

American Government: Process and Policies
Political Science 1050, Fall 2011

Instructor:	Dr. Wendy L. Watson wendy.watson@unt.edu 302J Sage Hall	Office Hours:	M/T/W 2 - 4, and by appointment
Meetings:	Section 002 MWF 10 AM ENV 110	Section 003 MWF 12 PM Wooten 122	Section 007 W 6:30 PM Wooten 122
TAs:	Evan Lowe T/Th 11:30 – 1:30 Wooten 167		Mike Marshall W/F 12 - 2 Wooten 156

Course Overview / Objectives

This is one of two courses on American and Texas politics required by state law and as part of UNT's general education ("core") requirements. The U.S. government is a representative democracy. That suggests a connection between the will of the people (you and me) and the policies implemented by government. In PSCI 1050, we trace that connection by looking at where individuals' political values and attitudes come from, the mechanisms that connect individual beliefs to government action, and the outcomes of government policy.

Students who complete this course will be able to

- explain the origins, development, and effects of US and Texas political culture;
- identify, describe, and explain the origin of individual political attitudes;
- identify and analyze data about political behavior and different political phenomena;
- evaluate polling as a means of measuring public opinion;
- demonstrate knowledge about the role and effects of the media on political behavior;
- describe the expansion of the franchise in the U.S.;
- explain and assess theoretical explanations for the individual decision to participate;
- assess the decline in American voter turnout;
- assess the role of forms of political participation other than voting;
- explain the formation of interest groups;
- explain the effect of interest groups on American politics;
- explain the process of electing the President and Vice President of the U.S.;
- explain the reapportionment and redistricting process
- explain the election of members of the House and Senate;
- explain the relationship between money and elections;
- recognize the stages of the policy making process;
- evaluate the need for governmental regulation;
- explain U.S. economic policy;
- explain domestic and international forces that shape U.S. foreign policy; and
- identify and critique current U.S. economic and foreign policy positions.

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, 8th 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. At the UNT bookstore, you have a choice of purchasing a physical copy of the textbook (which is three-hole punched) or a code that will give you access to an e-version of the textbook. It’s entirely up to you which you purchase.

The Cox and Ruderman Workbook is entirely online. You will be purchasing a code from the bookstore. This code will give you access to the workbook essays, links, and instructions for the workbook assignments. The actual assignments will be completed in Blackboard.

You are also responsible for specific simulations, videos, and activities located on Pearson’s MyPoliSciLab website. The code for registering with MyPoliSciLab will come with your textbook. Don’t lose it.

Finally, for this class you must purchase a Turning Point “clicker” and bring it to class every day. You will receive credit for using your clicker, and you cannot use it if you do not have it. If you have purchased a clicker for another class, you can reuse it in PSCI 1050 (no need to purchase a brand new one).

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
Workbook Assignments:	3 @ 75 points each	225 total
Group Project		75 total
Papers	2 @ 75 points each	150 total
Clickers	18 @ 5 points each	90 total
Activities	2 @ 20	40 total
Exams:	3 @ 100 pts	300 total

		1000 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.

There are an additional 45 points of extra credit available. Details of the extra credit opportunities are provided below.

Groups:

You will be assigned to a small group for this class. You will work with your group on the group project. In addition, for a number of our activities (in and out of class) you will work with your group as a "team". I will assign you to groups when the drop period ends. I know people don't enjoy working in groups on projects, but communication, coordination, collaboration, and compromise are all important life skills. Group work helps build those skills.

Team 1050

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, there are two teaching assistants who are available to help you with class material. Finally, you will have the aid of a supplemental instructor (SI). 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.

Workbook Assignments:

You will complete three assignments from the Cox and Ruderman workbook. To complete these assignments, you will need to do the assigned reading on the firewall protected workbook website. The site behind the firewall includes text relevant to the assignments, directions, and necessary web links.

After you complete the reading, you will actually answer the questions in Blackboard. You can only complete a workbook exercise once (so make sure you are happy with your answers before you hit "submit". Workbook assignments are due at 8 AM on the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted. No exceptions.

