

**PSCI 1040-007: American Government**  
**Spring 2013**  
**T/ Th, 11:00am-12:20 pm**

**Instructor:** Dr. Regina Branton  
**Office:** 138 Wooten Hall  
**Email:** branton@unt.edu  
**Office hours:** T/Th 12:30 - 2:00, and by appointment

**Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the roles of the United States and Texas governments in the American political system. We will study the institutions, processes, and decisions of political actors that define American and Texas government. We focus particular attention on the United States and Texas constitutions, civil rights and liberties, federalism as well as the institutions that comprise the three branches of government.

**Course Goals**

- 1) Understand basic concepts of the U.S. and Texas governments, Constitutions, and civil rights/liberties.
- 2) Understand how U.S. and Texas governmental institutions have changed over time.
- 3) Understand the impact that political events have had on the development of the U.S. and Texas governments.
- 4) To be able to critically evaluate the topics covered in the course.

**Personnel**

There are numerous UNT people to help you succeed in this course. Take advantage of it! The TA, SI, and TAL are your first line of defense in this course. They help with everything! Contact them first and if you do not hear back within 72 hours, send a second message and include me so I can follow-up.

**Teaching Assistant (TA):** Kevin Kearns. The TA is critical for your success in this class. His job is to help you with grade issues, class policies and procedures, and substantive material about the course. The TA can be reached via email at: KevinKearns@my.unt.edu Due to renovations, Mr. Kearns does not currently have an office. As such, his office hours for now are by appointment only.

**Supplemental Instruction Leader (SIL):** Zach Rector. A Supplemental Instruction Leader (SIL) component is provided for all students who want to improve their understanding of the material taught in this course. SIL 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 SIL sessions is free and voluntary. Students may attend as many times as they choose. SIL sessions begin the second week of class

and continue throughout the semester. A session schedule will be announced in class. The SIL helps with curriculum related issues, but he cannot help you with your class grades or policies. The class SIL can be reached by email at: drawingablank77@gmail.com

**Teaching Assistant Liaison (TAL):** Michael Galvan. The Teaching Assistant Liaison will be available to help you with any issues related to your eWorkbook. You may contact him directly through email at michaelgalvan@my.unt.edu if you are experiencing any eWorkbook emergencies!

**Course Materials:** The following items are required and are available at the UNT bookstore and/or on-line.

1. *We the People: An Introduction to American Politics*. **This text is available as an e-reader and in hardcopy. The materials can be purchased on-line (via the course Blackboard) or at the university bookstore (hardcopy only).** If purchasing course materials on-line, the e-reader is \$45.83. If purchasing course materials at the university bookstore, the paperback text is \$95.50.

2. Cox, Gloria C. and Richard S. Ruderman (editor). 2011 (8th ed.). *Perspectives on American and Texas Politics: A Workbook for Political Science 1040* Denton, (Pearson) [hereinafter **WB for Workbook**]. Available: only in eBook (electronic format) Please use the link on Blackboard to purchase & register your account online. The WB is \$20. Note, the TAL will host a technology help sessions Thursday (January 17<sup>th</sup>) and Friday (January 18<sup>th</sup>) from 8:30 AM-4:30 PM in the GAB, Room 550A.

3. Turning Point, Response Card RF-LCD. Each student must purchase a Turning Point Response Card—a.k.a. a “clicker.” (It must be *Turning Point Technology*—others are not compatible.) New and used clickers may be purchased at the UNT bookstore. **Bring your clicker with you to every class.** It is your responsibility to keep your clicker with you and to ensure that it has a functioning battery. Missed clicker questions cannot be made up. All students need to register their clickers through Blackboard prior to our class meeting on **January 29<sup>th</sup>**. (If your clicker is not registered, you cannot receive clicker points.) There is a link from the front-page of Blackboard to the clicker registration page and a link to a YouTube video with step-by-step instructions on how to register your clicker. If, after consulting those resources, you are unable to register your clicker, see me right away for assistance (and bring your clicker).

NOTE: You may want to purchase spare batteries (check with the bookstores about the round flat medical battery). Do not just “throw your clicker” in your backpack as this risks damage. Also, some students make the mistake of not removing the plastic cover on the top of new clickers (this results in a clicker “not clicking”), and students wonder why they have a “0” for clicker participation! There are iPhone, iTouch, iPad, and Blackberry applications,

but I do not recommend them because of cost and computer interface issues (it has been unstable and students have felt “ripped off” because of data usage charges).

Keep your receipt (and box) in case of problems or the bookstores cannot fix or replace it! See us IMMEDIATELY if your clicker appears to be malfunctioning!

