



## Course Readings

There are two books required for this class:

Fiorina et al. *New American Democracy with Texas Chapters, Volume II (Custom Edition)* (Pearson Learning Solutions) (“Text” on the syllabus).

Cox and Ruderman, *Processes and Policies in American & Texas Politics, 8<sup>th</sup> Ed.* (Pearson Learning Solutions) (“Workbook” on the syllabus).

Both books are available at the UNT bookstore. Please note that the Fiorina text is a custom book. Versions of the text you find online will not contain all of the material you need for class.

You are also responsible for specific simulations, videos, and activities located on Pearson’s MyPoliSciLab website. After the drop/add period ends, I will give you a code you can use to register for MyPoliSciLab.

Finally, please note that you will be expected to complete a number of assessments through Blackboard Vista; you will also find links to the specific MyPoliSciLab content I expect you to use on Blackboard. You should locate the Blackboard page (through the UNT homepage) and check to make sure you are able to log on and that you see a link to this class on your Blackboard homepage.

## Class Responsibilities and Grades

In this class, you will be presented with a number of opportunities to earn points:

Quizzes:	12 @ 10 points each	120 total
Exercises:	6 @ 25 points each	150 total
Activities:	8 @ 10 points each	80 total
Projects:	3 @ 100 points each	300 total
Exams:	3 @ 150 pts	450 total
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		1100 points possible

At the end of the semester, your grade will be based on the number of points you have accumulated.

> 899	= A
800-899	= B
700-799	= C
600-699	= D
< 600	= F

I deal only with whole numbers so there is no rounding. Just as you would never go to the clerk at Best Buy and say, "Gee, I know this iPod is \$100, but I have \$99 and that's really close ...." you should not come to me and say, "Gee, I know a 'B' costs 800 points, but I have 799, and that's really close ..." Your grade is what it is.

Note that "extra credit" and wiggle room for things like family emergencies and illnesses are built into this grading scheme. The range for an "A" allows you to miss a couple of quizzes or an assignment here or there. As a result, you should not expect any additional extra credit. Similarly, you should not waste that wiggle room up front. If you skip the first five assignments and then get mono during November, you're in real trouble. Do everything you can, as well as you can, from day one.

### **Groups:**

To facilitate our small-group experiential learning, you will be divided into two sections (Green and White), with roughly half the class in each. On the calendar, you will see some days where Green students are to come to class; on those days, White students should be working on the material themselves. Similarly, there are days when White students are in class and Green students are working solo. Please note that midway through the semester, I rotate which group meets on Fridays and which group meets on Wednesdays. I swear, it's fair.

In addition to being placed in a section for the class, you will be assigned a team within your section. You will be assigned to a team the first Monday of class, and during the first week's team meeting, your team will come up with a name for itself (something politically relevant, please). Your team will be important to you. First, you will be working with your team (and possibly a few others) during class activities. Second, three of the four class projects are team projects.

For team projects (for which a grade is assigned to the whole team), I will multiply the points for the project by the number of students in the team. It will be up to the team to allocate those points. For example, if a project is worth a possible 100 points, but your team only earns 75, and there are 8 members of your team ... your team has  $75 * 8$  (or 600) points to distribute. You may divide them equally, or you may reward team members who did more than their fair share or punish those who slacked off. All members of the team must sign off on the point allocation before I will accept it.

I know working in groups or teams is a hassle, but welcome to real life. You will frequently be expected to work with a team in real life, and some of those team members will bring more to the table than others. Learning to coordinate with other people, to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and to collaborate effectively are important life skills. Here's a chance to practice them.

## **Team 1040**

My office hours and those of your teaching assistant are YOUR TIME. You are free to stop by our offices without an appointment during these hours; come with questions, concerns, or even a desire for further discussion.

In addition to me, you have two other people who are here to help you succeed in PSCI 1040. You have a TA, Mr. Chris Freeman (who will oversee some in-class experiential activities and who will hold weekly office hours) and two Supplemental Instructors (SIs): Ashley Stewart for Section 001 and Stephen LaFlamme for Section 004 . An SI is a fellow student who has taken PSCI 1050 in the past and earned an “A” in the class. The SIs will sit in on class with you and will hold weekly study sessions and exam review sessions.

Information about me, the TAs, and the SIs are located on the class Blackboard site.

### **Quizzes:**

The quizzes are quizzes on the readings. Every quiz is a short assessment you will take via Blackboard. Quizzes must be completed by 8 AM on the Monday we begin covering a topic. In other words, you need to read and take the quiz **before** we cover the material. You may take each quiz as often as you like before the deadline. Note, however, that if you do not at least score a 70, you will receive a “0”. I am not kidding here. Moreover, after you take the quiz once, you must wait 15 minutes before you can start the quiz again. Do not treat the quiz like a slot machine, where you keep pulling the lever until you get a 70. Take it thoughtfully (use your book!) the first time, get a perfect score, and move on.

In addition to the 11 political science quizzes, there is an “orientation quiz” that covers the use of Blackboard. In our course Blackboard shell, click on “start here,” read the material, and take the quiz. As with all the other quizzes, you can take this one repeatedly, but you must earn at least a 70. This “orientation quiz” is actually due on a FRIDAY, the 28<sup>th</sup> of Jan.

### **Exercises:**

You will complete six graded exercises in this class. Five of these exercises will be from the Cox and Ruderman workbook. While you have a physical copy of the workbook, the actual exercises you will complete will be entered via Blackboard. These five exercises are due by 8 AM on the due date (always a Monday). You should work ALONE on the workbook assignments. If we catch you copying each other’s answers, you will be sanctioned for academic misconduct.

