

PSCI 1040 - American Government: Laws and Institutions

University of North Texas
Summer 5w2 2017
MTWR • 8:00–9:50a (BLB 070)

Instructor

Evan M. Lowe
EvanLowe@my.unt.edu
Office: WH 140
Office Hours: TR 10–12a & by appt.

Teaching Assistant

Seyma Akyol
SeymaAkyol@my.unt.edu
Office: WH 111
Office Hours: W 10a-1p

Supplemental Instructor (SI)

Marcy Hanson
marcyhanson@my.unt.edu

Sessions: MW 10:30-11:50 (BLB 260), T 2:00-3:20 (ART 219), R 4:00-5:20 (ART 219)

Course Description

This course provides an introductory overview of American and Texas politics, focusing on their laws and institutions. We will begin with a discussion of constitutional foundations and then turn to the construction and operation of the different branches of government. We will also discuss the concepts and implementation of civil rights, civil liberties, and federalism. Our understanding of American and Texas government will be applied to current events and issues.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, a student who has mastered the material will be able to:

1. Explain the traditions that led to the U.S. and Texas constitutions.
2. Describe the concepts and effects of separation of powers and checks and balances in theory and practice.
3. Demonstrate understanding of the operation of federalism in the U.S.
4. Understand and evaluate the powers exercised (and interaction thereof) by each branch of government.
5. Think critically about course topics.
6. Apply concepts to contemporary situations and questions.

Course Materials

Please buy the following items for this course:

- **Textbook:** Patterson, Thomas. *U.S. & Texas Government*. McGraw Hill publishers. (A custom book. Buy only this or the 11th edition of *PSCI 1040*...)
- **Workbook:** PSCI 1040 Workbook. Soomo Publishing (online)

Grading

Exam 1: 25%

Exam 2: 25%

Exam 3: 25%

Workbook: 28%

Total: 103%

Assignments & Grades

Grading

We use the standard grading system for UNT: 90 – 100% = A; 80 – <90% = B; 70 – <80% = C; 60 – <70% = D; ≤60% = F

I don't change grades unless I have made a computational error. Final course grades are not rounded. Grades will be posted on Blackboard. If you are not satisfied with your grades, I urge you to see me as soon as possible so we can work to correct things. No extra credit will be available other than any I may announce in class or that is described herein – please do not ask for personal extra credit.

Exams

Exams will be administered online (via Blackboard) on the day indicated on the course schedule. Each exam will cover the material for that unit; regular exams are *not* cumulative. On exam day you do not need to come to class. Exams will be “open” from 8a-6p on the day of the exam. Once you begin the exam, you will have 90 minutes to complete it. Questions and answers will be randomized, so your exam will not look the same as anyone else's exam. You will need to answer a question and save your answer prior to moving on to the next question. You will not be able to revisit the question after moving on. I recommend *not using a wifi* internet connection during the exam. If you have a problem with the exam, contact me immediately.

Given the nature of the exams in this course, an exam missed without a University approved absence cannot be made up. If you miss an exam, please plan to take the cumulative final exam to replace that score.

There will also be a cumulative final exam on the scheduled final exam day (11 August, 2017). The final is optional and will replace your lowest exam grade if you perform better. The format will be the same as the other exams except it will cover content from the entire course.

Workbook

The workbook for this course has questions interspersed throughout the text. You should answer each of these, including the short answer questions. Be sure to submit/post your short answer questions after typing your response! You may return to the assignment to reset your answers and do the assignment again to improve your score as many times as you would like until the due date.

Each workbook assignment goes together with material discussed in class. You should complete the assignments prior to the respective lecture. The due dates listed in the course schedule are “soft” due dates. All workbook assignments must be completed, however, prior to August 9, 2017 at 11pm. That is the “hard” deadline; assignments submitted or modified after that date will not be given credit. I encourage you to keep pace with class or work ahead.

Grade Disputes

If you wish to dispute a grade or exam score, you must do so in person within 7 days of the due date. You should email the instructor (a) a clear explanation of the basis for the dispute, (b) what grade is more representative and why, and (c) a reference to a source that supports your objection. Disputes raised after 7 days will not be addressed.

Course Policies

Classroom Conduct

Please be courteous to your classmates. There will be little tolerance for disruptive behavior. Watching videos online, surfing websites, etc. is distracting to the people around you. Please be attentive and awake. Beverages are fine in class, but please do not bring food. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>.

Attendance

Attendance is expected but will not be taken or graded in this class. Students who regularly attend class tend to receive grades that are nearly a full letter grade higher. Regular attendance is all the more important in this quick paced summer course

Communication

I will not discuss grades via telephone or email. Preferred contact is *in person*. If you cannot make my office hours, I am happy to schedule a time to meet with you.

