

American Government: Process and Policies
PSCI 1050 section 001
Spring 2012

Time: MWF 9-9:50a

Place: 055 Business Leadership Building (BLB)

Instructor: Mr. Evan M. Lowe

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Office Hours: MW 11a-12:30p and by appointment

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Course Objectives: This course will serve as an introduction to the processes of American and Texas politics and the impact of those processes on policy making. The material will address *how* “politics” works. We will cover the role of the media, the presidential selection process, political parties, and linkage institutions in addition to American political culture and individual political participation. At the end of the course, students should:

1. Have an understanding of linkage institutions, policy making, and electoral processes as they relate to American and Texas governments.
2. Have sufficient knowledge of how “politics” works to think critically about historical and current events.

Blackboard: Our course will have a Blackboard (Bb) site located at <http://learn.unt.edu>. This is the *new* Bb and is not currently the site to which the “blackboard” link on the UNT homepage directs you. You will probably want to bookmark this.

Required Texts:

- Fiorina et al. *New American Democracy with Texas Chapters*, Volume II (referred to as “textbook”)
- Cox and Ruderman, *Processes and Policies in American & Texas Politics*, 8th ed. (referred to as “workbook”)

Resources:

- Texas politics website, hosted by UTexas: <http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/index.html>

Each student must purchase both the textbook and the workbook. There are no exceptions. These are custom editions, so copies you may find online will likely not be the correct books and should not be purchased. There are, however, several options for purchasing the required texts:

- Option 1 *recommended* (print copy + e-text & e-workbook):
The textbook (Fiorina et al.) is available from the university bookstore in the student union. Purchasing the text from the bookstore is the simplest way to ensure you get all the material for

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the information on the syllabus. Any changes will be announced in class, and a revised syllabus posted online. Students are responsible for noting any modifications that are announced.

the course. Purchase of the textbook package at the bookstore will also provide you with an online access code for the e-text and access to the e-workbook and MyPoliSci Lab -- *ie.* you get the print text, e-text, and e-workbook as a single package. (These access codes may no longer work if you buy a used book.)

NEW: \$100, USED: \$75

- Option 2 (*all* online):

You may purchase an e-textbook and e-workbook package that is less expensive than option 1. Should you wish to buy *only* e-access (*ie.* no print copy text), instructions are located on our blackboard page. Purchase of this package will get you the e-text, e-workbook, and access to MyPoliSci Lab.

COST: \$42

- Non-options

You may see an option to buy *only* the e-workbook, or only the e-textbook. **Do not** buy either book without the other.

Registering for Pearson:

There is no Pearson course number. You should select “self study” when setting up your Pearson account. Detailed instructions for Pearson registration can be found on our Blackboard page.

Course Assignments

Test 1: 20%

Test 2: 20%

Test 3: 20%

Workbook assignments: 30%

Attendance quizzes: 10%

Grading: The standard university grading scale will apply (>90% = A, 80-89.9% = B, 70-79.9% = C, 60-69.9% = D, < 60% = F).

Grades will not round up. Grades will not be changed unless I make a computation error. The grade you earn is the grade you receive.

Any grade disputes must be addressed within two weeks of receiving your grade. After two weeks grades may not be disputed.

Communication: I will not discuss grades via email or telephone. This is to protect *your* privacy, in accordance with [FERPA](#). Grading questions must be addressed during my office hours. If my office hours are in direct conflict with your course schedule, please contact me to set up an appointment.

Exams: Exams will be multiple choice and will address the material covered either up to that point, or since the previous exam. The final exam will not be cumulative; it will cover only material since the second exam.

Scantron forms will be provided with the exam. Students are responsible for bringing a #2 pencil. Additionally, students should know their ID number (not EUID) for the exam.

During exams all bags, bottles, pencil cases, cell phones, laptops, iPads, etc. *must* be put away, either against the wall or under your chair. Hats and hoods are not to be worn. No exceptions. Failure to follow these rules may result in receiving a zero for the exam.

No more exams will be distributed once the first exam is turned in. Be on time.

The final exam will be Friday, May 11, 8-10 am. It will *not* be cumulative.

Make up policy: Requests for make up exams must be made in person and for a valid reason. No request will be heard after one week past the exam date. University sponsored events will be excused, but the student must bring written record of his/her participation in the event prior to the exam.

The decision to grant make up exams will be at the instructor's discretion. Make up exams will *not* be the same questions as the missed exam, and may be in a different format.

Workbook Assignments: Your TA will grade and have access to your workbook assignments. Questions related to workbook grades should be addressed to the teaching assistant. You must complete each of 4 workbook assignments (found on Bb) throughout the semester. The due dates are given in the course schedule and will not change.

Because due dates are known and assignments may be turned in online from anywhere, late work will NOT be accepted. If you have a conflict, you must be proactive and approach me prior to the deadline or as soon as possible. Workbook assignments may, of course, be completed before the deadline.

Workbook assignments are due by class time on the designated date.

When answering the workbook questions, students should use the sources provided in class (*ie.* the text and workbooks). Students should *not* search the internet and copy the content of search results as their answers. Not only is this plagiarism (see below), but it also does not meet standards for students engaged in college-level work. Verbatim replication, or close paraphrases, of non-cited sources may result in no credit for the question, assignment, or course.

Attendance quizzes: Several quizzes will be given randomly throughout the semester. These quizzes will not be difficult, but answering the questions successfully will require that you have read the material assigned for that day -- the answers will be obvious to one who has done the reading. Quizzes will be given in the first five minutes of class and *cannot* be made up. This 10% of your grade will be based on correct answers to these pop quizzes. Be on time and prepared.

