

University of North Texas at Dallas
Fall 2016
SYLLABUS

PSCI 1040: American Government – Laws and Institutions		3Hrs
Department of Political Science		Division of Liberal Arts and Life Science
Instructor Name:	<i>Ronald Hy</i>	
Office Location:		
Phone:	361-455-3754 (I answer and check phone messages periodically. Please communicate by official university email.)	
Email Address:	ronald.hy@untdallas.edu	
Office Hours:	This course is an online class. If you wish to talk with me, email me so we can set up a time for meeting via telephone.	
Virtual Office Hours:	You may email at any time. I will try to answer within 24 hours.	
Classroom Location:	Online	
Class Meeting Days & Times:		
Course Catalog Description:	This course introduces American federal and Texas constitutions, federalism, local government, institutions, and civil rights and civil liberties. Satisfies legislative requirement of a course emphasizing U.S. and Texas constitutions..	
Prerequisites:	None	
Co-requisites:	None	
Required Access Codes for the Texts:	<p>You only need to purchase the Mindtap Access Codes for Janda, Kenneth et. al., <i>The Challenge of Democracy: American Government in Global Politics</i> (with MindTap™ Printed Access Card), 13th Edition and Maxwell, William et al., <i>Texas Politics Today 2015-2016 Edition</i> (with MindTap Political Science Printed Access Card), 17th Edition.</p> <p>You will need two access codes--one for each text. <u>You must purchase access codes; otherwise you will be unable to pass the course since all course assignments/quizzes are taken and submitted via MindTap.</u> The MindTap program includes an electronic version of the texts. <u>Purchasing a hard copy of the texts is optional.</u></p>	
Recommended Text and References:	None.	
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 Goals or Overview:	
	This course meets the requirements of the university core curriculum and its overarching purpose is to utilize a theoretical framework to examine the design of American federal, state, and local governments and the extent to which each fulfills its purpose. The course will systematically study institutions and processes by learning who the players are, and their respective roles. The course will also (1) increase awareness of a number of contemporary issues in American federal and Texas politics in order to illustrate how public officials and citizens address those issues, (2) learn how government decisions have far-reaching effects in our everyday lives, and (3) highlight linkages so that we are familiar with the multiple access points from which we as citizens <i>can</i> affect government.

Learning Objectives/Outcomes: At the end of this course, the student will:	
1	Be able to discuss the policy processes in the American federal government;
3	Demonstrate the ability to understand the major issues in American government and public responses to those initiatives;
4	Define roles and processes used to affect policy;
5	Identify past, current and future issues of American federal government;
	General Education objectives
6	The course is designed to enhance critical thinking through inquiry and analysis and the creative linking of disparate or similar concepts.
7	The course is designed to enhance written, oral and reading skills to promote communication.
8	The course is designed to ensure UNT Dallas graduates are socially responsible, interculturally competent, and civically engaged through enhanced knowledge of local and global governments and issues, and through various culture-based approaches underlying government institutions and policy.
9	The course promotes personal responsibility through discussions of ethical problems and reasoning in the public sphere.
10	Taken together, these general education objectives are designed to achieve the ultimate goal of the university, to provide skills and a conceptual foundation that allows graduates to continue learning long after leaving the university.

Course Requirements and Due Dates

The course uses an online format. The course begins on August 22, 2016 and ends on December 3, 2016.

Since this course is web-based, you will complete all course work from your home (or anywhere else) as long as you have an Internet connection, and are able to master the features of the university's online course management system, **BlackBoard**, and Cengage's the **MindTap** program.

It is each student's responsibility to submit all the assignments/quizzes properly, accurately, and on time.

Each week, you will need to read and finish the assigned readings and assignments/quizzes for that week. Access to the assigned readings and assignments/quizzes will be given on the day that the previous set of assignments are due.

Purchase the access codes before the beginning of the course since the first set of assignments/quizzes that include two chapters are due within 5 days of the beginning of the course.

If you do not submit all the required assignments by the due date, you will not be able to complete that week's readings and assignments/quizzes. They will be closed on the due date and not be reopened except for documented medical or work related reasons, with prior approval. See the syllabus for the due date for the readings and assignments.

You also will need to participate in three discussion sessions as outlined later in the syllabus.

