



**PSCI 3110D.090: Fall 2012 semester
The Legislative Process**

Class Meets: Tuesdays, Thursdays 4 pm – 5:20 pm
Building 2, Rm. 308

Professor: Walt Borges, PhD; Department of Social Sciences

Office: Building 2 – Rm. 221

Office Hours: Monday: 11 – 11:30 am, 1 – 3 pm
Tuesday: 11:30 am – 12 noon, 2:30 – 5:30 pm
Wednesday: 11 – 11:30 am
Thursday: 11:30 am – 12 noon, 3:30 – 5:30 pm
and by appointment

Office hours will be adjusted after consultation with the class. Final office hours will be posted on Blackboard.

Office Phone: 972-338-1552

I only answer and check phone messages when I am in the office. Please communicate by official university email if you want a prompt reply.

Email: walter.borges@unt.edu

Website: Blackboard (<https://ecampus.unt.edu/webct/entryPage.dowebct>)

Course Description and Goals:

Political Science 3110 is a Congress-focused course that explores the nature of legislative power and process in the United States. Texas and other state legislatures are contrasted with Congress on occasion, but the focus is on Congress as the structural model for all but one of the other state legislatures. The course explores the dual roles of legislators and representatives and the external electoral and pressures that bear on policy choices and other legislative functions. We also investigate the theoretical underpinnings of legislative power and the historical and practical development of Congress processes as models for other US legislatures.

At the end of this course, the student will

- Be able to discuss the formulation and enactment of legislative policy in the American and state governments;
- Demonstrate the ability to write cogently about major legislative issues and processes;
- Define external inputs and internal processes used to produce Congressional policy and other legislative outcomes;
- Be able to discuss individual and mass behaviors of the American electorate with regards to Congressional elections.

Required Text:

Davidson, Roger, Walter J. Oleszek, and Frances E. Lee. *Congress and Its Members*, 13th ed. Washington DC: CQ Press.

Other Assigned Readings:

Article I, US Constitution. 1787. (Multiple online sources.)

Fenno, Richard F. Jr. 1977. US House Members in Their Constituencies: an Exploration. *American Political Science Review*. 71(3):883-917.

Jacobson, Gary. 2011. The Republican Resurgence in 2010. *Political Science Quarterly*. 126(1):27-52.

Kingdon, John W. 1977. Models of Legislative Voting. *The Journal of Politics*. 39(3):563-595.

Madison, James. *Federalist 10 and 51*. 1788. (Multiple online sources. Also on Blackboard Learn course web page.)

Mann, Thomas J., and Norman Ornstein. 2012. Let's Just Say It: The Republicans Are the Problem. *Washington Post*. April 27. (link:Blackboard)

Ornstein, Norman. 2011. Worst. Congress. Ever. *Foreign Policy*. July 19.

Pew Research Center of the People & the Press. 2010. Distrust, Discontent, Anger and Partisan Rancor. URL.

Polsby, Nelson W. 1968. The Institutionalization of the US House of Representatives. *The American Political Science Review*. 62(1):144-168.

Sinclair, Barbara. 2009. Barack Obama and the 111th Congress: Politics as Usual? *Extensions*. Norman, Okla.: Carl Albert Research and Studies Center, Univ. of Oklahoma.

Additional online readings may 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@fhcg.follett.com

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** – weekly participation in class discussions.

Grading Matrix:

Instrument	Value (points or percentages)	Cumulative
Midterm	20 percent	20 percent
Final exam	30 percent	50
Issue/reading discussion leader (2)	10 percent	60
District description	10 percent	70
Paper	25 percent	95
Class participation	5 percent	100
Total:		100 percent

Grade Determination:

A = 90% or better B = 80 – 89% C = 70 – 79%
 D = 60 – 69% F = less than 60%

Course Outline:

All dates and topics are approximate and subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Any changes to this schedule will be communicated by the instructor in class and by posting on Blackboard. Assignments will be handed out in class and posted afterwards on Blackboard.

Due dates for reading and homework assignments are in boldface.

DATE	TOPICS
Aug. 30	General course info
Sept. 4	Two Congresses: legislators v. representatives (Davidson Ch 1)
Sept. 6	Public views of Congress (Pew, Ornstein, Mann, Sinclair)
Sept. 11	Evolution of modern Congress (Davidson Ch2) (Polsby) (Article 1)
Sept. 13	Parliamentary v. presidential systems
Sept. 18	Factions and party (Federalist 10 and 51)
Sept. 20	Representatives (Davidson Chs 3-5)
Sept. 25	Recruitment
Sept. 27	Elections (Jacobsen)
Oct. 2	Two constituencies: the lobby and the gift economy
Oct. 4	Keeping constituents happy (Fenno)
Oct. 9	Legislators (Davidson Chs 6-9) (Kingdon, Mann)
Oct. 11	Parties and leaders
Oct. 16	Committees structures and process
Oct. 18	The game of rules (District profiles due Oct. 15)
Oct. 23	Enactment and delaying tactics
Oct. 25	MIDTERM
Oct. 30	Organized interests and Congress (Davidson Ch 13)
Nov. 1	Lobbyists: typology, approaches and games
Nov. 6	Congress and the president (Davidson Chs 10-11)
Nov. 8	The budget (Davidson Ch 14)
Nov. 13	National security (Davidson Ch 15)
Nov. 15	Congress and the courts (Davidson Ch. 12) Papers due Nov. 15
Nov. 20	A different model: the Texas legislature
Nov. 22	Thanksgiving
Nov. 27	Paper presentations
Nov. 29	Issue discussions (approved by instructor)
Dec. 4	More discussions
Dec. 6	Review
Dec. 13	Final: 4- 6 pm

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. Generally, no late assignments are accepted.

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, or that conflicts with 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. I am not your parent – you are responsible for attending class. Students are also responsible to make up any work covered in class, and I will not provide you with notes or an outline. 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:

- Do not attempt to communicate through the Blackboard mail function. I do not check it and I will not respond. Communicate through my official university e-mail listed at the top of this syllabus. I communicate with you by responding to whatever e-mail address you use to send your message. General notices are posted as announcements on Blackboard and/or as email to your official university address. Failure to check your email is no excuse for missing changes in test dates or assignments.
- 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.
- I support my classes with PowerPoint presentations. However, **you will not have access to these presentations outside of class.** There are several reasons for this:
 - 1) One-time use of images and charts for teaching is fair use under current legal rulings, but were I to allow you permanent access to those images, I would have to secure formal permission from the owner of every image.
 - 2) Some students substitute post-lecture PowerPoint downloads for attending class or note-taking. Others substitute verbatim regurgitation of PwrPt material on tests and quizzes for the thoughtful analysis that earns high grades. Studies show that note-taking does enhance student performance, so please develop that skill.
 - 3) There is potential for an ownership dispute over course content posted online. The presentations constitute my work product, virtually all of which was assembled before I began teaching at UNTD. Many universities are now enamored with online courses, and some attempt to claim legal ownership of work prepared by individuals employed at the school or posted on university websites, whether or not the content was compiled on university time or published during university employment. My lectures were compiled by me over years of study, reading and research outside the UNTD environment and existed before I began teaching these courses. Previously assembled presentations were adjusted to fit UNT course requirements and mandated texts.