

University of North Texas at Dallas
Spring 2011
SYLLABUS

PSCI 1050.090: American Government – Mass Behavior and Policy
3 Hrs.

Department of	Social Sciences	Division of	Liberal Arts and Life Sciences
Instructor Name:	Walt 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.		
Virtual Office Hours:	You may email at any time. I will try to answer within 24 hours.		
Classroom Location:	Building 2: Rm 306		
Class Meeting Days & Times:	Tuesday, Thursday 5:30-6:50 pm		
Course Catalog Description:			
Prerequisites:	None		
Co-requisites:	None		
Required Text:	<p>Fiorina, Morris P., Paul E. Peterson, Bertram Johnson and William G. Mayer. 2009. <i>The New American Democracy</i>, 6th ed. New York: Longman.</p> <p>Cox, Gloria C., ed. 2007. <i>Processes and Policies in American & Texas Politics: 1050 Workbook</i>, latest ed. New York: Pearson.</p>		
Recommended Text and References:	Additional online readings may be assigned.		
Access to Learning Resources:	<p>UNT Dallas Library: phone: (972) 780-3625; web: http://www.unt.edu/unt-dallas/library.htm</p> <p>UNT Dallas Bookstore: phone: (972) 780-3652; e-mail: 1012mgr@fhcg.follett.com</p>		
Course Goals or Overview:			
	Political Science 1050 is the second course in the introduction to American and Texas government sequence. It covers the behavior of individuals, mass publics, interests groups and interest publics. It also explores how the constitutional structures and institutions explored in PSCI 1040 tie together with behavior and interest groups to produce policy.		
Learning Objectives/Outcomes			
	Course Objectives: At the end of this course, the student will		
1	Be able to discuss the policy processes in the American federal and Texas state governments;		
2	Demonstrate the ability to write cogently about major issues in American and state government and public responses to those initiatives;		
3	Define roles and processes used to produce policy;		
4	Identify past, current and future issues of American and Texas government, including differences and similarities in state and federal approaches to major policy initiatives;		
5	Be able to discuss individual and mass behaviors of the American electorate.		

	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	Jan. 18
The nature of politics: concepts Fiorina et al. ch.1	Jan. 20
Democracy and participation	Jan. 25
Public opinion Fiorina ch. 5, Cox et al. ch.1 Workbook ch. 1 due: exercise 1-6	Jan. 27
Voting behavior : Turnout Fiorina ch.6, Cox ch.2	Feb. 1
Voting behavior : Choice Workbook ch 2 due: exercises 2-3 and 2-5 only	Feb. 3
The press, policy and the public agenda Fiorina ch.9, Cox ch.3	Feb. 8
Agenda setting: presidents, news media, interest groups and movements Workbook ch. 3 due: to be assigned	Feb. 10
The role and evolution of political parties Fiorina ch.8, Cox ch.4	Feb. 15
Party behavior – Downs revisited Workbook ch. 4 due: exercise 4-6	Feb. 17
Review/ writing hints	Feb. 22
MIDTERM #1 (in class)	Feb. 24
Elections as institutions Cox ch.6, Workbook ch.6 due: exercise 6-4, question 6 essay: 2 pages max	March 1
Campaigns Fiorina ch. 10-11	March 3
Interest groups: roles Fiorina ch.7, Cox ch.5 Workbook ch. 5 due: exercises 5-3, 5-6	March 8
Policy process and priorities Fiorina ch.18:519-520 , Cox ch.7 Workbook ch.7 due: exercise 7-5	March 10
Spring break	March 14 -20
The government and the economy Fiorina ch.19	March 22
Fiscal policy and budgets	March 24
Taxes and policy	March 29
Review	March 31
MIDTERM #2	April 5
Monetary policy and the Fed	April 7
Economic crises	April 12
Social safety nets and welfare Cox ch.9 Workbook ch. 9 due: exercise 9-4	April 14
Health care policy Cox ch.8 Workbook ch. 8 due: to be assigned	April 19
Foreign policy and defense Fiorina ch.20, Cox ch.10 Workbook ch. 10 due: exercise 10-5	April 21
Immigration policy (catch-up day)	April 25
Catch-up day	April 27
Course wrap-up	May 3
Exam review	May 5
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)	10 percent	10
Written assignments (3)	15 percent	15
Quizzes (10/13)	15 percent	15
Class participation	10 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.

Optional Policies:

Class Attendance and Discussions:

- 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.