

PSCI 1040: American Government–Laws and Institutions
Professor Blackstone Section 001
Summer 5W2 2016, MTWR 10:00 AM–11:50 AM, BLB 055

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.

Team 1040

<i>Instructor</i>	Dr. Bethany Blackstone blackstone@unt.edu Office: Wooten 154	<i>Teaching Assistant (TA)</i>	Mr. Brandon Stewart BrandonStewart4@my.unt.edu Office: Wooten 173A
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Office Hours in the BLB Lobby

We will be available to assist students before and after class each day. We will hold office hours in the BLB lobby (by the cafe) according to the schedule below.

	Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays
From 9:00 AM to 9:50 AM	Blackstone	Stewart	Blackstone	Stewart
From 12:00 PM to 12:50 PM*	Stewart	Blackstone	Stewart	Blackstone

* Note: If you intend to leave the BLB after class and return for help before the end of office hours at 12:50 PM please let us know. If no one indicates that they plan to make use of after-class office hours at the end of a class day, we will not hold them.

If these times are not convenient for you and you would like to meet with one of us, please send a private message in Piazza (see below) to schedule an alternative meeting time.

Supplemental Instruction (SI)

The UNT Learning Center provides Supplemental Instruction for this course. SI Leaders are UNT students that have taken this course before and performed well. Your SI Leader will hold group study sessions and a weekly office hour. All students are welcome to and strongly encouraged to attend SI sessions. Your SI Leader cannot answer questions about your grades but can help with any questions about course content. Your Supplemental Instruction Leader is Jeanne-Anne Tye. Once the SI session schedule is finalized, SI sessions will be added to the course calendar in Blackboard.

<i>Supplemental Instruction (SI) Leader</i>	Ms. Jeanne-Anne Tye jeanneanne.leigh@gmail.com Session Schedule: TBA (will be posted in Blackboard calendar)
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Blackboard

A Blackboard conference is maintained for this course at <https://learn.unt.edu/>. You should check Blackboard regularly to ensure that you are up to date on all class-related information. Some course assignments will be submitted in Blackboard and student grades will be posted in Blackboard.

Links to the following course materials are also available in Blackboard.

- ***Your Personal PSCI 1040 Class Notebook (OneNote)***

Each student has an online PSCI 1040 Notebook. PowerPoint slides and some assignments will be distributed and graded in OneNote.

You can access your notebook through Blackboard or through your EagleConnect account which also includes access to Office365. You can also download OneNote (for free) to any smartphone, tablet, or computer (<https://www.onenote.com/download>).

- ***Class Discussion in Piazza***

We will be using Piazza for class discussion. The system is highly catered to getting you help fast and efficiently from classmates and the instructional staff. Rather than emailing questions that might be of relevance to the entire class, you should post your questions on Piazza. If you have a question that is private in nature, you should send a private message in Piazza, rather than email. Create an account using the link in Blackboard.

- ***Remind*** (optional)

If you wish to receive course-related reminders via email or text, you may sign up to receive notifications at this link: <https://remind.com/join/bstone1040>.

Required Materials

1. Christine Barbour and Gerald C. Wright. 2015. *Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship in American Politics*, 6th Brief Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. (Hereinafter, *KTR*.)

ISBN for print+eBook edition: 9781483381138.

ISBN for eBook only: 9781483380681.

- This text can be purchased at the UNT Bookstore. Prices range from \$37.55 (for rental of a used hard-copy) to \$83.45 (for purchase of a new hard copy that also includes eBook access). You can rent or purchase the text at lower cost from other retailers. I recommend [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [BigWords.com](https://www.bigwords.com).

2. Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha, ed. 2014. *PSCI 1040 Workbook*. Ashville, N.C.: Soomo Learning.

ISBN for workbook code: 9780991135578

- An access code for this text can be purchased at the UNT Bookstore *or* in Blackboard. If you purchase access through Blackboard, the cost is \$28.75; the bookstore charges \$41.05.