### Course Requirements:

- Three exams (worth 20% each). **The exams will be held at If you are a first time user:**

**button to register your Pearson Learning Solutions Student Access Code. You can find your access code in the Student Access Kit that came with your text.register Please click the Sage Hall’s Computer Testing Center.** Each exam will consist of a mix of multiple choice, true/false, and/or short essay questions. The exams **are not** cumulative. The exams are closed book and closed notes. You will not be allowed to access any on-line resources during the exam. During exams, all of your course materials should be out of sight. You may not wear headphones. Phones must be turned off and put away. If I see you with a phone in your hand or visible during the exam, I will take your exam and you will receive a 0. You **must** notify the Class TA by email if you cannot take an exam on the scheduled day and time. Make-up exams will **only** be given to students who miss the exam due to illness requiring medical care, required university activities, or a personal emergency of a serious nature. Documentation or prior permission is required. Make-up exams will be scheduled on the “Day for Make Ups” (during the last week of classes). You may not make up more than one exam even if you have an excused absence. The makeup test is long essay.

- On-line Quizzes and Assignments (20% of course grade): To facilitate better preparation for tests, there are on-line interactive activities and quizzes that are scheduled for **each week**. The quizzes/assignments are designed to make sure you have done the reading and mastered the basic factual information in the readings. The quizzes and assignments will be posted in Blackboard. The due date and time will likewise be posted. TO AVOID POTENTIAL TECHNOLOGICAL ISSUES, DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO SUBMIT MATERIALS. **NO LATE QUIZZES/ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**
- Workbook Assignments (5% of course grade) Submitted online.
- Clicker Participation (15% of course grade): This course relies on Response Cards (“clickers”) to encourage interaction during class periods. The first clicker question is given within the first 5 minutes of class and the last one during the closing segment. Your grade for this section is a percentage of times you “click” in. There are instructional videos on-line to help you register your clicker (your clicker must be registered

in order to accurately record your participation). We use clickers every day in this course for public opinion polls and questions about assigned material. **BRING THEM TO CLASS BEGINNING THE FIRST DAY!** If you have registered it properly for the first week of classes, you receive **EXTRA CREDIT!** You must register your clicker on-line. It is your responsibility to keep your clicker with you and to ensure that it is functional. **Missed clicker questions cannot be made up.**

**NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS—written, on-line, or in-class—WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

### **Course Grading Scale:**

A	B	C	D	F
100-90%	89.9-80%	79.9-70	69.9-60%	<60%

**NOTE: I do not change grades unless I make a computational error. Begging for a higher grade will not work.** I do not give grades via e-mail or telephone. **There are no opportunities for extra credit. I will not give anyone a special opportunity for extra credit simply because you do are not doing as well in the class as you would like.**

### **Blackboard**

A Blackboard conference is maintained for this course at [www.learn.unt.edu](http://www.learn.unt.edu). Students are responsible for checking Blackboard for assignments and notices. You should check Blackboard at least every 48 hours to ensure that you are up to date on all class related information. Quizzes and assignments (discussed in more detail below) will be submitted on Blackboard and student grades will be posted on Blackboard.

### **Communication and E-mail**

When e-mailing me, please include the course number (PSCI 1040) in the subject line of your message. A note on etiquette: please sign your messages with your first and last name, and include an appropriate salutation. (Hint: you can't go wrong with "Hi Professor Branton.") Please articulate the content of your message clearly—do not use text message or instant message speak. Finally, before you e-mail me you should review the syllabus and the course's Blackboard page—it is very likely that you can find an answer to your question(s) by examining the course materials. You should contact me at my UNT email address ([branton@unt.edu](mailto:branton@unt.edu)). I strongly encourage you to e-mail from your UNT EagleConnect account to ensure that your message is not caught by a spam filter. I will respond to emails within 24 hours. If you do not receive a response, please follow-up.

If I need to contact you by e-mail, I will send e-mail to your UNT EagleConnect account. Each student **MUST** check their UNT email account regularly or set-up email forwarding so you will receive all course-related messages. It is your responsibility to ensure that you receive any and all messages I send to the class.

## **Class Policies**

### **Academic Honor Code**

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Incidents of plagiarism and/or cheating will result in a failing grade for the class and further penalties per the University's judicial process.

The Political Science Department adheres to and enforces UNT's policy on academic integrity (cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and sabotage). Students should review the policy (UNT Policy Manual Section 18.1.16), which may be located at:

[http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student\\_Affairs-Academic\\_Integrity.pdf](http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf)  
Violations of academic integrity in this course will be addressed in compliance with the penalties and procedures laid out in this policy. Students may appeal any decision under this policy by following the procedures laid down in the UNT Policy Manual Section 18.1.16 Student Standards of Academic Integrity.

### **Accommodations (ODA/ADA)**

The University of North Texas 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 you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You 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. 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 add/drop deadline. 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 Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

### **Department of Political Science—POLICY ON CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM**

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" in the course. In the case of graduate departmental exams, the minimum penalty shall be failure of all fields of the exam. Determination of cheating or plagiarism shall be made by the instructor in the course, or by the field faculty in the case of departmental exams. Cases of cheating or plagiarism on graduate departmental

exams, theses, or dissertations shall automatically be referred to the departmental Graduate Studies Committee. Cases of cheating or plagiarism in ordinary coursework may, at the discretion of the instructor, be referred to the Undergraduate Studies Committee in the case of undergraduate students, or the Graduate Studies Committee in the case of graduate students. 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 any decision under this policy by following the procedures laid down in the UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

### **Department of Political Science—POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

The Political Science Department adheres to and enforces UNT's policy on academic integrity (cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and sabotage). Students in this class should review the policy (UNT Policy Manual Section 18.1.16), which may be located at [http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student\\_Affairs-Academic\\_Integrity.pdf](http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf). Violations of academic integrity in this course will be addressed in compliance with the penalties and procedures laid out in this policy. Students may appeal any decision under this policy by following the procedures laid down in the UNT Policy Manual Section 18.1.16 "Student Standards of Academic Integrity."

