

PSCI 2305: US Political Behavior

Summer 2023 – M/T/W/R 10 – 11:50 – 117 Wooten

Instructional Staff

Instructor: Dr. Wendy Watson
Office Hours, M/W 12:30 – 2:00
153 Wooten Hall

Please contact me via the CANVAS Inbox messaging system. Emails received Monday through Thursday will be returned within 24 hours. Emails sent Friday, Saturday, or Sunday may not be returned until the following Monday.

Required Materials

We will be using a textbook (and a few other short readings) accessed through a platform/app called “Perusall.” There is a page in Canvas that provides step by step instructions for accessing the textbook and other readings. When you sign up for Perusall and join our “class” there, you will be prompted to pay approximately \$10. The \$10 is a licensing fee for the textbook readings. It is NOT a fee to use Perusall or a payment for any readings written by your instructor.

If you want to have a full copy of the textbook we are using (one that isn’t dependent on an internet connection), you have two options.

You can order a print copy (\$20.07 to rent from Amazon) or download a copy from the Internet if you prefer not to read on a screen. If you wish to order a print copy, the ISBN is 978-1-711493-95-4.

You can access the text through the publisher’s website (for free) and download a copy of the text as a PDF file (again, for free):

Openstax, American Government, 3rd Edition (<https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e>).

MATERIALS FOR THIS COURSE WILL COST \$10 + TAX. If you have a financial hardship that will interfere with your ability to succeed in this class, PLEASE contact the instructor immediately. We can find a solution, but only if we know there’s a problem.

Why This Course Matters to You

This is a course about action. In the political science world, we call it “political behavior”: how the behavior (actions) of individuals and groups come together to form the political landscape. It is also a course about power. It is a course about the power that forces such as the media and interest groups hold over you. But it is also about your power—and the power of people like you—to create the political policies you want to see.

Many students say that politics doesn't matter to them. But think about the things that do matter to you. Maybe that is school and the federal student loans that allow you to attend. Maybe that is immigration and the effect that has on your family. Maybe that is whether you will have a job when you graduate or whether you will be able to support your family with the money you make from that job. All of those things are affected by politics. If you care about those things, you care about politics, and you need to understand how you and other institutions come together to create those policies.

Course Objectives

Students who complete this course will be able to

- explain the development and measurement of individual values, attitudes, and opinions about politics;
- interpret the role of individuals in the political process;
- explain the roles of linkage institutions (parties, interest groups, and media) in connecting individuals to institutions of government;
- demonstrate the relationship between electoral rules/institutions and outcomes; and
- explain the connection between the political process and the policies generated by that process.

Technical Requirements and Support

Technical Requirements

You will need access to a reliable internet connection so that you can access our online textbook. You will also need to access modules, assignments, and quizzes in Canvas.

Technical Support

Your instructor has limited technical skill. 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

Please note: if you experience a loss of internet connection or a browser freezes during a quiz, you should contact UNT support FIRST (to start a help ticket) and then contact your instructor via Canvas second. Do both immediately. When you contact your instructor, 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.

Evaluation

Quizzes (4)	200 points
Perusall Assignments (9)	450 points
Final Exam	350 points
TOTAL	1000 points

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

A	900 – 1000 points	D	600 – 699 points
B	800 – 899 points	F	< 600 points
C	700 – 799 points		

Graded Assignments

Perusall Assignments

Perusall is a platform designed to support deeper and more collaborative learning. You will create an account with Perusall; pay \$10 to access our course materials through the platform; and do your reading through that site. As you read, you can annotate the text. You can offer definitions, pose questions, provide links to relevant news stories . . . there are many ways to turn the text into a richer, more personal document. As you comment, other members of the class can see your annotations, add their own, respond to your questions, and “upvote” your observations.

Perusall uses an algorithm to grade your performance on each assignment (each “chunk” of reading). That algorithm gives you credit for the time you spend working on the reading, the number and quality of comments, and your engagement across the full length of the assignment. As you work, you can view your Perusall score to make sure you are getting up to full credit.

There is a Perusall assignment for each of the nine course modules. Perusall assignments are typically due at 11:59 PM on Sundays. The exception is the LAST Perusall assignment (covering foreign policy) which you must complete before the final exam.

