

Honors U.S. Political Behavior and Policy

PSCI 2315

Fall 2018

Blackstone

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Professor Bethany Blackstone

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Office: Wooten 154

940.365.4923

Please contact via Canvas.

CLASS MEETINGS

Tuesdays and Thursdays

11:00 am-12:20 pm

Wooten 321

OFFICE HOURS*

Tuesdays and Thursdays

12:30 pm - 2:00 pm

Wooten 154

** You may reserve appointment slots in Canvas.*

CANVAS

UNT is in the process of switching from Blackboard to Canvas. Our course site is on the Canvas platform. Some assignments will be submitted in Canvas and student grades will be posted in Canvas. You should use Canvas for course-related communications.

Access the site at unt.instructure.com.

In this course, we will explore the connection between the will of the people and the policies implemented by government by focusing on individual political values and attitudes, the mechanisms that connect individual beliefs to government action (political parties, interest groups, the media, and elections), and the outcomes of government policy.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course, you will

- * Demonstrate familiarity with core concepts related to the topics listed above.
- * Evaluate the credibility and persuasiveness of politically-relevant information and arguments from diverse sources.
- * Formulate and articulate arguments supported by appropriate evidence.
- * Apply knowledge to make evidence-based policy recommendations.
- * Identify avenues of access and barriers to the political system for individuals and groups.
- * Formulate strategies to increase political participation.
- * Organize arguments and evidence coherently.
- * Demonstrate conciseness, clarity, accuracy, and readability while avoiding wordiness and ambiguity in writing.
- * Locate, evaluate, and incorporate insights from primary and/or secondary research materials into writing.
- * Engage fairly and accurately with source material and your own ideas.
- * Demonstrate familiarity with different forms of plagiarism.
- * Correctly and consistently employ the citation format most widely used in your field of study (or in political science).

What You'll Do in PSCI 2315

1

TEAM-BASED LEARNING & READINESS ASSURANCE TESTS (RATS)

This course uses a team-based learning approach that emphasizes your ability to apply course concepts and to solve problems. Course requirements are designed to ensure that individuals are prepared for team work and minimize the likelihood of typical “group work” problems (individuals shirking their responsibilities, other individuals dominating the group, or the division of labor to avoid group interaction).

Course grades will be based on work from individuals and teams. You will be assigned to a team during the first day of class.

At the beginning of each course unit, you will take an **individual Readiness Assurance Test (iRAT)**. You will then take the same **Readiness Assurance Test as a team (a tRAT)**. After the RATs, we will explore the unit’s topic through short lectures and team application exercises.

2

BOOK CLUB

Every student will read a book from the list posted in Canvas. You will write a 4-5 page book review of this book and participate in a book club discussion group with other members of the class. During the final weeks of the semester, you will work with other students that read the same book to share the key insights from your book with the students in the class that read different books.

3

ELECTION ANALYSIS

Each student will be assigned a 2018 election contest. You will research the candidates, issues, and outcome of the election by reading at least 10 newspaper articles and write a 3 page paper that describes the key features of the contest.

4

FINAL EXAM

There will be one, cumulative exam in the course. You may take the final exam during the course’s scheduled final exam period—Tuesday, December 11 from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm—or during my other class’s scheduled final exam period. The alternative exam time is Thursday, December 13 from 8:00 am to 10:00 am. Both exams will be administered in our regular classroom. Please ensure that your end-of-semester plans permit you to be present for the final exam.

5

PEER EVALUATIONS

You will complete peer evaluations of your TBL teammates at two points during the semester. You will also submit peer evaluations for the students that you work with to prepare your “Lessons from Book Club” materials and presentation. You will be evaluated on both the quality of feedback you provide about your teammates’ performances and on how your teammates evaluate your performance.

Required Materials

Good news: your textbook for this class is available for free online! If you prefer, you can also get a print version at a low cost.

American Government from OpenStax, ISBN 1938168178, www.openstax.org/details/american-government

You will also be responsible for obtaining a copy of the book you are assigned for the Book Club assignment. All Book Club books are available on Amazon.com.