I do have some rules about email:

1. Include your name, course number, appropriate salutation, and a direct question. I should know to whom I am responding and what the response should entail without having to guess at or hunt for that information. I will not respond to emails that don't contain these things.
2. Check the syllabus for an answer to your question. If it is directly addressed by information in the syllabus, I will not respond.
3. Students who email me a funny picture of the television character ALF – photoshopping encouraged! – with the subject line “Melmac is not a place for cats” will receive 1 extra percentage point on an exam. May only be done once.
4. No texting language. I understand that language evolves, but if ur gon2 tryta rite thngz 2 me dat i dunno wat ur saying when u kno jus wanna say what?... I won't struggle to figure things out. Professional email practice.
5. If you haven't received a response, please do follow up. I try to respond to emails within 24 hours, during the week. Responses over the weekend may be longer, and not on Saturday. If you haven't gotten a response, follow up with another email or -- better! -- come to see me in my office.

Notifications/Statements

Academic Integrity (aka cheating)

I will not tolerate this, and neither should you. You know what cheating is. Don't do it. The UNT catalogue says cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) depending on sources that are unauthorized and/or without proper citation, (2) unauthorized assistance on exams/assignments, (3) possession of faculty or staff's academic material.

Plagiarism is taking another's statements/ideas and playing them off as your own. It includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of a direct quotation or paraphrase from uncited material, *whether intentional or owing to neglect*; (2) use of work done by another individual, even if done expressly for you; or (3) use of material submitted for another course.

Cheating and plagiarism will be treated severely and, at the least, will involve filing a report with the Office of Student Rights and Responsibility and failure of the assignment and/or course. The OSSR may take further disciplinary action.

If anything about this is unclear or you are uncertain about anything, please ask.

Religious Observances

In accordance with University policy (UNT Policy 15.2.5), I am happy to excuse student absences owing to religious holidays or observances that conflict with course meetings or assignments provided I am given advance warning. Notification is the student's responsibility.

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 (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, you must contact the Office of Disability Accommodation before accommodations can be given.

Students who wish to utilize the testing center must first complete an Alternative Test Request form from the Office of Disability Accommodations that must be signed by the instructor for each course and exam that he or she wishing to take at ODA Testing Center. The form must then be turned in to ODA's main office at the University Union Suite 322A at least 72 hours prior to any regularly scheduled exam and 1 week before a final exam. A new letter of accommodation must be obtained for every semester, and students must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation. For more information, please visit <http://www.unt.edu/oda/index.html>.

Students who qualify for accommodation may opt not to use it. Though, should a student later wish to take advantage of their accommodation, having the paperwork taken care of already is very helpful.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault

UNT is committed to providing an environment free from all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experience or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders and more.

UNT's Dean of Students website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their needs: http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate and she can be reached through email at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students office at 940.565.6248.

Course Materials and Copyright Statement

The handouts used in this course are copyrighted and are not to be distributed unless granted express permission from the instructor. That means not uploading to websites, etc. By “handouts,” I mean syllabi, quizzes, exams, in-class review materials, problem sets, PowerPoint slides, etc.

UNT Academic Success Program

The Learning Center at UNT has developed a programs to help students be successful in their classes and find a work-life balance that is beneficial and sustainable. Their advice generally consists of 6 points: (1) show up, (2) find and seek support, (3) take control, (4) be prepared, (5) get involved, and (6) be persistent. This is good advice. For more information on the program and see how to schedule a one-on-one meeting with a “coach,” visit <http://learningcenter.unt.edu/asp>.

University Calendar

For information about add/drop and other University established deadlines, see http://catalog.unt.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=1228#5w2_term_2017

Course Schedule

UNIT 1

M 7/10: Introduction

Textbook (TB): chapter 1

T 7/11: Constitution & Founding

Read: TB chapter 2, Workbook (WB) chapter 1

W 7/12: Constitution

Read: TB ch. 2,11; WB ch. 1

**Due: WB ch. 1*

R 7/13: Federalism

Read: TB ch. 3, WB ch. 2

M 7/17: Federalism

Read: TB ch. 3, WB ch. 2

**Due: WB ch. 2*

T 7/18: Legislature

Read: TB ch. 6,12; WB ch. 5

W 7/19: Legislature

Read: TB ch. 6,12 ; WB ch. 5

**Due: WB ch. 5*

EXAM 1 (Thursday, 20 July)

UNIT 2

M 7/24: Executive

Read: TB ch. 7

T 7/25: Executive

Read: TB ch. 7, 13; WB ch. 6

**Due: WB ch. 6*

W 7/26: Executive/Bureaucracy

Read: TB ch. 7, 13, 8

R 7/27: Bureaucracy

Read: TB ch. 8, WB ch. 8

M 7/31: Bureaucracy

Read: TB ch. 8, WB ch. 8

**Due: WB ch. 8*

EXAM 2 (Tuesday, 1 August)

UNIT 3

W 8/2: Courts

Read: TB 9,14; WB ch. 7

Due:

R 8/3: Courts

Read: TB ch. 9, 14; WB ch. 7

**Due: WB ch. 7*

M 8/7: Civil Liberties

Read: TB ch. 4, WB ch. 3

**Due: WB ch. 3*

T 8/8: Civil Liberties/Rights

Read: TB ch. 5, WB ch. 4

W 8/9: Civil Rights

Read: TB ch. 5, WB ch. 4

**Due: WB ch. 4 (Hard deadline all WB assignments is 8/9 at 11:00pm)*

EXAM 3 (Thursday, 10 August)

FINAL EXAM: 11 August