University of North Texas at Dallas
Fall 2015
SYLLABUS

PSCI 1060: Government and Politics in Texas	3Hrs

Department of Political Science		Division of	Liberal Arts and Life Science

Instructor Name:	*Ronald Hy*
Office Location:	*Founders Hall, 228*
Office Phone:	972-338-1588 (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.)
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Office Hours:	By appointment. Please communicate by official university email if you want a prompt reply.
Virtual Office Hours:	None, but 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. Boston: Wadsworth

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@fheg.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 *can* 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 Outline

This schedule is subject to change by the instructor. Any changes to this schedule will be communicated via Blackboard.

Readings	Timeline
Introduction to Course, including MindTap	August 24 - 28
Chapter 1: Texas Culture & Diversity (Introduction to Texas State Government)	Aug 31 – Sept 4
Chapter 2: Texas in the Federal System	Sept 7-11
Chapter 3: Texas Constitution	Sept 14 – 18
Chapter 7: The Legislature (Structure & Organization)	Sept 21 – Oct 2
Chapter 8: The Executive Branch (Bureaucracy)	Oct 5-16
Chapter 9: Judiciary	Oct 19-23
Chapter 11: Local Government	Oct 26-30
Chapter 12: Public Policy (Taxes, Budgeting Spending, & Services)	Nov 2-6
Chapter 6: Interest Groups	Nov 9-13
Chapter 4: Voting & Elections	Nov 16-20
Chapter 5: Political Parties	Nov 23-27
Chapter 10: Law and Due Process	Nov 30-Dec 4

Course Requirements

The course uses an online format. The Fall semester begins on August 24, 2015 and ends on December 4, 2015.

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 readings and assignments/quizzes for a chapter. Access to each chapter 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. See the syllabus for the assignment/quizzes' due dates.

You also will need to participate in three discussion sessions. See the syllabus.

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

Please note that this course includes **FIRM** deadlines scheduled throughout the summer semester. You will be required to adhere to a weekly schedule that includes readings, activities, assignments, and class participation. Please review the syllabus and pay careful attention to deadlines. Due to the nature of this course, deadlines will not be extended for any reason, 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 located provided in the Introduction section posted in Blackboard concerning the purchase and use of MindTap.

Course Evaluation Methods

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

You will be able to take each quiz twice before its due date, and will receive the better of the two scores.

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

Chapter 1: Texas Culture & Diversity
- Tutorial   3
- Quiz   2
- Focus Activities Quiz   16
- Video Quiz   5
- Wrap Up Quiz   25

    Due   **Sept 4**

Chapter 2: Texas in the Federal System
- Tutorial   3
- Quiz   2
- Focus Activities Quiz   8
- Simulation   4
- Wrap Up Quiz   25

    Due   **Sept 11**

Chapter 3: Texas Constitution
- Tutorial   2
- Quiz Constitution   2
- Focus Activities Quiz   12
- Video Quiz   5
- Wrap Up Quiz   25

     Due   **Sept 18**

Chapter 7: The Legislature
- Tutorial   3
- Focus Activities Quiz   15
- Video Quiz   5
- Simulation   3
- Wrap Up Quiz   25

     Due   **Oct 2**

Chapter 8: The Executive Branch
- Focus Activities Quiz   15
- Quiz- Texas Executive   2
- Simulation   4
- Wrap Up Quiz   25

     Due   **Oct 16**

Chapter 9: Judiciary
- Tutorial   3
- Quiz- Texas Judiciary   2
- Simulation Quiz   4
- Wrap Up Quiz   25

     Due   **Oct 23**

Chapter 11: Local Government
- Tutorial   4
- Focus Activities   17
- Quiz- Texas Local Govt   2
- Video Quiz   2
- Wrap Up Quiz   25

     Due   **Oct 30**

Chapter 12: Public Policy
- Quiz Public Policy   2
- Quiz- Finance/Fiscal Policy   2
- Focus Activities   33
- Video Quiz   3
- Wrap Up Quiz   25

     Due   **Nov 6**

Chapter 6: Interest Groups
- Tutorial   3
- Quiz- Interest Groups   2
- Video Quiz   5
- Focus Activities   17
- Wrap Up Quiz   25

Due   **Nov 13**

Chapter 4: Voting & Elections
- Tutorial   3
- Focus Activities Quiz   18
- Quiz- Voting & Elections   2
- Wrap Up Quiz   25

Due   **Nov 20**

Chapter 5: Political Parties
- Tutorial   3
- Focus Activities Quiz   18
- Simulation   4
- Wrap Up Quiz   25

Due   **Nov 27**

Chapter 10: Voting & Elections
- Tutorial   3
- Quiz Due Process   2
- Focus Activities Quiz   10
- Simulation   4
- Wrap Up Quiz   25
Due   **Dec 4**

Class Participation (Discussion Board)
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. **You will need to respond to at least two of your classmate's discussion board postings for full credit.** 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 Board 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
Crtical 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 972-780-3632.

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_Integrity.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"*

Core Rubrics

The required core objectives that will be met and measured are (1) critical thinking, (2) communication, (3) social responsibility, and (4) personal responsibility. This course will utilize the following instruments to determine the degree to which newspaper or Internet articles, assignments, and, videos written and viewed by the students have achieved the core objectives of critical thinking communication, and personal and social responsibility.

