and has been trained to facilitate group sessions where students can meet to compare class notes, review and discuss important concepts, develop strategies for studying, and prepare for exams.  Attendance at SI sessions is free and voluntary.   Students may attend as many times as they choose.  SI sessions begin the second week of class and continue throughout the semester.  A session schedule will be announced in class.  For information about the program, and session schedule/updates, visit: <http://learningcenter.unt.edu/>

**Required Text**:

*We The People with Texas State Politics UNT Edition*. Patterson and Mora. Published by McGraw-Hill (You must use the UNT Edition.)

**Electronics**: Lap-top Computers, Hand-Held Tablets, Cellular Phones, and other similar electronic devices are **not allowed** in class without prior permission form the Professor or Teaching Assistants.

**Annoying Things:** No Newspapers, hats, or noisy gum.

**Class Discussion**: Questions and comments are always welcome in this class. Please be courteous with your fellow classmates. You are allowed and encouraged to express your opinion on the condition that you understand other classmates will disagree with it.

**Grading**:

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| Participation/Attendance | 10% |
| Exam #1 | 20% |
| Exam #2 | 15% |
| Exam #3 | 15% |
| Exam #4 | 15% |
| Comprehensive Final Exam | 25% |

**Assignments**

Week 1: January 13

* Introduction Federalist 10, 51 Textbook

Week 2: January 20

* **Jan 20 - MLK Day Monday (no Class)**
* Chapter 1 Political Thinking and Political Culture

Week 3: January 27

* Chapter 2 Constitutional Democracy

Week 4: February 3

* Exam #1

Week 5: February 10

* Chapter 3 Federalism

Week 6: February 17

* Chapter 6 Congress

Week 7: February 24

* Chapter 7 Presidency

Week 8: March 3

* Exam #2 March 7

Week 9: March 17

* Chapter 9 The Federal Judicial System

Week 10: March 24

* Chapter 4 Civil Liberties

Week 11: March 31

* Chapter 5 Civil Rights
* Exam #3

Week 12 April 7

* Chapter 10 Introduction to Texas History and Politics

Week 13 April 14

* Chapter 11 Texas State Constitution

Week 14: April 21

* Chapter 12 The Texas Legislature

Week 15: April 28

* Chapter 13 The Executive Department (Texas)
* Exam #4

Week 16: Finals Week – See UNT Finals Schedule for Exam time and place.

**Appendix**

**Attendance**: Your attendance in this class will be recorded and function as a large portion of your participation grade. More than three unexcused absences could result in being **dropped from the course**. Excused absences are defined by the UNT Registrar.

**Religious Holidays:** The observance of your personal Religious Holidays will be recognized as excused absences.

**Make-Up Exams:** You will only be allowed to make up an exam with a University excused absence.

**Missed Assignments**: A one letter grade penalty will be assessed for each day after an assignment is due. Exceptions will be made for excused absences if approved by the UNT Registrar.

**Disability:** If you require an accommodation for a disability, you must provide me with documentation from UNT’s ODA before I can assist you.

* The Political Science Department cooperates with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please present your written accommodation request on or before the fourth class day.

**Plagiarism and Cheating**: The UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline defines cheating and plagiarism as the use of unauthorized books, notes, or otherwise securing help in a test; copying others' tests, assignments, reports, or term papers; representing the work of another as one's own; collaborating without authority with another student during an examination or in preparing academic work; or otherwise practicing scholastic dishonesty. Normally, the minimum penalty for cheating or plagiarism is a grade of "F" on the assignment with the possibility of an F in the class. Determination of cheating or plagiarism shall be made by the instructor in the course.

Cases of cheating or plagiarism in ordinary course work may, at the discretion of the instructor, be referred to the Undergraduate Studies Committee. These committees, acting as agents of the Department Chair, shall impose further penalties, or recommend further penalties to the Dean of Students, if they determine that the case warrants it. In all cases, the Dean of Students shall be informed in writing of the case. Students may appeal a decision under this policy by following the procedures laid down in the UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

**Withdrawal:** Students wishing to withdraw must notify the Registrar’s Office by completing a Petition for Course Drop. The last date to withdraw without instructor consent is **January 28, 2014.** The last date to withdraw without my reporting your pass/fail status is **February 21, 2014**.

**Grade Disputes:** If a student wishes to dispute a grade, he or she must do so by e-mail within **7 days** of the assignment being graded. The email must contain the following: *a*) the precise reason/question which is supposedly in error and *b*) a citation for evidence of the answer you say is correct (Text book page, or link to reliable website) and *c*) be sent from a UNT sponsored address (either blackboard or your my.unt.edu account). Merely “wanting” or “needing” a higher grade is not a sufficient reason.