Miscellaneous Information:

Email Etiquette: Email is the preferred means of contact for the instructor and teaching assistant. When emailing either the instructor or teaching assistant, you need to follow a few rules:

1. Include the course and section number (PSCI 1050.001) in the subject line of the email. We have multiple courses and including this information will help ensure a prompt and accurate response.

2. Do *not* use text/instant message language. Emails that lack punctuation, or are spelled such that your instructor or TA cannot be sure what question you are asking will not receive responses.
3. Clearly identify yourself. This means you should use the name you have registered with the university. If the course roster says that your name is Eugene Smith but you go by your middle name, we do not know this and will not know whom Ben Smith is.
4. Check the syllabus. If you are asking a question about the course, it is likely that the answer is to be found on the syllabus.

PowerPoint Slides: Lecture slides will be made available on the Blackboard site. These slides are *not* a substitute for active note taking. The lecture slides provide an outline for the material covered in lecture. Simply printing off, or copying down the material from the slides will be of little to no help when reviewing for exams.

Attendance: Attendance will not be taken except in the form of the quizzes. Attendance is highly encouraged. Failure to attend regularly will likely result in more than the loss of the 10% attendance grade; regular attendance is strongly related to better performance on exams and workbook assignments.

Classroom Conduct: There will be little tolerance for disruptive behavior. Students are to be attentive and awake in class (even at 9am). Texting, online chatting, surfing the internet, carrying on conversation with those around you, etc. will not be tolerated as these things are a distraction to other students. Students not displaying appropriate conduct will be asked to leave class. Coffee and other beverages are fine, but please do not eat in class.

Class will begin at 9:00a and end at 9:50. I will not hold you past 9:50. Therefore, do not begin shuffling papers and loading your bags prior to the end of class. Not only is this rude, but it is distracting to other students.

Academic Integrity (cheating): No form of cheating will be tolerated. The UNT catalogue states that cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) depending on sources that are unauthorized and/or without proper citation, (2) unauthorized assistance on exams/workbook assignments, (3) possession of faculty or staff's academic material. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: (1) a direct quotation or paraphrase of uncited material, whether intentional or owing to neglect; (2) use of work done by another individual, even if done expressly for you. Cheating and/or plagiarism will be treated severely. Cheating or plagiarism may result in failure of the course and the filing of a report with the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), who may impose further penalties.

Religious Observances: I will be happy to recognize and excuse religious holidays and observances that conflict with class assignments and/or meetings. However, it is the student's responsibility to bring these to my attention ahead of time -- notification after the fact will not suffice for excuse.

ADA Statement: Students with a disability who wish to be accommodated should see the instructor by the end of the second week of class so that the appropriate material can be filed with the [Office of Disability Accommodation](#) (ODA). Students with disabilities are welcome to participate without special accommodation, but filing paperwork leaves the option open should accommodation be desired later. ODA makes final recommendations regarding what constitutes "reasonable accommodation," the standard established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Week 1		1/18: Syllabus	1/20: Political Foundations have read: text ch. 1
Week 2	1/23: New American Democracy?	1/25: American political culture have read: text ch. 4	1/27: Political culture have read: Huntington 1981, Ch. 1 (file on Bb homepage)
Week 3	1/30: Public opinion: what is it? have read: text ch. 5 & wb ch. 1	2/1: Public opinion: polling	2/3: Public opinion: polls and governing
Week 4	2/6: TX culture and opinion have read: TX-1	2/8: Participation: voting have read: text ch. 6 & wb ch. 2	2/10: Participation: voting
Week 5	2/13: Participation: beyond voting DUE: workbook #1	2/15: Exam 1 review	2/17: Exam 1
Week 6	2/20: Parties: what they do have read: text ch. 8 & wb ch. 4	2/22: Parties: party systems	2/24: Parties: conclusion
Week 7	2/27: Interest groups: in-class activity	2/29: Interest groups: creation and maintenance have read: text ch. 7 & wb ch. 5	3/2: Interest groups: impact on government
Week 8	3/5: Interest Groups: conclusion DUE: workbook #2	3/7: Elections: presidential have read: text ch. 10 & wb ch. 6	3/9: Elections: presidential
Week 9	3/12: Elections: congressional have read: text ch. 11	3/14: Elections: representation	3/16: NO CLASS
Week 10	3/19: SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)	3/21: SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)	3/23: SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)
Week 11	3/26: TX parties, groups, and the elections process have read: TX-2	3/28: Media: development have read: text ch. 9 & wb ch. 3	3/30: Media: effects
Week 12	4/2: Media: impact on government DUE: workbook #3	4/4: Exam 2 review	4/6: Exam 2

	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Week 13	4/9: Policy process have read: text ch. 18 & wb ch. 8	4/11: Policy process II	4/13: Domestic policy
Week 14	4/16: Domestic policy	4/18: Economic Policy have read: text ch. 19	4/20: Economic Policy
Week 15	4/23: Economic Policy	4/25: Foreign Policy have read: text ch. 20 & wb ch. 10	4/27: Foreign Policy
Week 16	4/30: Foreign policy DUE: workbook #4	5/2: Exam 3 review	5/4: NO CLASS
Week 17	5/7: FINALS WEEK (NO CLASS)	5/9: FINALS WEEK (NO CLASS)	5/11: Exam 3 8 AM - 10 AM - 055 BLB