Please note that this course includes **FIRM** deadlines scheduled throughout the course dates. You will be **required** to adhere to a weekly schedule that includes readings, activities, assignments, and class discussions. Please review the syllabus and pay careful attention to deadlines. **Due to the nature of this course, deadlines will not be extended except for documented medical or work related reasons, so please do not ask for an extension.** If you miss an assignment or activity, work very hard to earn the maximum number of points on all subsequent activities. Extra credit is not available in this course.

If you are new to Blackboard Learn, you can take a little bit of time to review some of the on-demand video clips to help you learn your way around Blackboard Learn. Please click on the following link to view the videos: <http://ondemand.blackboard.com/students.htm>. If you need more hands-on assistance, please do not hesitate to call 972-338-5580 or visit our Technology resources tab located at the top of the Blackboard system.

Before beginning, please be sure to read the information concerning the purchase and use of MindTap located on the left side of the Blackboard screen.

Course Evaluation Methods

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

Grading Matrix:

Assignment/Quizzes
Discussion Sessions

Assignment/Quizzes

You will be able to take each quiz twice before their due dates, and will receive the better of the two scores. **You will be given credit for only the assignment/quizzes listed in the syllabus below.**

Please REVIEW THE SYLLABUS DUE DATES BEFORE EACH SET OF ASSIGNMENTS TO SEE WHICH ASSIGNMENTS/QUIZZES FOR EACH CHAPTER ARE REQUIRED. If you submit an assignment or quiz that is not part of the required assignments/quizzes for each chapter, you will not receive any points for that assignment or quiz. Consequently, a zero will be assigned to that assignment or quiz. A zero will not affect your grade since it is based on the cumulative score of only the assigned sets of assignments, with the discussions scores added to it.

If you wish, for your own edification, to complete an assignment or quiz that is not part of the required assignments/quizzes for each chapter, please do so. But, a zero will be assigned to that assignment or quiz.

For those assignments/quizzes that require written responses:

One word or one sentence answers will not suffice. You will receive a zero for those types of answers. A sound answer should address the issue and should contain at least 4 sentences. The rubric listed in the discussion session below will be used to score your answers.

The assignments, quizzes, points assigned, and their due dates are as follows:

READ CAREFULLY BEFORE EACH SET OF ASSIGNMENTS TO SEE WHICH ASSIGNMENTS/QUIZZES FOR EACH CHAPTER ARE PART OF THE SET.

Click on the appropriate folder (**American Government Folder or Texas Government Folder**) to enter into each week's assignment. The first time you click on each folder you will be asked for your access code. That request will only occur once. After you enter it the first time you will not need to do so again.

American Government Folder

Introduction to American Government Folder Maximum Points

- Quiz What Do You Know About Freedom, Order, and Equality 2
- Focus Activities Freedom, Order, and Equality 8
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 1 25
- Quiz What Do You Know About Majoritarian or Pluralistic Democracy 2
- Focus Activities Majoritarian or Pluralistic Democracy 3
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 2 25

Due August 27

Texas Government Folder

Introduction to Texas Government Folder

- Tutorial Texas history, culture and politics 3
- Focus Activities Quiz Texas history, culture and politics 16
- Video Quiz College Tuition in Texas 5
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 1 25

Due September 3

American Government Folder

Federalism and the Constitution Folder

- Quiz What Do You Know About the Constitution 2
- Focus Activities Constitution 12
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 3 25
- Quiz What Do You Know Federalism 2
- Focus Activities Federalism 9
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 4 25

Due September 10

Texas Government Folder
Federalism and Texas Constitution Folder

- Federalism Tutorial 3
- Focus Activities Federalism 8
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 2 25
- Texas Constitution Tutorial 2
- Focus Activities Texas Constitution 12
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 3 25

Due September 17

American Government Folder
Congress Folder

- Quiz What Do You Know About Congress 2
- Focus Activities Constitution 8
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 11 25

Due September 24

Texas Government Folder
Texas Legislature Folder

- Texas Legislature Tutorial 3
- Focus Activities the Legislature 15
- Simulation Quiz The Texas Legislature 3
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 7 25

Due October 1

American Government Folder
Presidency Folder

- Quiz What Do You Know About the Presidency 2
- Focus Activities The Presidency 6
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 12 25

Due October 8

Texas Government Folder
Texas Executive Branch Folder

- Texas Executive Tutorial 3
- Focus Activities The Executive Branch 16
- Video Quiz: Rick Perry's Plans for Texas 5
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 8 25

