

PSCI 2305: US POLITICAL BEHAVIOR
WINTERMESTER 2019
DR. WENDY WATSON

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’s school and the federal student loans that allow you to attend. Maybe that’s immigration and the effect that has on your family. Maybe that’s whether you’ll have a job when you graduate or whether you’ll 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

- (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 generated by that process

Instructor

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Please contact instructional staff via Canvas.

Access the Course

<http://unt.instructure.com>

Online Office Hours by Appointment

Contact Dr. Watson via Canvas to set up an appointment. Online office hour appointments will be conducted on Zoom (a teleconferencing program you can access through Canvas).

Required Materials

Central Ideas in American Government with PSCI 2305 Workbook. 2016. Soomo Publishing.

(Access to webtext can be purchased in Canvas or you can purchase an access code at the UNT bookstore.)

Computer with stable high-speed internet connection + webcam and microphone.

Technical Requirements and Support

Technical Requirements

Necessary technical skill requirements are minimal. You will need to navigate a webpage, follow links, complete online quizzes, and upload/download Word and pdf documents.

You will need access to a computer with a secure, high-speed internet connection AND both a webcam and microphone (for distance proctoring of exams). You will need Adobe Flash on your computer.

Technical Support

Neither the instructor nor the teaching assistants are technical support resources. 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 that the UIT Helpdesk will be closed during the winter break (Noon on December 21 – 8 AM January 2).

If you are having difficulty with the Soomo product, please contact the publisher directly at <http://soomolearning.com/support>.

Please note: if you experience a loss of internet connection or a browser freezes during an exam, you should contact UNT resources FIRST (to start a help ticket) and then contact your instructional staff via Canvas second. When you contact us, 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.

How You Will Be Evaluated

All assignments and exams in this course will be assessed as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. “Satisfactory” does not mean that you are just scraping over the bar. It means that you have met the objectives of the assignment in a clear and competent manner. Assignments are either satisfactory or they are not; there is no partial credit or “sort of satisfactory.” The only letter grade you receive in the course will be your final letter grade, and it will be based on the “bundle” of assignments and requirements you have satisfactorily completed during the term.

This system provides you with significant discretion to control how much you wish to learn, how much effort you wish to expend, and what kind of grade you wish to try to achieve. You might decide that achieving a “C” is sufficient to achieve your objectives in this course, especially if you have other obligations that need to take priority. If you strive for an “A,” make sure you have the personal and academic resource not only to do additional work but also to demonstrate an additional level of engagement with and mastery over the material.

To earn this grade:	Accomplish the following
A	Satisfactorily complete 2 Unit Exams (or the cumulative final exam) Satisfactorily complete 12 Webtext Assignments Satisfactorily complete 12 Investigation Assignments Satisfactorily complete 2 Essays Satisfactorily complete the Introduction Discussion Post and the Political Knowledge Survey
B	Satisfactorily complete 2 Unit Exams (or the cumulative final exam) Satisfactorily complete 12 Webtext Assignments Satisfactorily complete 12 Investigation Assignments Satisfactorily complete the Introduction Discussion Post and the Political Knowledge Survey
C	Satisfactorily complete 2 Unit Exams (or the cumulative final exam) Satisfactorily complete 12 Webtext Assignments Satisfactorily complete the Introduction Discussion Post and the Political Knowledge Survey
D	Satisfactorily complete 1 Unit Exam (or the cumulative final exam) Satisfactorily complete 10 WEbtext Assignments Satisfactorily complete the Introduction Discussion Post and the Political Knowledge Survey

Tokens & Flexibility

Every student begins the course with 2 virtual tokens that can be “exchanged” for some leniency or opportunities for revision. You may use a token to:

- Submit an Essay up to 48 hours late
- Revise and resubmit an Unsatisfactory Essay that you submitted but did not earn Satisfactory credit for (resubmission must be completed within 72 hours of notification of the grade)
- Be awarded credit for 1 skipped or Unsatisfactory Get the Gist, Investigation, or Workbook assignment

To redeem a token: Navigate to “Modules” on the left side menu bar of the course and choose the “Token Redemption” module. Click on one of the assignments located in the module and follow the instructions there; hit submit and wait for your instructional staff to correct your grade and/or contact you with follow-up instructions.