The sixth graded exercise is an in-class exercise on the collective action problem. The date for this exercise is on the class schedule and the calendar. It is important that you are present. If you have a legitimate excuse for missing the exercise, you must notify me AND your TA, Mr. Freeman, in writing (not orally, it must be in writing – please use e-mail) and in advance (not the next day or the next week). For those with excused absences, we will arrange an opportunity to make-up this one exercise.

## Activities:

Over the course of the semester, there are eight in-class experiential activities. These activities are meant to help you better understand important course concepts and make this material just a little more interesting to you. These activities are graded for completion. In order to receive the 10 points associated with each activity you must:

- (1) do any pre-meeting preparation (always quite minimal);
- (2) attend class—for the full 50 minutes—and actively participate in the activity; and
- (3) respond to a reflection question posted as a thread on the class discussion board.

Note that your response to the reflection question must be thoughtful (not simply “no” or “ditto”), though it need not be particularly long. The response also must be posted by 8 AM on the Monday following the in-class activity in order to gain the credit.

Activity grades are all-or-nothing. If you come to class but don’t post your reflection in a timely manner, you receive a “0.”

## Projects:

There are three group projects required for this class, each of which is worth 100 points:

**(1) America Rocks:** Your team has been hired by a non-profit organization called “People for America.” Your task is to create a 3-5 minute video about what it means to be American, specifically drawing on our coverage of American political culture. Your video will be a tool of socialization; it may be aimed at elementary- or middle-school children, high school children, college-age young adults, or recent immigrants. Be creative with your video: use interviews, music, imagery, dance, video graphics, poetry, whatever you want.

By the due date, you must post your video to Blackboard along with a one-page, single-spaced memorandum (a template is available on Blackboard) explaining (a) who the target audience is and (b) what message you hope to convey. The class will view the videos and evaluate them based on a rubric. Your score for this project will be based in part on peer evaluation, in part on my evaluation, and in part on the evaluation of several guest “judges.”

**(2) Grassroots Mobilization:** How do interest groups, political parties, and candidates build support for their policies or candidates? Your team’s project during the second third of the course is to build that support for your idea: your socialization video. Your team should develop a strategy for reaching as many people as possible with your video. Get people to vote for your video. By the due date, you will deliver a three-page (single-spaced) memo about the efforts your team made to garner support, whether they were successful, and why you think those efforts succeeded or failed (i.e., what did you learn and what would you do differently in the future). Ten of the 100 points possible for this project will be based on the number of votes you garner. The more votes, the more points.

**(4) K-Street Simulation** For this final project (details to come), your group will act as consultants on a public policy proposal. Your group will produce a policy briefing (approximately 750 words) and a professional presentation (8 minutes, max). Again, details are forthcoming.

## **Exams**

There are three exams in this class; the last exam will be weighted most heavily towards the material in the last 1/3 of the class, but will also include a few questions from the beginning of the class. These exams will be administered through Blackboard. It is your responsibility to get yourself to a computer that is “tuned up” and Blackboard ready at the time the exam starts. The exam is only open during the specified time window. You have 50 minutes to complete first two exams, 2 hours to complete the last exam.

I cannot prevent you from using your book when taking the exam. As a result, I will use more difficult questions, questions that require you to apply class material to novel situations. Be prepared. In order to prevent you from collaborating with your classmates during the exams, Blackboard will deliver questions to you in a random order (so your Question 1 may not be the same as your best friend’s Question 1). Moreover, you will only receive one question at a time, and after you answer a question, you cannot go back to it. After the time for the exam expires, you will not be able to submit the exam, so it’s important that you save your answers regularly and pace yourself.

## **Class Policies**

1. Lectures are not intended to regurgitate the material in the textbook. Rather, you should do the reading before class and come prepared to delve into the more difficult concepts covered in the text. You are ultimately responsible for the material in the readings and from class. If you are struggling with the reading, it is your responsibility to seek my help.
2. Class starts at 8:00/11:00 and runs until 8:50/11:50. I expect you to be in class, ready to roll, at 8:00/11:00, and I expect you to stay until 8:50/11:50. Moreover, I expect you to be attentive. Arriving late, leaving early, talking to your neighbor, surfing the web, or otherwise distracting your fellow students will not be tolerated. I will ask you to leave class. Repeated or egregious instances of classroom disruption will result in referral to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. 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).
3. All workbook assignments, quizzes, and exams will be turned in electronically, and late assignments will not be accepted. It is your responsibility to plan for possible computer problems and to contact the appropriate IT support person if you encounter problems with Blackboard.

4. I will communicate with the class via Blackboard and e-mail. You can set your Blackboard e-mail account to deliver messages to whichever e-mail address you regularly use. It is your responsibility to check that account regularly.
5. If you require an accommodation for a religious observance or for a disability, I am happy to oblige, but I will not do so on an ad hoc basis. If you require an accommodation for religious reasons, you must notify me in writing at least two weeks in advance. If you require an accommodation for a disability, you must provide me with appropriate documentation from ODA before I can assist you.
6. All work must be your own. That includes workbooks assignments.
7. This class uses a blended format. While the blended format gives you a bit more flexibility in terms of when you do your work and hopefully will make the work more interesting for you, there are potential pitfalls. On the days you are scheduled to be in class, it is particularly important that you actually attend. Moreover, you have to keep up with the work; it will be easy for students to fall behind, to dig themselves into a hole they cannot get out of. Don't be that student. Finally, you have to let us know if you do not understand the material. We are here to help you, but we may not know that you're struggling unless you ASK. Which leads us to ...

### **University of North Texas-Statement of ADA Compliance**

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 sixth class day.

### **University of North Texas--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 the failure of all fields of the exam. 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.