Due October 15

**American Government Folder
Judiciary Folder**

- Quiz What Do You Know About the Judiciary 2
- Focus Activities The Judiciary 10
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 14 25

Due October 22

**Texas Government Folder
Texas Judiciary Folder**

- Texas Judiciary Tutorial 3
- Focus Activities Texas Judiciary 10
- Simulation Texas Judiciary 4
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 9 25

Due November 5

**American Government Folder
Public Policy Folder**

- Quiz What Do You Know About Economic Policy 2
- Focus Activities Economic Policy 8
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 17 25
- Quiz What Do You Know About Domestic Policy 2
- Focus Activities Domestic Policy 7
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 18 25

Due November 12

**Texas Government Folder
Public Policy Folder**

- Focus Activities Public Policy in Texas 33
- Video Quiz Texas Health Care 5
- Simulation Quiz: Finance, Fiscal Policy, and Services 4
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 12 25

Due November 19

American Government Folder
Law and Due Process Folder

- Quiz What Do You Know About Civil Liberties 2
- Focus Activities Civil Liberties 9
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 15 25
- Quiz What Do You Know About Civil Rights 2
- Focus Activities Civil Rights 7
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 16 25

Due November 26

Texas Government Folder
Law and Due Process Folder

- Law Due Process Tutorial 3
- Focus Activities Law and Due Process 10
- Video Quiz: One Texas Sheriff's Unique Approach to Lowering Recidivism 5
- Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 10 25

Due December 3

Discussion Sessions

Each student will be required to post to (3) different discussion board postings during the semester. The discussion board topics will correspond with information from the appropriate chapters. Each student will be required to post to the discussion question asked. **Postings will be graded according to the Critical Thinking Value and Written Communication Value in each posting.** The (3) discussion board postings will count up to (10) points each, for a total of 30 points toward a student's final grade. A completion date will be posted on each discussion question located inside the Discussion Board link.

Only thorough responses will earn participation points. Your responses must be thoughtful and either expand on another student's ideas or discuss why you agree or disagree with some points of the discussion. Only posts in the Discussion Board will count towards your class participation score. Any other posts will not earn credit. Each student must address the discussion issue and then review at least three students' answers and respond to at least three of your classmates' discussion board postings for full credit.

The purpose of the discussion board is to exchange ideas with other students. That being the case, submitting All your posts on the same date only defeats the purpose of the assignment. Consequently, I will not give any points on the discussion assignment if all your posts on the same date.

Discussion Session Grading: Discussion board activities and any other grading activities will be graded within 48 hours after the closing of each unit. Instructor will also respond to student Blackboard questions within 24 hours of student posting in the Blackboard's messaging tool.

Blackboard Discussion Grading Rubric	Exceptional	Effective	Acceptable
Critical Thinking Value of Posting	5 points	3 points	2 points
Written Value of Posting	5 points	3 points	2points

Grade Determination

Grades will be given using the following scale as a foundation:

- A = (90 –100%)
- B = (80 – 89%)
- C = (70 – 79%)
- D = (60 – 69%)
- F = (59% or less)

Using the Blackboard grade book is convoluted. You may wish to use the MindTap grade books to check your scores. The only exception would be scores for the discussion sessions which are recorded only in the Blackboard grade book. Keep in mind that if you use MindTap, there is one grade book for the American government assignments and one for the Texas government assignments.

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. Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed as accommodations are not retroactive. For more information, you may visit the Student Life Office, Suite 200, Founders Hall or call 972-338-1777.

Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness Policy:

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNTD. 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.

Exam Policy:

*Exams should be taken as scheduled. No makeup examinations will be allowed except for documented emergencies (See Student Handbook). Also see point #2 under the **Grading Matrix***

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is a hallmark of higher education. You are expected to abide by the University's code of Academic Integrity 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 Academic Integrity at <http://www.unt.edu/unt-dallas/policies/Chapter%2007%20Student%20Affairs,%20Education,%20and%20Funding/7.002%20Code%20of%20Academic%20Integrity.pdf> for complete provisions of this code.

In addition, all academic work submitted for this class, including exams, papers, and written assignments should include the following statement:

On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance that violates the UNTD Academic Integrity Policy.

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 (swearing) 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 Office of Student Life as the instructor deems appropriate.