

PSCI 1040: American Government—Laws and Institutions
Sections 001 and 009
Spring 2012

Instructor

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 - Office Hours: Wednesdays, 8:30 am–11:30 am, and by appointment
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The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the roles of the United States and Texas governments in the American political system. We will consider the institutions, processes, and decisions of political actors that define American and Texas government. We focus particular attention on the United States and Texas constitutions, civil rights and liberties, federalism as well as the institutions that comprise the three branches of government.

Required Course Materials

There are three required items for the course.

1. **Textbook.** Fiorina & Dye. *The New American Democracy with Texas Chapters, Volume I, Custom Edition.* New York: Pearson.

This is a custom textbook created for PSCI 1040. It includes material on the U.S. Government and Texas Government. Chapters on the U.S. Government are authored by Fiorina et al. and appear at the front of your book. Chapters on Texas Government are written by Dye et al. and are numbered TX–1, TX–2, etc. They appear after the Fiorina chapters in your text.

You can purchase a hard copy of this book at the UNT bookstore or an electronic copy through the course Blackboard page. A copy of this book will be placed on reserve at Willis Library for student use.

2. **eWorkbook.** Gloria C. Cox and Richard S. Ruderman, eds. 2011. *PSCI 1040 eWorkbook.* Ninth edition. New York: Pearson.

The workbook is available only in electronic format. If you purchase the required textbook from the bookstore, it will include an access code for the eWorkbook. You can also purchase access to the eWorkbook in Blackboard (with or without an electronic version of the textbook).

3. **Clicker.** Turning Point, Response Card RF-LCD. Each student must purchase a Turning Point Response Card frequently referred to as a “clicker.” New clickers may be purchased at the UNT bookstore for \$42.75. Used clickers are available for \$32.25.

Purchasing Options for Books

1. Paper copy of Fiorina/Dye textbook with UNT eWorkbook access code. Cost \$100.00. Available only at bookstore. ISBN 1-256-285439.

2. Online copy of Fiorina/Dye textbook and UNT eWorkbook. Cost: \$47.00. Available only through Blackboard course site.
3. Access code for the eWorkbook only. (If you plan to use the reserve copy of the Fiorina/Dye text.) Available through Blackboard course site. Cost \$30.00

Grading

Grades in this class will be assigned on a fixed scale. There are 1000 points possible.

900.00–1000.00	A
800.00–899.99	B
700.00–799.99	C
600.00–699.99	D
<600.00	F

Your grade will be based on the following factors:

3 Exams	750 points (250 points each)
10 Workbook Assignments	150 points (15 points each)
Clicker Points	100 points

Exams

There will be three exams in this course. Please note that the third exam will be held during the course's final exam period. Plan your end of semester travels accordingly—you need to be in Denton to take this exam on Tuesday, May 8 at 8:00 AM.

Each exam will consist of 63 multiple-choice questions. You will use a scantron to answer these questions, so you **MUST** bring a #2 pencil and an eraser to the exam. The exams are not cumulative. You should bring a form of photo identification with you to each exam. Exams will cover material from all lectures, textbook, and eWorkbook readings. The exams are closed book and closed notes.

Students are expected to take exams at the scheduled times. Any student missing either Exam 1 or Exam 2 will be offered a make-up exam on Friday, April 27 at 8:30 am. The only reason a student will be allowed to take a make-up exam at an alternate time is if they are enrolled in a UNT class that meets at 8:00 am or 9:00 am on Friday mornings.

Under no circumstances will a student be allowed to make-up more than one exam. Make-up exams for Exam 3 will only be offered for university-excused absences.

Workbook Assignments

You must complete 10 workbook assignments. Each assignment consists of a set of questions based on readings from the eWorkbook and is worth 15 points. Workbook assignments must be submitted electronically in Blackboard and are due by 9:30 AM on their due dates. Late submissions will be penalized 2 points per calendar day. Assignments submitted more than one week after their due date will not earn credit. You should plan for possible computer and/or network problems by not waiting until the last minute to turn in your work. Should you encounter computer problems, you should contact the appropriate IT support person.

Clicker Points

As part of this class I require each student to purchase a TurningPoint clicker. Clickers are integrated with PowerPoint and Blackboard and allow instructors to conduct in-class polls, take attendance, get feedback about what is being discussed, and evaluate students' understanding of course materials (i.e. test).

You can earn a maximum of 100 clicker points. Clicker points in excess of 100 points will not affect your grade. (That is, if you have 105 clicker points, your clicker grade will be 100 out of 100.) There will be at least 115 clicker point opportunities during the semester, so missing a couple classes should not prevent you from earning the full 100 clicker points. Missed clicker questions cannot be made up.

Extra Credit

There are no opportunities for extra credit in the class. Plan accordingly and focus on earning the required number of points for the grade you want. If you need a particular grade to graduate, keep a scholarship, etc., then ensure that you are exerting the effort necessary to earn that grade. If problems arise, address them early before they become unresolvable.

A Final Note About Grades and Grading

Take your education into your own hands. If you do poorly on the assignments and exams, you need to see me and/or one of the TAs as soon as possible to ensure that you understand what you can do to improve your grade. Begging for a higher grade after you complete all the assignments will not do you any good. I will not give you a special opportunity for extra credit simply because you are not doing as well in the class as you would like. The only way to get the grade you want is to pay attention and participate in lecture, read the book, complete your workbook assignments and study for the exams.