Quizzes:

For each topic covered on the syllabus, you are expected to read material in the textbook and complete exercises on MyPoliSciLab BEFORE we cover the topic in class. To assure that you are adequately preparing for our time together, you will take a quiz over the readings and the MyPoliSciLab exercises. You will complete these quizzes on Blackboard. They are due at 8 AM on the due date (the due date being the day we begin covering the topic in class). For example, we will begin our class discussion of American and Texas political culture on August 31. You should do the assigned reading and online exercises, and then take the Political Culture “prep quiz” before 8 AM on 8/31.

You may take each quiz as often as you like before the deadline. Note, however, that if you do not at least score a 7/10 (70%), you will receive a “0”. 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 7/10. Take it thoughtfully (use your book!) the first time, get a perfect score, and move on. There is no penalty for taking the quiz multiple times (it is your **highest** score that will count, not your last score).

You cannot take quizzes late, period. No exceptions. If you are traveling or know you will be busy, plan ahead. If you want, you can complete all of the quizzes during the first week of class ... but you cannot take them after the due date.

Note: There are 11 substantive quizzes. There is a 12th quiz, also worth 10 points, that covers the syllabus.

Clickers

You must purchase a TurningPoint “clicker” and bring it to class. For each of our “lecture” days, I will ask a number of clicker questions during the lecture. If you are present and click in an answer for all of the questions during a class day, you will receive 5 points. It’s all or nothing: either you click in for every question, or you don’t. If you miss the first one, you get a zero for the day. Miss the last one? Zero for the day.

The only way you can get credit for clicker participation without actually clicking in is by having an excused absence. What constitutes an excused absence? Not much:

1. You are representing the university at an official event;
2. You have a religious obligation;
3. A member of your immediate family (spouse, child, sibling, parent, grandparent) dies or is hospitalized;
4. You, yourself, have a contagious illness or a medical condition that requires a doctor’s care.

For numbers 1 and 2, you must give your TA at least 48 hours of ADVANCE notice, and that notice must be IN WRITING (via Blackboard e-mail); for #1, you must also provide your TA

with an official excuse. For numbers 3 and 4, you must notify your TA within 24 hours of missing class. Any longer than that, and the absence is not excused. Period. No exceptions.

Days on which clicker participation will count are denoted on the course schedule with an asterisk (*). There are 18 such days. If you miss classes, your extra credit will cover those absences.

Note that clicker attendance begins on Monday, September 12. You should purchase your clicker, register it, and begin bringing it to class right away. However, there is no penalty for not having your clicker or not having it properly set up until September 12.

Group Project:

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. The video itself must be posted to YouTube (set preferences to “unlisted”) or Vimeo (create a password to protect your video). You will then provide me with a link to the video and (if using Vimeo) the password.

In addition to the video, your group will be responsible for a short (750 word) memo that addresses (a) who your target audience is; (b) what message you hope to convey; (c) your rationale for conveying the message the way you did; and (d) how your message connects to our class readings on American political culture.

The class will view the videos and evaluate them based on a rubric (which is available on Blackboard). Your score for this project will be based on peer evaluations of your video, my evaluation of your video, the evaluation of several guest “judges,” and your group paper.

Papers:

In addition to the group project, you will be writing two papers of your own. These short (750 word) essays will require you to take a position and back it up with a logical argument. You will complete these assignments through a software application called “Calibrated Peer Review” (CPR). After you write your own paper in CPR, you learn to evaluate other papers, you then evaluate your colleagues’ papers (three of them), and then you evaluate your own paper. Your final score is based on the quality of your essay (as evaluated by your peers); the quality of the evaluations you do of your peers’ work; and the ACCURACY of your self-assessment (in other words, if you wrote a bad paper, you can improve your score simply by recognizing the weaknesses in your own work).

Activities:

In addition to our regular clicker-based classroom activities, you will participate in two more involved activities this term, each of which is worth 20 points:

(1) Collective Action Game: This game will take place in class on October 12 and October 14 (your date depends on which group you are in).

(2) 270 Vote Pick-Up: This game will take place in class on October 19 and October 21 (your date depends on which group you are in).

Extra Credit:

(1) Collective Action Game: On October 12/14, we will be playing a game in class. Your performance in the game may earn you up to 15 extra credit points.

(2) Red/Blue: On October 5, some of the clicker questions will be a group competition. In addition to the usual clicker points (for attendance), the winning teams will receive 5 extra credit points

(3) 270 Vote Pick-Up: On October 19/21, we will play a game involving the Electoral College. The winning teams in this game will earn 5 extra credit points.