3. REEF Polling Account (*free for all UNT students*)

We will use REEF polling (a student response system) in class this term. Students should create (or log-in to an existing) REEF account in Blackboard and then use REEF polling to respond to questions in class using a personal electronic device. If you do not have a personal electronic device that you can use in class (smartphone, tablet, or computer) and wish to earn credit for REEF participation, please see me right away.

Assignments and Grading

All assignments and exams in the course will be assessed as Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory, with the specifications required for Satisfactory articulated on each assignment. In general, Satisfactory should not be viewed as “minimally competent,” but rather as a mark of having achieved the assignment’s learning goals and specifications. An assignment meets the goals, or it does not—there is no gradation of assessment. The only letter grade that will be given in the course will be your final grade, and it will reflect the “bundles” of assignments and requirements you have satisfactorily accomplished in the class. That final letter grade is not an assessment of your intelligence, your abilities, or your value as a person. Rather, the grade reflects what you demonstrated that you learned in the course: no more, no less.

Built into this system is a good deal of choice as to how much you wish to learn and how hard you want to work to demonstrate and apply that learning. You might choose that passing the course with a C is sufficient for your goals—it is perfectly appropriate and worthy of respect for you to make that choice, especially if it allows you to proactively allocate your time to other endeavors. If you strive to get an A in the course and maximize your learning, you should know that you are taking on that work and challenge yourself, and should make sure you are in a personal and academic situation to achieve that level of engagement.

Grading Bundle Information

- ***A Bundle***

Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of A. The work required to complete this bundle provides strong mastery of course material and requires students to apply it to their own lives and effectively communicate it in their own words.

- Satisfactorily complete 2 exams
- Satisfactorily complete 8 workbook assignments by their assigned due dates
- Satisfactorily complete 7 constitutional design assignments by their assigned due dates
- Earn 80% of available REEF points
- Satisfactorily complete the zombie apocalypse simulation group project

- ***B Bundle***

Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of B. The work required to complete this bundle provides good mastery of course material and indicates that students can apply it to their own lives.

- Satisfactorily complete 2 exams
- Satisfactorily complete 8 workbook assignments by their assigned due dates
- Satisfactorily complete 5 constitutional design assignments by their assigned due dates
- Earn 80% of available REEF points

- ***C Bundle***

Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of C. The work required to complete this bundle provides fair mastery of course material.

- Satisfactorily complete 2 exams
- Satisfactorily complete 6 workbook assignments by their assigned due dates

- ***D Bundle***

Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of D. The work required to complete this bundle provides minimal mastery of course material.

- Satisfactorily complete 1 exam
- Satisfactorily complete 6 workbook assignments by their assigned due dates

- ***F Bundle***

Students failing to meet the requirements for the D bundle will receive a grade of F for the course.

Tokens & Flexibility

Every student starts the course with 3 virtual tokens that can be “exchanged” for some leniency or opportunities for revision. Using a token will allow a student to do the following:

- For 1 token: Revise and resubmit a Workbook Assignment or Constitutional Design Assignment that has been evaluated as Unsatisfactory.
- For 1 token: Submit a Workbook Assignment or Constitutional Design Assignment up to 48 hours late.
- For 1 token: Be awarded 10 “free” REEF points. (This is roughly equivalent to one class day of points.)
- For 2 tokens: Be awarded “Satisfactory” credit for one skipped Workbook Assignment or Constitutional Design Assignment

You can earn a maximum of one additional token for attending two complete SI sessions during the term.

Specifications for Assignments

- ***Exams (required for all bundles)***

Three exams will be given—two unit exams and a cumulative final exam. Exams will cover material from lectures and required readings. Exams will be comprised of objective questions—multiple choice, true/false, and matching, for example. In order to Satisfactorily complete an exam, students must:

- Earn 70% of the available points.

Exams will be administered in the Sage Hall Testing Center located in Sage Hall C330. On exam days, report to Sage C330 instead of our regular classroom.