Other readings will be posted in Canvas.

Grading

Your grade will be based on the components described above: individual Readiness Assurance Tests (iRATs), team performance (team Readiness Assurance Tests—tRATs—and in-class activities), Book Club-related assignments and participation, an Election Analysis paper, a final exam, and peer evaluations. Detailed expectations for all assignments will be posted in Canvas.

Scores will be rounded to the nearest whole number and then letter grades will be assigned according to the scale below:

- 90-100% = A
- 80-89% = B
- 70-79% = C
- 60-69% = D
- <60 = F

Late Election Analyses and Book Reviews will be penalized 10 points (1 letter grade) for each 24 hour period they are late. Other assignments will not be accepted after their due dates.

Missed iRATs and tRATs cannot be made up. They can be taken early if you will miss class for a university-excused absence (including observance of religious holidays). If 80% or more of students complete the end of semester Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) evaluations, I will drop everyone's lowest iRAT score.

There are no opportunities for extra credit. Plan accordingly.

Policies

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



Assignment Weights

Component	Assignment Weight
Individual Readiness Assurance Tests	20
Team Performance (Team Readiness Assurance Tests and In-Class Activities)	15
Book Club Project (includes plagiarism identification assignment, book review, participation in Book Club Discussion, and Lessons from Book Club project)	25
Election Analysis	15
Final Exam	15
Peer Evaluations	10

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>.

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 accommodation 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 letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the ODA website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, and Assault

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced 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 unique needs: http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate and she can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, I will communicate with you through Canvas regarding assignments, exams, and other items that may be impacted by the closure.

Schedule

Readings from your OpenStax textbook are denoted TB. Other readings are posted in Canvas and/or linked below. Use the Reading Guides posted in Canvas to guide your pre-class preparation. Some additional short readings may be added to this list for non-RAT days.

Course Introduction

August 28 (T)	Read Syllabus
August 30 (R)	No Class Meeting
September 2 (Su)	Submit Book Club Preference Form by 11:59 pm. Submit Student Info Form by 11:59 pm.

**These submissions are not graded, but for each one you submit, you can claim a 24-hour extension on the deadline for your Book Review or Election Analysis. (These extensions can be combined.)*

Unit 1: Public Opinion

September 4 (T)	iRAT 1 and tRAT 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Christine Barbour and Gerald Wright. 2017. <i>Keeping the Republic: Power and Citizenship in American Politics</i>, 8th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press. Chapter 11, "Public Opinion."Pew Research Center. 2017. "Video Explainer: Understanding Random Sampling for Public Opinion Surveys." May 12. http://www.pewresearch.org/2017/05/12/video-explainer-understanding-random-sampling-for-public-opinion-surveys/ (Accessed January 7, 2018).Carl Bialik and Harry Enten. 2016. "The Polls Missed Trump. We Asked Pollsters Why." <i>FiveThirtyEight.com</i>. November 9. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-polls-missed-trump-we-asked-pollsters-why/ (Accessed January 7, 2018).Nate Silver. 2017. "The Media Has a Probability Problem." <i>FiveThirtyEight.com</i> September 21. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-media-has-a-probability-problem/ (Accessed January 7, 2018).
September 6 (R)	
September 11 (T)	
September 13 (R)	

Unit 2: Political Parties

September 18 (T)

iRAT 2 and tRAT 2

- TB Chapter 9, "Political Parties"
 - Raymond A. Smith. *The American Anomaly: U.S. Politics and Government in Comparative Perspective*, 3rd edition. New York: Routledge. Chapter 10, "Political Parties"
 - Amanda Skuldt. 2016. "Could a Third-Party Candidate Win the U.S. Presidency? That's Very Unlikely." *Washington Post-The Monkey Cage*. August 2. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/08/02/could-a-third-party-candidate-win-the-u-s-presidency-very-unlikely/?tid=a_inl&utm_term=.56608db47a26 (Accessed January 7, 2018).
 - Jack Santucci. 2017. "Maine's Citizens Passed 'Ranked-Choice Voting.' Why did Republicans Shoot It Down?" *Washington Post-The Monkey Cage*. May 31. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/05/31/maines-citizens-passed-ranked-choice-voting-why-did-republicans-shoot-it-down/?utm_term=.a9a6abd79160 (Accessed January 7, 2018).
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September 20 (R)

September 25 (T)

September 27 (R)

September 28 (F)

Plagiarism Identification Certification Test due by 11:59 pm. Upload a copy of your certificate in Canvas.

