

**American Government—Laws and Institutions**  
**PSCI 1040.001 Fall 2011**  
**MW, 5:00-6:20 PM, Sage Hall 116**

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:30-4:30 pm and by appointment

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 9:00-11:00 am

### **Course Overview**

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.

### **Blackboard**

A Blackboard conference is maintained for this course at <https://ecampus.unt.edu>. Students are responsible for checking Blackboard for assignments and notices. You should check Blackboard every day to ensure that you are up to date on all class-related information. Quizzes and workbook assignments (discussed in more detail below) will be submitted in Blackboard and student grades will be posted in Blackboard.

### **Office Hours**

Office hours for myself and the Teaching Assistants are listed above. I will hold office hours on Wednesday afternoons (from 1:30-4:30 pm), Tim will hold office hours on Mondays from 11:00 am-1:00 pm and Tatyana will hold office hours on Thursdays from 9:00 to 11:00 am. If none of these times are convenient for you and you would like to schedule a meeting to discuss course material, please email one of the TAs to arrange an alternative meeting time. We hold office hours for your benefit. You may stop by our offices without an appointment during these hours; come with questions, concerns, or a desire for further discussion.

During my office hours, I will also hold “virtual office hours” using Google’s instant messenger program. My username is professorblackstone. Google Talk works with a number of other IM clients but you will have to create a username if you don’t already have one. More info here: <http://www.google.com/talk/about.html> and <http://www.google.com/talk/otherclients.html>.

## Communication and E-mail

When e-mailing me or one of the Teaching Assistants, please include the course number (PSCI 1040) in the subject line of your message. A note on etiquette: please sign your messages with your first and last name, and include an appropriate salutation. (Hint: you can't go wrong with "Hi Professor Blackstone.") Please articulate the content of your message clearly--do not use text message or instant message speak. Finally, before you e-mail me or one of the TAs, you should review the syllabus, the course FAQs, and the course's Blackboard page--it is very likely that you can find an answer to your question(s) by examining the course materials. You should contact me at my UNT email address ([blackstone@unt.edu](mailto:blackstone@unt.edu)). I strongly encourage you to e-mail from your UNT EagleConnect account to ensure that your message is not caught by a spam filter. The TAs and I will respond to emails within 24 hours. If you do not receive a response, please follow-up with us.

If I need to contact you by e-mail, I will send e-mail to your UNT EagleConnect account. Check this account regularly or set-up email forwarding so you will receive all course-related messages.

## Course Materials

The following items are required and are available at the UNT bookstore.

1. Morris P. Fiorina, Paul E. Peterson, Bertram Johnson, and William G. Mayer. 2011. *The New American Democracy with Texas Chapters, Volume I*, Custom Edition. New York: Pearson.  
*(A copy of this book will be placed on reserve at Willis Library for student use.)*
2. Gloria C. Cox and Richard S. Ruderman, eds. 2011. *Perspectives on American and Texas Politics: A Workbook for Political Science 1040*. Ninth edition. New York: Pearson. (I will refer to this book as the "workbook.")  
*\*\* Note: The workbook is available only in electronic format. You will need to purchase an eWorkbook access code to access these readings. \*\**
3. 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 textbook with UNT eWorkbook access code. Cost \$96.00. Available only at bookstore. ISBN 1-256-285439.
2. Online copy of Fiorina textbook and UNT eWorkbook. Cost: \$42.00. Available only through Blackboard course site. Choose "Start Here" link in Blackboard and then choose "Purchase access WITH eBook."
3. Access code for the eWorkbook only. (If you plan to use the reserve copy of the Fiorina text.)



you with a phone in your hand or visible during the exam, I will take your exam and you will receive a 0.

Exams will begin promptly at 5:00 pm. If you are late, you will not be allowed to enter the classroom or to take the in-class exam. If you are late and would like to request the opportunity to take a make-up exam, you must make arrangements with me during the exam period. If you are running late, do not just skip the exam and assume you can take it later.