(4) Redistricting Game: This game will be completed online. A link to the game is located on Blackboard. To complete this activity, you need to “win” the online game and submit proof of your completion to the TAs. (Details of that process will follow.) Completing the game **successfully** by the due date will earn you 20 extra credit points.

Exams

There are three exams in this class, each worth 100 points (or 10% of your grade). The exams are not cumulative.

All exams will be administered online. As a result, they are open book and open note. Please be advised: they are not easy! They will involve application of course concepts to new situations.

To reduce your ability to collaborate on the exam, the questions will be given in a random order. You will only be able to move forward in the exam (so if you do not answer a question before moving to the next, you cannot come back to it).

Each exam is open for a period of time (indicated on the course schedule). You will only have one hour to complete the exam from the time you begin. It is your responsibility to find a quiet place with a secure (non-wireless) internet connection to take the exam. On-campus computer labs, public libraries, and your home office (if you have a good internet connection) are all good choices.

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. I expect you to be attentive in class. 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.
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. You must be in class, on time, on class days. 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 ...

ADA Statement: The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 – The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) as amended, pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at www.unt.edu/oda. Also, you may visit the Office of Disability Accommodation in the University Union (room 321) or call (940) 565-4323.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, which may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

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

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
		8/26 - Introduction
8/29 - Introduction (Repeat)	8/31 - Political Culture Read: Text, Chapter 4 Due: Political Culture Quiz Due: Syllabus Quiz	9/2 - Political Culture
9/5 - Holiday	9/7 - Public Opinion Read: Text, Chapter 5; Workbook, Chapter 1 Due: Public Opinion Quiz	9/9 - Public Opinion
9/12 - Individual Participation* Read: Text, Chapter 6; Workbook, Chapter 2 Due: Participation Quiz	9/14 - Individual Participation*	9/16 - No Class
9/19 - Media* Read: Text, Chapter 9; Workbook, Chapter 3 Due: Media Quiz	9/21 - Media*	9/23 - No Class
9/26 - Catch-up and Review Due: Workbook 1	9/28 - Exam 1 8 AM to midnight	9/30 - No Class
10/3 - Parties* Read: Text, Chapter 8; Workbook, Chapter 4 Due: Parties Quiz	10/5 - Parties* Red/Blue Game	10/7 - No Class
10/10 - Interest Groups* Read: Text, Chapter 7; Workbook, Chapter 5 Due: Interest Group Quiz	10/12 - Interest Groups Collective Action Game (Groups 1-10)	10/14 - Interest Groups Collective Action Game (Groups 11-20)
10/17 - Presidential Elections* Read: Text, Chapter 10; Workbook, Chapter 6 Due: Presidential Election Quiz Due: Text of 1 st Paper to CPR	10/19 - Presidential Elections 270 Vote Pick-Up Game (Groups 11 - 20)	10/21 - Presidential Elections 270 Vote Pick-Up Game (Groups 1 - 10)

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
10/24 Congressional Elections* Read: Text, Chapter 11 Due: Congressional Elections Quiz Due: Peer and Self-Assessment on CPR	10/26 - Congressional Elections*	10/28 - No Class
10/31 - Catch-up/Review Due: Workbook 2 Due: ReDistricting Game	11/2 - Exam 2 8 AM to midnight	11/4 - No Class
11/7 - Policy Process* Read: Text, Chapter 18; Workbook, Chapter 8 Due: Policy Process Quiz	11/9 - Policy Process*	11/11 - No Class
11/14 - Economic Policy* Read: Text, Chapter 19 Due: Economic Policy Quiz	11/16 - Economic Policy*	11/18 - No Class
11/21 - No Class (Work on your public policy paper!) Due: Group Projects	11/23 - No Class	11/25 - No Class
11/28 - Foreign Policy* Read: Text, Chapter 20; Workbook, Chapter 10 Due: Foreign Policy Quiz Due: Text of 2 nd Paper to CPR	11/30 - Foreign Policy*	12/2 - No Class
12/5 - Video Viewing Day* Due: Peer and Self-Assessment on CPR	12/7 Video Viewing Day* Due: Workbook 3	12/9 - No Class
	12/14 Final Exam Opens at 8 AM	12/16 Final Exam Closes at noon

All assignments and quizzes are due at 8 AM on the due date (unless otherwise specified).