Unit 3: Interest Groups

October 2 (T)

iRAT 3 and tRAT 3

- TB Chapter 10, "Interest Groups & Lobbying"
 - Lee Drutman. 2015. "The Solution to Lobbying is More Lobbying." *Washington Post-The Monkey Cage*. April 29. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/04/29/the-solution-to-lobbying-is-more-lobbying/?utm_term=.a1e3dd4208cb (Accessed January 7, 2018).
 - John Sides. 2011. "Gauging the Influence of Public Interest Groups." *TheMonkeyCage.org*. October 31. <http://themonkeycage.org/2011/10/gauging-the-influence-of-public-interest-groups/> (Accessed January 7, 2018).
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October 4 (R)

October 5 (F)

Midterm peer evaluations due by 11:59 pm

October 9 (T)

Unit 4: Elections & Voting

October 11 (R)

iRAT 4 and tRAT 4

- TB Chapter 7, "Voting & Elections"
- Andrew Rudalevige. 2017. "In the U.S. Who Votes and Why? Here's How the Constitution Shapes the Answers." *Washington Post-The Monkey Cage*. August 25. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/08/24/in-the-u-s-who-votes-and-why-heres-how-the-constitution-shapes-the-answers/?utm_term=.3fa7bb912ee4 (Accessed January 7, 2018).

October 16 (T)

October 18 (R)

October 23 (T)

Unit 5: Media

October 25 (R)

iRAT 5 and tRAT 5

- TB Chapter 8, "The Media"
- James Hamblin. 2017. "What Do You Mean by 'The Media?'" *TheAtlantic.com* January 24. <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2017/01/all-possible-realities-are-playing-out-across-infinite-universes/514130/> (Accessed January 7, 2018).
- Niraj Chokshi. 2017. "News Shared on Twitter Can Drive the Conversation, Study Finds." *NYTimes.com* November 9. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/business/media/twitter-news-study.html> (Accessed January 7, 2017).

October 30 (T)

November 1 (R)

November 2 (F)

Book Reviews due in Canvas.

Unit 6: Domestic and Foreign Policy

November 6 (T)

iRAT 6 and tRAT 6

- TB Chapter 16, "Domestic Policy"
- TB Chapter 17, "Foreign Policy"

November 8 (R)

November 13 (T)

November 15 (R)

November 25 (Su)

Lessons from Book Club

- November 20 (T) Lessons from Book Club:
- Mason's *Uncivil Agreement*
 - Albertson & Gadarian's *Anxious Politics*

November 22 (R) No Class Meeting - Thanksgiving Break

November 25 (Su) Election Analyses due in Canvas.

- November 27 (T) Lessons from Book Club
- Klar & Krupnikov's *Independent Politics*
 - Grossman & Hopkins's *Asymmetric Politics*

- November 29 (R) Lessons from Book Club
- Mutz's *In Your Face Politics*
 - Frasure-Yokley's *Race and Ethnic Politics in American Suburbs*

- December 4 (T) Lessons from Book Club
- Hollis-Brusky's *Ideas With Consequences*
 - Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen's *Deep Roots*
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Important End-of-Semester Dates

December 6 (R) Final Class Meeting - Review Session

December 7 (F) End-of-term peer evaluations for TBL teammates due by 11:59 pm
Peer evaluations for Lessons from Book Club group members due by 11:59 pm

December 11 from 10:30 - 12:30 pm

or

December 13 from 8:00 - 10:00 am
