

**University of North Texas at Dallas
Spring 2011
SYLLABUS**

PSCI 1040.090: American Government – Laws and Institutions 3 Hrs.			
Department of	Social Sciences	Division of	Liberal Arts and Sciences
Instructor Name:	Walter Borges		
Office Location:	Building 2 – Rm 221		
Office Phone:	972-338-1552		
Email Address:	walter.borges@unt.edu		
Office Hours:	Initial – Monday, Wednesday: 11:30 am-12 noon, 3:30-5:30 pm; Tuesday, Thursday: 3:30-5:30 pm; and by appointment. Hours will be revised after consultations with classes.		
Virtual Office Hours:	You may email at any time. I will try to answer within 24 waking hours.		
Classroom Location:	Building 2 – Rm 306		
Class Meeting Days & Times:	Monday and Wednesday, 5:30 pm – 6:50 pm		
Course Catalog Description:			
Prerequisites:	None		
Co-requisites:	None		
Required Text:	Fiorina, Morris P., Paul E. Peterson, Bertram Johnson and William G. Mayer. 2009. <i>The New American Democracy</i>, 6th ed. New York: Longman. Cox, Gloria C., and Richard S. Ruderman, eds. 2009. <i>Perspectives on American and Texas Politics: A Workbook for Political Science 1040</i>, latest ed. New York: Pearson.		
Recommended Text and References:	Additional online readings to be assigned.		
Access to Learning Resources:	UNT Dallas Library: phone: (972) 780-3625; web: http://www.unt.edu/unt-dallas/library.htm UNT Dallas Bookstore: phone: (972) 780-3652; e-mail: 1012mgr@fhg.follett.com		
Course Goals or Overview:			
	The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the roles of the US 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. In addition, we will focus particular attention on a multitude of issues, including the US and Texas constitutions, civil rights and liberties, federalism, as well as the three branches of state and federal government.		
Learning Objectives/Outcomes			
	Course Objectives: At the end of this course, the student will		
1	Be able to discuss the different approaches taken by the framers of the US and Texas constitutions and the motivations behind each charter;		
2	Demonstrate the ability to write cogently about major issues in American and state government;		
3	Define roles and processes used in the governing institutions of Texas and the United States;		
4	Identify past, current and future issues of American and Texas government, including differences and similarities in state and federal constitutional structures, judicial selection, legislative structures and		

	operations, and taxation and budget systems.
	General Education Objectives
1	The UNT Dallas graduate will explore English, the arts and humanities, math, the natural sciences, and social and behavioral sciences.
2	The UNT Dallas graduate will gain leadership skills that prepare them for active citizenship.

Course Outline

This schedule is subject to change by the instructor. Any changes to this schedule will be communicated by the instructor in class and by posting on Blackboard.

TOPICS	TIMELINE
General course info/ writing for this class	Jan. 19
Democracy and government (Fiorina ch1)	Jan. 24
The permanent campaign	Jan. 26
Constitutions (Fiorina, ch2)	Jan. 31
US Constitution (Cox, chs 1,3)	Feb. 2
A different approach: Texas Constitution of 1876 (online LAITS reading) Hand in Workbook exercises 4-1 through 4-3 and 4-6	Feb. 7
A House Divided: Federalism (Fiorina, ch3; Federalist 10,51: pp 620-627)	Feb. 9
New Federalism (Cox, ch4)	Feb. 14
The popular presidency (Fiorina, ch13)	Feb. 16
The imperial presidency (Cox, ch6) Hand in Workbook exercises 6-2 through 6-5	Feb. 21
Review	Feb. 23
Midterm exam 1	Feb. 28
Federal bureaucracy (Fiorina, ch14, and Cox, ch7)	March 2
The Texas Executive and Bureuacracy (online LAITS reading) Hand in Workbook exercises 7-1 through 7-4	March 7
The First Branch: Congress (Fiorina ch12)	March 9
SPRING BREAK	March 14 -20
Do we really hate Congress?	March 21
The Texas Legislature (online LAITS reading)	March 23
Review	March 28
Midterm exam 2	March 30
Myths of the robe: (Fiorina ch15)	April 4
The federal courts (Cox ch8)	April 6
The Texas Judiciary (online LAITS reading)	April 11
Civil Liberties: the Bill of Rights (Fiorina ch16)	April 13
The First Amendment	April 18
Privacy (Cox ch9) Hand in Workbook exercises 9-1 through 9-4	April 20
The struggle for civil rights (Fiorina ch 17)	April 25
Concepts of equality (Cox ch10) Hand in Workbook exercises 10-1, 10-4, and 10-5	April 27
Class wrap-up	May 2
Exam review	May 4
Final exam	TBA

Course Evaluation Methods

This course will utilize the following instruments to determine student grades and proficiency of the learning outcomes for the course.