Other Class Policies

Attendance

Because I will cover material in class that is not discussed in the texts, I strongly encourage you to attend each class session. If you are absent from a class session, it is your responsibility to obtain lecture notes from a classmate. I make my PowerPoint slides available to students in Blackboard but they are not sufficient to prepare you for the course exams. Clicker points that you miss cannot be made up.

Class starts at 9:30 am and ends at 10:50 am. I expect you to be in class and ready to begin at 9:30 am. I expect you to stay until 10:50 am. I expect you to be attentive. Things like arriving late, leaving early, surfing the web, playing on your phone and talking to your neighbor are distracting to me and to your fellow students. Don't do them. If you are disruptive, I will ask you to leave the class. Repeated or egregious instances of classroom disruption will result in referral to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether student behavior violates the Code of Student Conduct.

Accommodations

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 93-112–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.

The Political Science Department cooperates with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA). The ODA makes formal recommendations regarding necessary and appropriate accommodations based on specifically diagnosed disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, you should contact the ODA as soon as possible at 940.565.4323. Please present your written accommodation request to me on or before January 24. Information regarding disabilities is treated in a confidential matter.

Academic Integrity

I encourage you to study for exams together and to seek help from your classmates if you are having trouble with material. However, all work submitted for evaluation must be your own. This means that you should not collaborate on your workbook assignments.

The Political Science Department adheres to and enforces UNT's policy on academic integrity (cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and sabotage). Students in this class should review the policy (UNT Policy Manual Section 18.1.16). Violations of academic integrity in this course will be addressed in compliance with the penalties and procedures laid out in this policy.

Course Outline

The schedule that follows represents an approximate calendar of class discussions. Every attempt will be made to adhere to this schedule. However, departures from the schedule may occasionally occur. Exam dates should be considered firm, and you should arrange your personal schedule to be present at the appointed times.

Unit 1

Assignment Due Dates

- eWorkbook Assignment 1, Chapter 1 due Thursday, January 19 before start of class.
- Register your clicker in Blackboard before start of class on Tuesday, January 24.
- eWorkbook Assignment 2, Chapter 2 due Thursday, January 26 before start of class.
- eWorkbook Assignment 3, Chapter 3 due Thursday, February 2 before start of class.
- eWorkbook Assignment 4, Chapter 4 due Tuesday, February 14 before start of class.

Schedule and Readings

Course Introduction (January 17)

- Syllabus

Introduction to Politics in the United States and Texas (January 19, 24, 26)

- eWorkbook Chapter 1, Liberty and Security
- Fiorina Chapter 1, Democracy in the United States
- Dye Chapter TX-1, The Social and Economic Milieu of Texas Politics
- Fiorina Chapter 4, American Political Culture
- eWorkbook Chapter 2, Alexis de Tocqueville and American Political Culture

The U.S. and Texas Constitutions (January 31, February 2)

- Fiorina Chapter 2, Establishing a Constitutional Democracy
- The United States Constitution (in Fiorina/Dye Appendix II)
- Dye Chapter TX-2, The Texas Constitution
- eWorkbook Chapter 3, Comparative Constitutions

Federalism (February 7, 9)

- Fiorina Chapter 3, Federalism: The Division of Power Among National, State, and Local Governments
- eWorkbook Chapter 4: Evolving American Federalism

Politics Now: Federalism (February 14)

- Readings TBA

Exam 1, Thursday, February 16

Unit 2

Assignment Due Dates

- eWorkbook Assignment 5, Chapter 5 due Tuesday, February 28 before start of class.
- eWorkbook Assignment 6, Chapter 6 due Tuesday, March 6 before start of class.
- eWorkbook Assignment 7, Chapter 7 due Tuesday, March 13 before start of class.

Schedule and Readings

Congress (February 21, 23, 28)

- Fiorina Chapter 12, The Congress and Its Work
- eWorkbook Chapter 5, Representation and Religion

The Presidency (March 1, 6)

- Fiorina Chapter 13, The Presidency: Powers and Practice
- eWorkbook Chapter 6, Understanding Presidential Power

The Bureaucracy (March 8)

- Fiorina Chapter 14, The Bureaucracy
- eWorkbook Chapter 7, From Criticism to Understanding: The Federal Bureaucracy

Texas Legislative and Executive Branches (March 13, 15)

- Dye Chapter TX-3, The Texas Legislature
- Dye Chapter TX-4, The Texas Executive and Bureaucracy

Politics Now: Congress & the Presidency (March 27)

- Readings TBA

Exam 2, Thursday, March 29

Unit 3

Assignment Due Dates

- eWorkbook Assignment 8, Chapter 8 due Tuesday, April 10 before start of class.
- eWorkbook Assignment 9, Chapter 9 due Thursday, April 19 before start of class.
- eWorkbook Assignment 10, Chapter 10 due Tuesday, May 1 before start of class.

Schedule and Readings

Courts (April 3, 5, 10)

- Fiorina Chapter 15, The Courts
- Dye Chapter TX-5, The Texas Judiciary
- eWorkbook Chapter 8, How Did the Supreme Court Get to Be “Supreme?”

Civil Liberties (April 12, 17, 19)

- Fiorina Chapter 16, Civil Liberties
- eWorkbook Chapter 9, The Right to Privacy in Historical Perspective

Civil Rights (April 24, 26)

- Fiorina Chapter 17, Civil Rights
- eWorkbook Chapter 10, The Quest for Equality

Politics Now: Civil Rights and Liberties (May 1)

- Readings TBA

Exam 3

Section 009: Tuesday, May 8 @ 8:00 am

Section 001: Thursday, May 10 @ 10:30 am