



College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
Department of Political Science
PSCI 2305
US Political Behavior and Policy

Summer Session II 2021

Instructor: Dr. Richard Ruderman

Office hours - via Zoom; M/R 11am-12:30pm and by appointment

Zoom: <https://unt.zoom.us/j/5017343807>

Email: Richard.Ruderman@unt.edu

(I don't reply Friday nights/Saturdays)

Tutorial Assistants:

Mr. Mahdi Amirisefat

Office hours - via Zoom; T/W 1-2:30 and by appointment

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Ms. Stephanie Wise

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Zoom: <https://unt.zoom.us/j/8447624245>

Student Instructor (SI):

Mr. Michael Fish

Sessions: M 3:00-4:30pm; W 12:30-2:00pm; R 2:00-3:30pm; Sun 6:00-7:30pm

Zoom: <https://unt.zoom.us/j/84167584342>

Email: Michael.Fish@unt.edu

***The TA's and the instructor will typically reply to your emailed questions within 24 hours.

Also, the **Learning Center** offers tutoring services for this class. Lead Tutors facilitate in-person and online appointments, with Walk-In hours 12-2pm in the Sage Common Area each Thursday. Students can schedule [appointments](#) any time and can learn more about their services [here](#).

Course Description

This course examines those aspects of American government not found explicitly in the Constitution. It explores the complex ways of ascertaining the will of the people and its relation to the policies implemented by government. We will consider individual political values and attitudes, the mechanisms that connect individual beliefs to government action (parties, interest groups, the media, and elections), and the formation and outcomes of government policy.

This course is about action. Political scientists call it "political behavior": how the behavior (actions) of individuals and groups come together to form (and are influenced by) the political

landscape. It's exciting, but can sometimes be complex and even contentious. Your instructor and teaching assistants are here to help you understand the material. Even though this is an online class, there will be opportunities to ask questions and engage in discussion; jump in!

Pre-requisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Course Objectives

Students who complete this course 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) demonstrate the relationship between electoral rules/institutions and outcomes;
- (5) explain the connection between the political process and the policies it generates.

Required Materials

- *Central Ideas in American Government + 1050 Workbook*, published by Soomo Publishing (*please note: this is an ONLINE (digital) book + ONLINE workbook*)
- *Packback Questions* (an online Discussion community; see instructions for the required separate registration on our Canvas page; \$25 or less.

You can purchase a code for this text from the BARNES & NOBLE bookstore or directly from the publisher (recommended) by clicking on the textbook link in our course Canvas site. If you are waiting for financial aid, please access the text through Canvas and choose the free trial of the text (three chapters). If you do not acquire access to the course materials (including most of the assignments) in a timely fashion, your grade may be irreparably harmed.

Technical Support

Neither the instructor nor the teaching assistants are technical support resources. If you experience any kind of technical problem, please contact:

Student Helpdesk:

UIT Helpdesk
Sage Hall 130
940-565-2324
helpdesk@unt.edu

If you are having difficulty with the Soomo product, please contact the publisher [directly](#) (on the first day of class, Soomo won't be available til 1 PM, because of the 4th of July holiday)

Please note: If you experience a loss of internet connection, WIFI signal, or your browser freezes up on you during an assignment or exam, you must contact the UNT resources first, then send us

an email with the problem you experienced and how you're addressing it. Technical difficulties do not guarantee that time on assignments or exams will be extended.

Technical Requirements

Since this is an online course, you are required to have regular access to the course materials and texts through a web interface. In addition, you *will* be asked to use Lockdown Browser for exams, and you *may* also be asked to use the webcam feature.

Technical Skill Requirements

While this is an online course, the necessary technical requirements are minimal. You will need to navigate our Canvas webpage, follow the link to our online textbook, complete multiple choice and short answer questions in the online textbook, follow links to videos and some external websites, upload/download Word and pdf documents, and post to/comment on discussion boards (in Canvas).

In addition, you will need Adobe Flash on your computer, and you will need the ability to take screen shots (screen captures) of websites or your work that can be saved and uploaded to the course Canvas site.

Netiquette

The online environment can invite thoughtless and unkind behavior. Please keep in mind that this is a community of scholars, even though a virtual one. When interacting with your fellow students, instructors, and teaching assistants, you should be polite. This is best done by showing and assuming in others good will. If in doubt, pause for five minutes before you hit "submit." Consider whether you would say something to a person's face before saying it to them in an electronic format. Also remember that electronic communication does not convey *tone* well; a well-intentioned comment may be perceived as harsh or offensive. Whether you are the communicator or the recipient, please keep that in mind.

All of this is particularly important in a class on politics. We will, inevitably, touch on topics that are touchy under the best of circumstances.

Course Requirements

Get the Gist Assignments (6)	15%
Workbook Assignments (7)	15%
Investigation Assignments (10)	15%
PackBack Posts (7)	15%
Short Essay (first required; 2 nd optional)	10%
Media Bias Essay	10%
Exams (first two required; 3 rd only if you wish to replace an earlier unsatisfactory score)	20%
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 100%

NOTE: I will turn on the "drop one grade" feature for the Short Reflections and the Exams after the final paper and exam are due. That way you can see a true picture of your grade.

****Be aware that Canvas can *inflate* your grade (as a result of our "dropping the lowest score" rule)! If you do only some of the assignments, Canvas won't know to grade you down for the unfinished ones until the end of the class--you will think you have a higher grade than you do!! ****

Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	Below 60%

I use standard mathematical rounding, but I will make no other adjustment of grades. Please remember that your final grade is the culmination of work that you have done over the course of the semester. It is not the product of bargaining at the end of the term. Moreover, I cannot make an exception for one student without making it for all students, and that is not fair.

Late Workbook assignments will be accepted up to one week late with a 50% penalty. After one week, they will not be accepted. Late work is not accepted on Packback posts. Late papers will be docked 3 points/day. It does not matter why the work is late; this policy is uniform. If you DO have issues such as a family emergency or illness, your grade will not necessarily suffer; at least one grade is dropped for each type of homework, so having a penalized grade or even a missing grade is not the end of the world. Extreme situations will be given consideration if appropriate.

Course Expectations

A university course is a joint endeavor between instructor and students.

As the instructor in this course, I am responsible for:

- providing course materials that will give you the opportunity to achieve our course objectives and providing you with the tools to learn,
- providing timely feedback on your work and explaining concerns you may have with grading, and
- being fair in my implementation of rules and policies in the course.

As a student in this course, you are responsible for:

- reading and completing all requirements of the course in a timely manner,
- working to remain attentive and engaged in the course and interact with your fellow students, and,
- assisting in maintaining a positive learning environment for everyone.

Course Components

Get the Gist Assignments: Your online textbook has two types of chapters: Central Ideas in American Government (CIAG) chapters and Workbook chapters. The CIAG chapters have “study questions” or “Get the Gist” questions at the end of each page. You need to complete these questions for each chapter. You can reset and repeat the questions until

you get them all correct, so you should aim to get a perfect score! (**Once the due date passes, though, don't reset the questions because it will override your good score with a late score.) There are 7 Get the Gist Assignments. The lowest grade gets dropped, so the highest 6 grades will constitute 15% of your final grade.

Investigation Assignments: In the CIAG chapters, you will also find some breakout assignments called "Investigations." These assignments allow you to dig deep and apply what you know to tougher problems. **You only get one crack at investigation questions; you cannot repeat them to try to do better.** There are approximately two investigation assignments in each CIAG chapter for a total of 15 investigations. The highest 10 grades will constitute 15% of your final grade.

Workbook Assignments: The other type of chapter in your online textbook is called a workbook chapter. Each workbook chapter consists of four essays that explore some facet of the topic of the module, and the essays are followed by questions (usually multiple choice, but sometimes a "poll" (where you can see the summary results of the class) or a short answer question). You can reset and repeat the questions until you get them all correct, so you should aim to get a perfect score on the multiple-choice questions! An "assignment" involves completing all of the questions for all four essays. There are 8 workbook assignments. The lowest grade gets dropped, so the highest 7 will constitute 15% of your final grade.

Packback Community Participation: Excluding the first day, you must post a Question and 2 Responses (to questions posed by others) each Monday and Thursday (by 11:59 PM) in Packback to your Group. You should post a Question and 2 Responses for each Module (on the relevant topics). You will be prompted (and required) to post 7 times during the semester—if you do all 7, we will drop the lowest score. ***Please post your Question at the start of each period*** (to give your colleagues adequate time to reply). Late work is not accepted. Your Packback grades will constitute 15% of your final grade.

To receive your points, you must post 1 Question and 2 Answers per module, each with a minimum Curiosity Score of 50. Stay relevant to our class subject matter. Each grading period is listed on the Course Schedule below. Good questions and responses in Packback will be understandable and genuinely open (so don't just make a statement and add "don't you agree?"); provide a full description or context (usually at least 100 words); and use a cited source and supporting materials. Images, quotations, and descriptions all help spark curiosity. Curiosity and engagement are the key: ask about why something *specific* is what it is—or how it could work better. Politics can be frustrating, but focus here on *how politics works* (so your Answers can improve or at least explain it!). Your TAs and I will be supporting you with occasional "coaching" thoughts. For a brief introduction to Packback Questions and what kinds of Questions work, watch this [video](#). For more on the Packback scoring system, go [here](#).

Short Essay: You must write one short (250 – 350 word) essay. Specific instructions will be spelled out on Canvas. The due date is listed at the bottom of this syllabus and the

topic is posted in Canvas. You may wish to do an optional second essay at the end to replace a lower score: the higher essay score will constitute 10% of your final grade.

Media Bias Essay: You must write a Letter to the Editor on the claim of Media bias. Due date below; instructions posted in Canvas.

Unit Exams: There are two unit exams in this course and a final exam. They will be multiple choice. The final exam is cumulative and optional. You may choose to do the final if you wish to replace a lower unit exam grade. The top two exam scores will constitute 20% of your final grade. Therefore, if you are happy with your grade in the course after the second exam you are not required to take the final exam.

Policies

Americans with Disabilities Act Statement: 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 <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Academic Misconduct: Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University Policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of "F" in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. Policy and procedures are [here](#).

Emergency Notification & Procedures: UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at my.unt.edu. Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) ensuring you know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas, determining how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and identifying where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, your instructor will communicate with you through Canvas regarding assignments, exams, field trips, and other items that may be impacted by the closure.

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 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. In short, please be considerate of others.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault: The University has procedures in place that aim to be aware of the needs of those who make an institutional report of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Procedures include informing individuals about their right to file criminal charges as well as the availability of counseling, health, mental health, victim advocacy, legal assistance, visa and immigration assistance and other services on and/or off campus, as well as additional remedies to prevent contact between a complainant and a respondent, such as housing, academic, transportation and working accommodations, if reasonably available. The University will make such accommodations, if the victim requests them and if they are reasonably available, regardless of whether the complainant chooses to report the crime to the UNTPD or local law enforcement.

Anyone can report prohibited conduct by notifying the Dean of Students Office (940.565.2648), the Title IX Coordinator (940.565.2759) or the UNT Police Department (940.565.3000). The online reporting form is found at <http://report.unt.edu>.

Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

Federal Regulation

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations [website](#). The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at "Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G)" and can be found buried within [this document](#).

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

University of North Texas Compliance

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

- (1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.

(2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (telephone 940-565- 2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

Course Calendar

Please be aware that all due dates are 11:59 p.m. on the date listed unless otherwise specified.

<u>Canvas Module</u>	<u>Due Dates</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
			Although unlikely, the course calendar is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.
1: Public Opinion	Th. 7/8	Chapter 1 Chapter 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 Get the Gist • Am I Blue ... Investigation • Exit Poll Investigation • Packback #1 (Q & 2As) • Chapter 2 Workbook
2: Media	Mon. 7/12	Chapter 3 Chapter 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3 Get the Gist • Making the News Part 1 Investigation • #Divide • Chapter 4 Workbook • Packback #2 (Q & 2As)
3: Political Participation	Th. 7/15	Chapter 5 Chapter 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 5 Get the Gist • We the Protesters Investigation • What Does It Take ... Investigation • Packback #3 (Q & 2 As) • Chapter 6 Workbook
4: Media Bias Letter to the Editor	Fri. 7/16		Letter to the Editor Due; 11:59 PM
5: Unit Exam #1	Sun. 7/18		EXAM I between 6 a.m. and 11:59p.m.

6: Parties	Mon. 7/19	Chapter 7 Chapter 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 7 Get the Gist • Third Wheels Investigation • 2020 Party Platforms Investigation • Chapter 8 Workbook • Packback #4 (Q & 2As)
7: Interest Groups	Th. 7/22	Chapter 9 Chapter 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 9 Get the Gist • Evil Lobbyists Investigation <i>or</i> • American Pizza Community Investigation • Chapter 10 Workbook • Packback #5 (Q & 2As)
8: Elections	Mon. 7/26	Chapter 11 Chapter 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 11 Get the Gist • Brandon Brown Running for Congress Investigation • Getting into the Electoral College Investigation • Chapter 12 Workbook • Packback #6 (Q & 2As)
9: Short Reflection	Wed. 7/28		Short Reflection Paper Due at 11:59pm
10: Public Policy (textbook)	Th. 7/29	Chapter 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 13 Get the Gist • Health Care Quality Investigation • Bombing for Peace Investigation • Packback #7 (Q & 2 As)
11: Domestic & Foreign Policy (workbook)	Mon. 8/2	Chapters 14, 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 14 Workbook • Chapter 15 Workbook • Packback #8 (Q & 2As)
12: Unit Exam #2	Wed. 8/4	Unit Exam #2	Unit Exam available between 6 a.m. and 11:59 p.m.
13: Short Reflection #2	Thur. 8/5	Paper #3	Short Reflection 2 Due (if applicable)
14: Final Exam	Fri. 8/6	Final Exam	FINAL EXAM (if applicable) between 6am and 11:59pm