Students are expected to take exams at the scheduled times. Arrangements for make-up exams should be made prior to a scheduled absence whenever possible. If an unforeseeable emergency prevents you from taking an exam and you would like to request the opportunity to take a make-up exam, you should notify me via email of the reason for your absence on the day of the scheduled exam. Do not wait until our next class meeting to discuss a missed exam and do not miss an exam because you assume that you will be able to make it up at a later time.

I will determine on a case-by-case basis if a make-up exam is appropriate and will require documentation to verify your excuse. The format of any make-up exam will differ from the in-class exam.

### Online Reading Quizzes

You must complete fifteen reading quizzes. The quizzes are designed to make sure you have done the reading and mastered the basic factual information in the readings. The quizzes are multiple-choice and are posted in Blackboard.

Quizzes are due by 5:00 pm on their due dates. You may take each quiz up to 3 times and your highest score will be recorded. Missed quizzes cannot be made up.

### Workbook Assignments

You must complete five of six workbook assignments; one may be skipped without penalty. If you submit all 6 workbook assignments, I will count your five highest grades toward your final grade.

Workbook assignments must be submitted electronically in Blackboard and are due by 5:00 pm on their due date. Late assignments will not be accepted. 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.

Remember that the processes of SAVING and SUBMITTING your work in Blackboard are separate. Be sure to SAVE your answers before you select FINISH to submit them.

### 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).

Graded clicking begins Wednesday, September 7. You should bring your clicker with you to every class meeting. It is your responsibility to keep your clicker with you and to ensure that it has a functioning battery. All students need to register their clickers through Blackboard prior to our class meeting on September 7. (If your clicker is not registered, you cannot receive clicker points.) There is a link from the front-page of Blackboard to the clicker registration page and a link to a YouTube video with step-by-step instructions on how to register your clicker. If, after consulting those resources, you are unable to register your clicker, see me or one of the Teaching Assistants right away for assistance (and bring your clicker).

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 the quizzes and 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 5:00 pm and ends at 6:20 pm. I expect you to be in class and ready to begin at 5:00 pm. I expect you to stay until 6:20 pm. 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 September 12. 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 reading quizzes or 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 course outline that follows represents an approximate calendar of class discussions. I will do my best to adhere to this schedule. Exam dates and assignment deadlines should be considered firm and you should arrange your personal schedule to be present at the appointed times and to give yourself adequate time to complete assignments. You should complete the listed readings prior to the class during which they will be discussed. Assignment due dates for each week are listed below. Plan ahead; missed quizzes and workbook assignments cannot be made up.

## Unit I

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### *Topic Schedule*

Monday, August 29	Course Introduction
Wednesday, August 31	Politics in the United States and Texas
Wednesday, September 7	The U.S. and Texas Constitutions
Monday, September 12	The U.S. and Texas Constitutions
Wednesday, September 14	The U.S. and Texas Constitutions
Monday, September 19	Federalism
Wednesday, September 21	Federalism
Monday, September 26	Review for Exam 1
Wednesday, September 28	Exam 1

### *Readings*

- Syllabus
- Chapter 1, “Democracy in the United States”
- Chapter TX-1, “The Social and Economic Milieu of Texas Politics”
- Chapter 2, “Establishing a Constitutional Democracy”
- The United States Constitution (in Appendix II, pages 616-628)
- Chapter TX-2, “The Texas Constitution”
- Chapter 3, “Federalism: Division of Power Among National, State, and Local Governments”
- eWorkbook Chapter 2, “Alexis de Tocqueville and American Political Culture”
- eWorkbook Chapter 4, “Evolving American Federalism”