If you have taken the first two exams and scored to your satisfaction, you may skip the final exam. If you are dissatisfied with your exam scores or missed one of the first two tests, you may take the final exam in an attempt to satisfactorily complete an additional exam.

No make-up exams will be given unless you have a university-excused absence or a family or medical emergency which is documented and verifiable. If you will miss an exam because of a university-approved absence, you should make arrangements to take the exam early if you know about your absence ahead of time. Students that will miss an exam due to travel with UNT athletic teams or performance groups, or for observance of a religious holiday, for example, should make arrangements to take their exams prior to their absences.

- **Workbook Assignments** (*required for all bundles*)

There are eight workbook chapters. Each chapter is organized around the four learning objectives adopted by Texas's Higher Education Coordinating Board. Workbook chapters provide an opportunity to apply the material covered in the textbook and lecture. Due dates are listed on the schedule. To be considered Satisfactory:

- Assignments must be completed by 10:00 am on the due date
- 80% of the questions must be answered correctly

- **REEF Polling** (*required for A & B bundles*)

During every class period students will be presented several questions using REEF polling. To earn a grade of A or B in the course, students must earn at least 80% of the available clicker points. For most REEF questions, there are 2 points possible; students earn 1 point for responding and 1 point for choosing the correct response. For some questions, students receive full credit for responding.

- **Constitution Design Assignments** (*required for A & B bundles*)

There are seven constitutional design assignments in the course. Each includes several questions. For students participating in the simulation, these sets of questions will provide a starting point for your group's discussions. For students that are not participating in the simulation, the assignments will provide an opportunity for you to think about alternative institutional arrangements and how you would prioritize competing goals in designing a constitution.

To be considered Satisfactory a constitutional design assignment must:

- Be completed by 10:00 am on the due date.
- Include an on-topic response to every question; responses must be a minimum of 100 words.
- Employ clear writing with no more than three spelling or grammatical errors.

- ***Zombie Apocalypse Simulation (group project) (required for A bundle)***

To earn an A in the course, students must satisfactorily complete the Zombie Apocalypse Simulation. Working in a group, you will write a new constitution to govern the United States in the aftermath of a zombie apocalypse. This project requires that you demonstrate an understanding of the significance of institutional structures and rules, that you explain your decisions in a thoughtful and thorough manner, and that you express yourself clearly using meaningful organization, clear grammar, and proper spelling/word choice.

Your participation in the simulation will be evaluated on four dimensions: (1) the content of the constitution itself; (2) adherence to instructions regarding formatting and submission; (3) your group's explanations for the decisions you have made; and (4) your team members' evaluation of your contributions to the group.

1. Your constitution must:

- include a preamble that articulates the key principles guiding the creation of your constitution;
- address the mechanism for adopting and modifying the constitution;
- address the relative powers of the states and the national government;
- address the structure, powers, and selection mechanism for the institution(s) that will exercise legislative power;
- address the structure, powers, and selection mechanism for the institution(s) that will exercise executive power;
- address the structure, powers, and selection mechanism for the institution(s) that will exercise judicial power;
- address protections of citizens from government power (including a definition of “citizens”)

2. To earn credit, constitutions must:

- Be organized by Article, with each Article getting its own page in the group's dedicated space in Blackboard/the class notebook;
- Express ideas in students' own words;
- Employ clear writing with no more than three spelling or grammatical errors per Article;
- Be complete and submitted in Blackboard by the assigned due date.

3. For each of the constitution's articles, the group should write a justification for the choices you have made. Each justification must:

- Be at least 150 words.
- Explain your choices by highlighting the relative strengths and weaknesses of considered alternatives.
- Employ clear writing with no more than three spelling or grammatical errors.

4. A majority of your team's members must indicate that you contributed substantially to the group's work product.

Groups may submit a partial or complete draft of their constitution for evaluation in advance of the final deadline. Constitutions received by 5:00 pm on Monday, August 8 will be reviewed and returned to students before class on Wednesday, August 11 for final revisions. Final versions of groups' constitutions and justifications must be submitted in Blackboard by 11:59 pm on Thursday, August 12. Late submissions will not be accepted and there will not be opportunities to revise constitutions after the August 12 deadline.