Quizzes

In order to check your progress as the course progresses, you will take a total of four quizzes, each due at 11:59 PM on Sunday. Each quiz will cover the two modules for the preceding week. These quizzes, taken in Canvas, are open book and open note, but they are timed. (You have one hour to complete the quiz unless you have additional time to accommodate a disability.) These quizzes are not intended to trick you or make your life difficult. They are meant to make sure that you are following the course content and keeping up so that you will be prepared for the final exam when it rolls around.

Final Exam

There is a single final exam in this course. It will be administered via Canvas, and you will need to take it in the Sage Hall Testing Center or in the Office of Disability Accommodation. Your time limit to take the exam is 60 minutes (unless you qualify for extended time). The exam will be administered between 10 AM and 12 PM on Thursday, June 22. Note that the exam availability ENDS at 12, noon, so you need to plan your start time accordingly. If you have extended time for the exam, you will need to arrive for the exam no later than 10:30 AM.

Attendance and Late Policies

You are expected to attend class. You need to arrive on time and plan to stay until the end of class. (We will take a 10 minute break in the middle of each class, and if you need to use the restroom or take a moment to yourself, you can leave and come back. However, you should not come and go a great deal, as it is distracting.) Arriving after 10:15 is the equivalent of an absence. You get one free pass (an absence that does not affect your grade) After that one “free pass,” every absence from class will result in a 20 point (2%) reduction from your final course score.

There is a grade column in Canvas that tracks the number of absences you have.

What happens if you get COVID? If you develop COVID and will need to isolate at home, we will create a system for you to attend class via Zoom. That includes participating with your team via Zoom. This is not ideal, so I will not do this for things like vacations, but we will go the extra mile to keep everyone safe. Let me know ASAP if you need to isolate at home for more than 2 days.

Policies

Grade Disputes

If you believe that you have received an unfair or inappropriate grade, you must notify me within one week of the grade posting on Canvas. You should notify me *in writing* of your concern. You need to explain to me, in writing, which assignment you are concerned about and why you feel your grade should have been higher. We can then schedule a time to talk about the issue if necessary. I make mistakes, and I will gladly correct them, so please do not start this process from a position of hostility.

Academic Integrity

<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/academic-integrity>

ADA Policy

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 Accommodation (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. 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](tel:940.565.4323).

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate. If you have concerns about the inclusivity of this course, please consider talking to the instructor about the issue; your instructor is dedicated to creating a more open, just, and inclusive learning environment and will be receptive to such comments.

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 Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials. In the event the instructor needs to cancel class because of a personal situation, she will contact you via Canvas Inbox.

Retention of Student Records

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 Canvas 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.

Student 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 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 <http://deanofstudents.unt.edu>.

Course Schedule

WEEK 1

Monday	5/22	Class introduction and political culture
Tuesday	5/23	Political culture, cont.
Wednesday	5/24	Public opinion
Thursday	5/25	Public opinion, cont.
Sunday	5/28	Due at 11:59 PM: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perusall 1• Perusall 2• Quiz 1

WEEK 2

Monday	5/29	Voting and participation
Tuesday	5/30	Voting and participation, cont.
Wednesday	5/31	Elections
Thursday	6/1	Elections, cont.
Sunday	6/4	Due at 11:59 PM: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perusall 3• Perusall 4• Quiz 2

WEEK 3

Monday	6/5	Media
Tuesday	6/6	Media, cont.
Wednesday	6/7	Interest groups
Thursday	6/8	Interest groups, cont.
Sunday	6/11	Due at 11:59 PM: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perusall 5• Perusall 6• Quiz 3

WEEK 4

Monday	6/12	Political parties
Tuesday	6/13	Political parties, cont.
Wednesday	6/14	Domestic policy
Thursday	6/15	Domestic policy, cont.
Sunday	6/18	Due at 11:59 PM: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perusall 7• Perusall 8• Quiz 4

WEEK 5

Monday	6/19	Foreign policy
Tuesday	6/20	Foreign policy, cont.
Wednesday	6/21	Course wrap-up Due at 11:59 PM: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perusall 9
Thursday	6/22	Final exam – SAGE HALL TESTING CENTER