### **Classroom conduct**

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 Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities 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 [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).

Please refrain from using laptops (used for purposes other than note-taking), cell phones, iPhones, iPods, Blackberries and the like, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the instructor), reading newspapers, falling asleep, etc. If you need a cell phone for emergency purposes, leave it on vibrate. If you use a laptop/ipad, please be sure the audio is off. I reserve the right to revoke the privilege of using devices if it interferes with the classroom environment or if it disrupts other students. Any student creating substantial disruption will be asked to leave. For repeat offenders, potential sanctions include dropping you from the class or giving you an "F" for the course. If you bring food or drink to class with you, be sure to dispose of it properly and do not make a mess for your classmates!

### **Submission of Materials**

All assignments, exercises, assessments, quizzes, and test scores are tracked in Blackboard

Gradebook. This saves resources, as well as being more efficient and effective. Most grades for on-line quizzes and assignments are returned immediately through the on-line system. I do NOT return assignments, quizzes, or tests; however, you will have the opportunity to verify answers with me. Material “disappears” on Blackboard after date due and cannot be turned in for credit. You may always turn in assignments early. IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE A GRADE ON-LINE FOR ANY PART OF THIS CLASS, SEE ME WITHIN ONE WEEK OF THE DUE DATE. I reserve the right to refuse credit if you do not do so. Do not wait until the end of the term!!

If you are having trouble with accessing Blackboard, you must contact the Blackboard Help Desk because they are the best personnel to help you in the submission of on-line materials. They are on-call during scheduled hours. Email: [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu) Phone: (940) 565-2324 (Sage Hall Room 130). Inform them of the issue, and they will keep me posted. When in doubt, university computer labs and assistants there can assist you with problems you have with submitting materials.

### **Class Cancellation**

The University may cancel classes for emergency reasons (I will inform you via Blackboard). In the event that classes are canceled, and there is a quiz, assignment, or exam scheduled for that class day, the work will be due on the next regular class day we are scheduled to meet. Please consult the policies in the Spring 2013 Schedule of Classes available on-line through [www.unt.edu](http://www.unt.edu).

### **Class Schedule:**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<b>January 15</b>	Welcome	
<b>January 17-22</b>	We The People Chapter 1	Democracy in the U.S.
<b>January 24</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
	<b>On-Line Quiz #1</b>	
	<b>WB Chapter 2 and BB Assignment</b>	
<b>January 29-31</b>	We The People Chapter 2; Appendix A8-A19	U.S. Constitution
	<b>On-Line Quiz #2</b>	
	<b>WB Chapter 3 and BB Assignment</b>	
<b>February 5</b>	We The People Chapter 20	Texas Constitution
	<b>On-Line Quiz #3</b>	
<b>February 7-12</b>	We The People Chapter 3	Federalism
<b>February 14</b>		Review & Catch-Up
	<b>On-Line Quiz #4</b>	
<b>February 19</b>		<b>Exam #1</b>
<b>February 21-26</b>	We The People Chapter 12	US Congress
	<b>On-Line Quiz #5</b>	
<b>February 28</b>	We The People Chapter Chapter 23	Texas Legislature
	<b>On-Line Quiz #6</b>	
	<b>WB Chapter 5 and BB Assignment</b>	
<b>March 5</b>	We The People Chapter 13	Federal Executive
<b>Dates</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<b>March 7</b>	We The People Chapter 24	Texas Executive
	<b>On-Line Quiz #7</b>	
	<b>WB Chapter 6 and BB Assignment</b>	
<b>March 12-14</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
<b>March 19-21</b>	We The People Chapter 14	Bureaucracy
	<b>On-Line Quiz #8</b>	
	<b>WB Chapter 7 and BB Assignment</b>	
<b>March 26</b>		Review & Catch-Up
<b>March 28</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
	<b>On-Line Quiz #9</b>	
<b>April 2</b>		<b>Exam #2</b>
<b>April 4</b>	We The People Chapter 15	Federal Judiciary
<b>April 9</b>	We The People Chapter 25	Texas Judiciary
<b>April 11</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
	<b>On-Line Quiz #10</b>	
<b>April 16-18</b>	We The People Chapter 5	Civil Rights
	<b>On-Line Quiz #11</b>	
<b>April 23-25</b>	We The People Chapter 4	Civil Liberties
	<b>On-Line Quiz #12</b>	
<b>April 30</b>		Review & Catch-Up
<b>May 2</b>		<b>Exam # 3</b>



**Revision to Syllabus**

I reserve the authority to change requirements by providing you with a 48 hour notice of changes in class and on Blackboard. You are responsible for any changes that occur during the semester.