Policies

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University Policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of F in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. You will find the policy and procedures at: <http://faculty.success.unt.edu/academic-integrity>.

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

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.

Classroom Conduct.

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>.

Reading and Assignment Due Dates

Readings and assignments should be completed prior to the class meeting for which they are listed. Additional readings and assignments may be added at the instructor's discretion.

Unit 1

Course Introduction

- July 11 (M) Read the Syllabus.
 Create a REEF account using the link in [Blackboard](#).
 Create a Piazza account using the link in [Blackboard](#) and adjust your notification settings to suit your preferences.
 Sign up to receive announcements via [Remind.com](#). (optional)
 Make sure you can access your OneNote Class Notebook in [Blackboard](#).

American Political Culture & the Constitution

- July 12 (T) Read KTR Chapter 1: Power and Citizenship in American Politics
 Read KTR Chapter 2: The Politics of the American Founding
- July 13 (W) Workbook Assignment #1: The Constitution due at 10:00 am

Federalism

- July 14 (R) Read KTR Chapter 3: Federalism
 Constitutional Design Assignment #1: Preamble due at 10:00 am
- July 18 (M) Workbook Assignment #2: Federalism due at 10:00 am

Civil Liberties & Civil Rights

- July 19 (T) Read KTR Chapter 4: Fundamental American Liberties
 Constitutional Design Assignment #2: Federalism due at 10:00 am
- July 20 (W) Workbook Assignment #3: Civil Liberties due by 10:00 am
- July 21 (R) Read KTR Chapter 5: The Struggle for Equal Rights
 Constitutional Design Assignment #3: Rights due by 10:00 am
- July 25 (M) Workbook Assignment #4: Civil Rights due by 10:00 am

Exam

- July 26 (T) **Unit 1 Exam**

Unit 2

Congress

- July 27 (W) Read KTR Chapter 6: Congress
 Constitutional Design Assignment #4: Adoption and Amendment due by 10:00 am
- July 28 (R) Workbook Assignment #5: The Legislative Branch due by 10:00 am
- August 1 (M) Constitutional Design Assignment #5: Legislature due by 10:00 am

The Presidency & the Bureaucracy

- August 2 (T) Read KTR Chapter 7: The Presidency
- August 3 (W) Workbook Assignment #6: The Presidency due by 10:00 am
- August 4 (R) Read KTR Chapter 8: The Bureaucracy
 Workbook Assignment #7: The Bureaucracy due by 10:00 am

Texas Legislative and Executive Branches

- August 8 (M) Constitutional Design Assignment #6: Executive due by 10:00 am
 After the Apocalypse Group Projects: Submit partial or complete constitution for preliminary evaluation by 5:00 pm

Courts

- August 9 (T) Read KTR Chapter 9: The American Legal System and the Courts
- August 10 (W) Workbook Assignment #8: The Courts due by 10:00 am
 Constitutional Design Assignment #7: Courts due by 10:00 am

Exams

- August 11 (R) **Unit 2 Exam**
 After the Apocalypse Group Projects and Peer Evaluations Due by 5:00 pm
- August 12 (F) **Cumulative Final Exam**

Track Your PSCI 1040 Progress

Use this checklist to track your progress in PSCI 1040. To earn a grade, you must satisfactorily complete all items in that grade's column and all columns to the left.

- To earn a C, you must complete all items in the C and D columns.
- To earn a B, you must complete all items in the B, C, and D columns.
- To earn an A, you must complete all items in the A, B, C, and D columns.

	D	C	B	A
Exams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Workbook	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Assignments	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
Constitutional Design Assignments			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
REEF Points (Earn 80% of Available Points)			<input type="checkbox"/>	
After the Apocalypse Group Project				<input type="checkbox"/>

Tokens Available: