

University of North Texas at Dallas
Spring 2016
SYLLABUS

PSCI 1060: American Government Topics--Government and Politics in Texas		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 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 Address:	ronald.hy@untDallas.edu	
Office Hours:	None because this 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 students to the political processes and administrative procedures of state governments. It will take a comparative discuss the similarities and differences among states with respect to institutional structures, laws and regulations, political cultures, histories, demographics, and economics.	
Prerequisites:	None	
Co-requisites:	None	
Required Text:	Texas Politics Today 2015-2016 Edition (with MindTap Political Science Printed Access Card), 17th Edition. ISBN# 9781305106444 You only need to purchase the Access Code for the text. You must purchase access code; otherwise you will be unable to pass the course since all course assignments/quizzes are taken and submitted via MindTap. The MindTap program includes an electronic version of the Texts. <u>Purchasing a hard copy of the texts is optional.</u>	
Recommended Text and References:	Additional online readings linked to homework assignments and quizzes 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 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 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 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. Although we only touch on many of these extremely important and complex topics, it is my hope that this course will spark your interest in politics and encourage your participation in the political process as active citizens of Texas.
Learning Objectives/Outcomes: At the end of this course, the student will understand and comprehend:	
1	the evolution of the Texas political system, focusing on political, economic, cultural, and global forces
2	The structure, functions, and operations of Texas state and local governments.
3	substantive solutions to public policy problems
4	the role, operations, and impact of media, interest groups, and political parties as they affect Texas state and local government
5	the development and implementation of various public policies in Texas state and local governments
6	he impact of budgeting, taxation spending and providing public services

Course Requirements

The course uses an online format. The semester begins on January 19, 2016 and ends on May 5, 2016.

This course is web-based. You will complete all course work from your home 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—instructions come with the text.

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 approximately one week before the due date and will be closed on the due date. Thus, if you do not submit all the required materials by the due date, you will not be able to complete that week's readings and assignments/quizzes. They will not be reopened. See the syllabus for the dues date for the readings and assignment/quizzes.

You also will need to participate in three discussion sessions as outlined below.

There will be no test in addition to the assignments/quizzes.

<p>Please note that this course includes <u>FIRM</u> deadlines scheduled throughout the semester. 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. <u>Due to the nature of this course, deadlines will not be extended for any reason, so please do not ask for an extension.</u> 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.</p>
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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
Class Participation

Assignment/Quizzes

You will be able to take each assignment/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 below.

Please review the syllabus or assignments due dates 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. The zero will not affect your total score.

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.

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

The first time you click on a 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.

Chapter 1: Texas Culture and Diversity	Maximum Points
• Tutorial Texas History, Culture and Politics	3
• Focus Activities Quiz Texas History, Culture and Politics	16
• Video Quiz <u>College Tuition in Texas</u>	5
• Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 1	25
Due	January 30
Chapter 2: Texas in the Federal System	
• Federalism Tutorial	3
• Quiz What do you know about Texas	2
• Focus Activities Federalism	8
• Simulation Federalism and the Texas Constitution	4
• Wrap Up Quiz Chapter2	25
Due	February 6
Chapter 3: Texas Constitution	
• Texas Constitution Tutorial	2
• Focus Activities Texas Constitution	12
• Video Quiz Craig Washington on Teas Constitution	5
• Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 3	25
Due	February 13

Chapter 7: The Legislature	
• Texas Legislature Tutorial	3
• Focus Activities the Legislature	15
• Simulation Quiz The Texas Legislature	3
• Video Quiz	5
• Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 7	25
Due	February 20
Chapter 8: The Executive Branch	
• Texas Executive Tutorial	2
• Focus Activities The Executive Branch	15
• Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 8	25
Due	February 27
Chapter 9: Judiciary	
• Texas Judiciary Tutorial	3
• Quiz- What do you know about the Texas Judiciary	2
• Video Quiz Dual Role of the Texas Judiciary	5
• Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 9	25
Due	March 5
Chapter 11: Local Government	
• Local Government Tutorial	4
• Quiz- What do you know about Texas Local Government	2
• Video Quiz Dallas Schools and Firearms	5
• Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 11	25
Due	March 12
Chapter 12: Public Policy	
• Quiz What do you know about Finance/Fiscal Policy	2
• Video Quiz Texas Health Care	5
• Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 12	25
Due	March 26
Chapter 6: Interest Groups	
• Interest Groups Tutorial	3
• Quiz What do you know about Interest Groups	2
• Video Quiz Pickens Plan	5
• Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 6	25
Due	April 2
Chapter 4: Voting & Elections	
• Voting and Elections Tutorial	3
• Focus Activities Voting and Elections	18
• Quiz What do you know about Voting & Elections	2
• Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 4	25
Due	April 9

Chapter 5: Political Parties

- Political Parties Tutorial 3
 - Focus Activities Political Parties 18
 - Simulation Quiz Political Parties 4
 - Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 5 25
- Due April 23**

Chapter 10: Law and Due Process

- Law and Due Process Tutorial 3
 - Focus Activities Law and Due Process 10
 - Wrap Up Quiz Chapter 10 25
- Due May 5**

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

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)

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.

Optional Policies:

- Use of WebCT/Blackboard
- Use of Cell Phones & other Electronic Gadgets in the Classroom
- Food & Drink in the Classroom

- *Use of Laptops*
- *Grade of Incomplete, "I"*