What You Will Do in PSCI 2305

Orient Yourself: Introduction and Survey

You must introduce yourself to a small group of students (who will be a support to you throughout the term) via a short discussion board post.

You must also complete a short political knowledge quiz. You are not evaluated on the basis of how much knowledge you have. Rather, you must simply complete the survey. It is important because (a) it is part of a larger discussion of public opinion and (b) it is a test of your webcam and microphone before your first exam.

Build Knowledge: Webtext Assignments

There are twelve chapters in your Webtext. Half have “Get the Gist” questions (which can be reset until you get them all correct) and half have workbook questions. GTG questions are designed to help you check your reading comprehension and build your basic knowledge of the course material, while the workbook questions help you connect the basic course concepts to key core learning objectives: critical thinking, communication, personal responsibility, and social responsibility.

A Webtext Assignment is the completion of all of the questions in a Webtext Chapter (minus any Investigation assignments)

To earn a Satisfactory, Webtext Assignments must be completed by noon on their the due date and earn 70% of the possible points.

Demonstrate Knowledge: Exams

There are two unit exams and a cumulative final. Exams will consist of objective questions (T/F, multiple choice, matching, etc.)

There will be no make-up exams except for university excused absences, religious observances, or a documented family or medical emergency. Students with university excused absences or religious observances should make arrangements in advance.

To earn a score of Satisfactory, exams must be completed by 11:59 on their due date and earn 70% of the possible points.

Apply Knowledge: Investigations

The Webtext chapters that include GTG questions also include Investigation assignments. These assignments require you to engage course concepts on a higher level, applying them to real-world circumstances. There are a total of 12 Investigation assignments in the course (two in each of six chapters). Unlike GTG assignments, your answers to Investigation assignments cannot be changed once you submit them.

To earn a score of Satisfactory, Investigation assignments must be completed by noon on their due date and earn at least 70% of the possible points.

Construct Knowledge: Essays

Essays require you to use course concepts to solve real-world problems. Essays take the course material out of the text and into your life.

To earn a score of Satisfactory, essays must be (1) submitted on time, (2) respond clearly to the prompt, (3) use course material to generate appropriate evidence for your central argument, (4) be between 400 and 600 words in length, and (5) have no more than 10 spelling or grammatical errors. Prompts and rubrics are posted in Canvas.

Policies

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 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 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).

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 at <http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov>. 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: <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/get-cfr.cgi?TITLE=8&PART=214&SECTION=2&TYPE=TEXT>

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.

Unit 1: Opinion, Participation, Media

Assignments		Due Date
Orient Yourself	Introduce Yourself	Wednesday, December 19
	Knowledge Survey	Friday, December 21
Webtext Assignments	Chapters 1 – 6	Friday, December 21
Investigations	Am I Blue, Purple or Red?	Friday, December 21
	Exit Poll	Friday, December 21
	Are Young Voters Closing the Turnout Gap?	Friday, December 21
	What Does It Take to Register to Vote?	Friday, December 21
	Does Watching TV Make the World Meaner?	Friday, December 21
	Making the News	Friday, December 21
Essay	Essay 1	Sunday, December 23
Exam	Unit 1 Exam	Wednesday, January 2

Unit 2: Parties, Interest Groups, Elections

Assignments		Due Date
Webtext Assignments	Chapters 7 – 12	Wednesday, January 9
Investigations	The Party People	Wednesday, January 9
	Third Wheels	Wednesday, January 9
	Evil Lobbyists	Wednesday, January 9
	The American Pizza Community	Wednesday, January 9
	Getting Into the Electoral College	Wednesday, January 9
	Presidential Campaign Commercials	Wednesday, January 9
Essay	Essay 2	Wednesday, January 9
Exam	Unit 2 Exam	Thursday, January 10

Cumulative Final Exam: Friday, January 11