Exams – Written tests include identification, multiple choice, short answer and essay questions, and are designed to measure knowledge of presented course material.

Assignments – written assignments are multi-page essays designed to supplement and reinforce course material.

Class Participation – daily attendance and participation in class discussions.

Grading Matrix:

Instrument	Value (points or percentages)	Total
Midterm exam 1	15 percent	15
Midterm exam 2	15 percent	15
Final exam	15 percent	15
Workbook assignments	10 percent	10
Writing assignments	15 percent	15
Quizzes	15 percent	15
Class participation	15 percent	15
Total:		100

Grade Determination:

A = 90% or better

B = 80 – 89%

C = 70 – 79 %

D = 60 – 69 %

F = less than 60%

University Policies and Procedures

Students with Disabilities (ADA Compliance):

The University of North Texas Dallas faculty is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students' with documented disabilities are responsible for informing faculty of their needs for reasonable accommodations and providing written authorized documentation. For more information, you may visit the Office of Disability Accommodation/Student Development Office, Suite 115 or call Laura Smith at 972-780-3632.

Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness Policy:

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class.

Assignment Policy:

Assignment criteria will be set by the instructor after consultation with the class.

Exam Policy: (

Exams should be taken as scheduled. No makeup examinations will be allowed except for documented emergencies (See Student Handbook).

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is a hallmark of higher education. You are expected to abide by the University's code of conduct and Academic Dishonesty policy. Any person suspected of academic dishonesty (i.e., cheating or plagiarism) will be handled in accordance with the University's policies and procedures. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct at http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student_conduct/index.html for complete provisions of this code.

Bad Weather Policy:

On those days that present severe weather and driving conditions, a decision may be made to close the campus. In case of inclement weather, call UNT Dallas Campuses main voicemail number (972) 780-3600 or search postings on the campus website www.unt.edu/dallas. Students are encouraged to update their Eagle Alert contact information, so they will receive this information automatically.

Attendance and Participation Policy: (

The University attendance policy is in effect for this course. Class attendance and participation is expected because the class is designed as a shared learning experience and because essential information not in the textbook will be discussed in class. The dynamic and intensive nature of this course makes it impossible for students to make-up or to receive credit for missed classes. Attendance and participation in all class meetings is essential to the integration of course material and your ability to demonstrate proficiency. Students are responsible to notify the instructor if they are missing class and for what reason. Students are also responsible to make up any work covered in class. It is recommended that each student coordinate with a student colleague to obtain a copy of the class notes, if they are absent.

Diversity/Tolerance Policy: (

Students are encouraged to contribute their perspectives and insights to class discussions. However, offensive & inappropriate language and remarks offensive to others of particular nationalities, ethnic groups, sexual preferences, religious groups, genders, or other ascribed statuses will not be tolerated. Disruptions which violate the Code of Student Conduct will be referred to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities as the instructor deems appropriate.

Other Policies:

- Students are expected to attend class, since much of the material is not drawn from the readings. The university wants instructors to take attendance (see above), so an attendance sheet will circulate at the end of class or at the beginning, varying on different days. Attendance does not enhance your grade, but failure to attend will lead to lower grades as much of the course material is not in the books. Missing class will also mean missing pop quizzes based on the readings.
- Entering class late is sometimes unavoidable. If you enter late, you are expected to do so as unobtrusively and quietly as possible. Please take a seat on the fringes of the class and do not disrupt the lecture by taking a first row seat. Do not attempt to hand in homework while the lecture is going on. If you must leave class, do so quietly.
- **Cell phones must be turned off.** Texting and twittering are not permitted.
- **Computers are a useful tool for taking notes in class, but these machines are often used for a number of other purposes such as emailing, web-surfing, game-playing etc. Note-taking on a computer is permitted in class, but secondary uses are not. Students who are found to be using their computers for activities other than note-taking will be banned from using the computer in class for any purpose. If we should have a guest speaker, everyone will go computer-free for that session.**
- Students are expected to have read the assigned material **before** class.
- Students are encouraged to participate frequently in discussions in class. Participation will make the instructor's calls on borderline grades easier to make.
- There are no 'right' answers to many of the issues we will discuss, and you will not be graded on your opinions. However, please take into account that opinions supported by facts are more persuasive than opinions supported by more opinions. Make your arguments accordingly.
- Students are expected to be considerate of others. This means silencing cell phones, arriving on time, not leaving early and being respectful of others during discussion and debate. **Flaming or**

intimidating fellow students will not be tolerated. Opinions and arguments are fair game; the speaker is not. Listening courteously is a real world skill, and I have a commitment to civil discourse that I will enforce.