### *Assignments Due (Assignments are due by 5:00 pm on the listed due date.)*

- Quiz 1, Syllabus (*due September 7*)
- Quiz 2, Politics in the U.S. (Chapter 1) (*due September 7*)
- Quiz 3, Politics in Texas (Chapter TX-1) (*due September 7*)
- Quiz 4, The U.S. Constitution (Chapter 2 and the U.S. Constitution) (*due September 12*)
- Quiz 5, The Texas Constitution (Chapter TX-2) (*due September 14*)
- Quiz 6, Federalism (Chapter 3) (*due September 19*)
- Workbook Assignment 1 (Exercises 4-1, 4-2, 4-3 and 4-6)—Federalism (*due September 21*)

## Unit II

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### *Topic Schedule*

Monday, October 3	Congress
Wednesday, October 5	Congress
Monday, October 10	Congress
Wednesday, October 12	Presidency
Monday, October 17	Presidency
Wednesday, October 19	Bureaucracy
Monday, October 24	TX Legislative and Executive Branch Politics
Wednesday, October 26	TX Legislative and Executive Branch Politics
Monday, October 31	Review for Exam 2
Wednesday, November 2	Exam 2

### *Readings*

- Chapter 12, “The Congress and Its Work”
- eWorkbook Chapter 5, “Representation and Religion”
- Chapter 13, “The Presidency: Powers and Practice”
- eWorkbook Chapter 6, “Understanding Presidential Power”
- Chapter 14, “The Bureaucracy”
- Workbook Chapter 7, “From Criticism to Understanding: The Federal Bureaucracy”
- Chapter TX-3, “The Texas Legislature”
- Chapter TX-4, “The Texas Executive and Bureaucracy”

### *Assignments Due (Assignments are due by 5:00 pm on the listed due date.)*

- Quiz 7, Congress (Chapter 12) *(due October 3)*
- eWorkbook Assignment 2 (Exercises 5-4, 5-5, and 5-6)—Congress *(due October 10)*
- Quiz 8, The Presidency (Chapter 13) *(due October 12)*
- eWorkbook Assignment 3 (Exercises 6-1, 6-3, 6-5, and 6-6)—Presidential Power *(due October 17)*
- Quiz 9, The Federal Bureaucracy (Chapter 14) *(due October 19)*
- Workbook Assignment 4—Bureaucracy (Exercises 7-1, 7-2, 7-3, and 7-4) *(due October 24)*
- Quiz 10, The TX Legislature (Chapter TX-3) *(due October 24)*
- Quiz 11, The TX Executive and Bureaucracy (Chapter TX-4) *(due October 26)*



## Unit III

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### *Topic Schedule*

Monday, November 7	Courts
Wednesday, November 9	Courts
Monday, November 14	Courts
Wednesday, November 16	Courts
Monday, November 21	Civil Liberties
Wednesday, November 23	<i>No Class – WB assignment 5 is due by 5 pm.</i>
Monday, November 28	Civil Liberties
Wednesday, November 30	Civil Rights
Monday, December 5	Civil Rights
Wednesday, December 7	Review for Exam 3
Monday, December 12 @ 5pm	Exam 3

### *Readings*

- Chapter 15, “The Courts”
- Chapter TX-5, “The Texas Judiciary”
- Chapter 16, “Civil Liberties”
- eWorkbook Chapter 9, “The Right to Privacy in Historical Perspective”
- Chapter 17, “Civil Rights”
- eWorkbook Chapter 10, “The Quest for Equality”

### *Assignments Due (Assignments are due by 5:00 pm on the listed due date.)*

- Quiz 12, The Courts (Chapter 15) *(due November 7)*
- Quiz 13, Texas Courts (Chapter TX-5) *(due November 9)*
- Quiz 14, Civil Liberties (Chapter 16) *(due November 21)*
- eWorkbook Assignment 5 (Exercises 9-1, 9-2, 9-3, and 9-4)—Civil Liberties *(due November 23)*
- Quiz 15, Civil Rights (Chapter 17) *(due November 30)*
- eWorkbook Assignment 6 (Exercises 10-1, 10-2, and 10-5)—Civil Rights *(due December 5)*