Core Objective: Critical Thinking

Category	Emerging 1	Developing 2	Proficient 3	Excellent 4
Explain	Does not attempt to or fails to identify and summarize issue accurately.	Explains issue, though some aspects are incorrect or confused. Nuances and key details are missing or glossed over.	Accurately explains the challenge and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the issue.	Clearly identifies and explains the challenge and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the issue. Identifies integral relationships essential to analyzing the issue.
Evaluate	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/ evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/ evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/ evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/ evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.
Analyze and Synthesize	States a specific position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis), but is simplistic and obvious.	States a specific position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) and acknowledges different sides of an issue.	States a specific position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) taking into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position.	States a specific position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) that is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position.

Core Objective: Written Communication Rubric

Category	Emerging 1	Developing 2	Proficient 3	Excellent 4
Context of and Purpose for Writing	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, disciplinary conventions, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, disciplinary conventions and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, purpose, and disciplinary conventions and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, purpose, and disciplinary conventions that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.
Content Development	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The use of language has few errors.	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.

Core Objective: Oral Communication Rubric

Category	Emerging 1	Developing 2	Proficient 3	Excellent 4
Content Selection	Central idea is not focused. Supporting details are general and/or irrelevant.	Central idea is minimally focused. Some supporting details are specific but most are general and/or of limited relevance.	Central idea is sufficiently focused. Most supporting details are specific and relevant.	Central idea is clearly focused and effective. All supporting details are specific and clearly contribute to the central idea.
Presentation Structure	Presentation structure is weak and lacks transitions.	Presentation structure supports the central ideas, but transitions are lacking.	Presentation structure and transitions help to support central idea.	Presentation structure and logical transitions consistently and effectively support the central idea.
Delivery (verbal and nonverbal)	Inappropriate or ineffective enunciation, pronunciation, volume, pitch, inflection, or pace. Reading of or reference to notes, recitation. Inappropriate energy level or empty vocalizations. Poor posture, distracting or inappropriate body movements or gestures, or lack of eye contact.	Some inappropriateness of enunciation, pronunciation, volume, pitch, inflection, or pace. Some moments of apparent recitation, reading of notes, or reference to notes. Occasional inappropriate body movements, facial expressions, or gestures.	Clear enunciation; appropriate pronunciation, volume, pitch, inflection, and pace are generally maintained. Delivery appears spontaneous throughout. Facial expressions are compatible with spoken content; body movements and gestures are usually natural, appropriate, and relaxed. Any nervous movements do not interfere with the presentation. Any lack of eye contact is only momentary.	Clear enunciation; appropriate pronunciation, volume, pitch, inflection, and pace throughout. Speaker sounds genuinely interested in the topic. Delivery appears spontaneous throughout. Notes may assist but do not interrupt or control delivery. Body movements and gestures are natural, appropriate, and relaxed; eye contact is consistently maintained.

Core Objective: Visual Communication

Category	Emerging 1	Developing 2	Proficient 3	Excellent 4
Purpose/ Context/ Audience	Audience cannot identify purpose and context Visual elements unconnected to purpose and unclear to reader	Several text and visual elements don't support unified purpose Doesn't provide audience with clear information	Text/Visual elements coordinated with purpose Addresses the needs and interests of the audience	Text/ visual elements coordinated with purpose and clear to the audience. Provides audience with context through clear background information
Visual Features	Demonstrates poor command of visual communication with little/ no title, captions, etc... Visuals not connected to purpose or audience	Demonstrates some command of visual communication conventions, but title, captions, etc. limit understanding Visuals appropriate to purpose, but not connected	Demonstrates command of visual communication conventions, but title, captions, etc. may be less than specific Visuals target appropriate audience and fit purpose	Demonstrates command of visual communication conventions Visual conventions match audience and clarify purpose.
Language	Lack of connectives Frequent mechanical errors	Awkward phrasing that obscures phrasing Adequate connectives	Clear sentence structure with clear meaning No mechanical errors, some imprecise diction	Graceful sentences as well as clear meaning Effective word choice

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY RUBRIC

Definition: Social Responsibility is the obligation to develop knowledge, skills, values, and motivations concerning intercultural competence, involvement, and other activities essential to improving the quality of life within local, regional, national, and/or global communities.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

Specific Outcomes	Exceeds Expectation (3)	Meets Expectation (2)	Does Not Meet Expectation (1)
Issue Identification & Analysis. Artifact identifies social issues and analyzes them from a variety of cultural perspectives.	Artifact clearly identifies the social issue, and clearly analyzes the social issue from distinct cultural perspectives.	Artifact somewhat identifies the social issue, and somewhat analyzes it from distinct cultural perspectives.	Artifact does not identify the social issue, and/or does not analyze it from distinct cultural perspectives.
OCommunity Impact. Artifact identifies and evaluates the social, political, and/or economic impact of a civic, regional, national, or global issue.	Artifact clearly identifies and clearly evaluates the social, political, and/or economic impact of a civic, regional, national, or global issue.	Artifact somewhat identifies and somewhat evaluates the social, political, and/or economic impact of a civic, regional, national, or global issue.	Artifact does not identify and/or does not critique the social, political, and/or economic impact of a civic, regional, national, or global issue.
Personal Impact. Artifact identifies and assesses the impact of social prejudices on attitudes and behaviors.	Artifact clearly identifies and provides examples of social prejudices, and clearly assesses their impact on attitudes and behaviors, providing examples of their effects on human behavior.	Artifact somewhat identifies social prejudices, and somewhat assesses their impacts and effects on human behavior.	Artifact does not define social prejudices, and/or does not assess their impacts and effects on human behavior.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY RUBRIC

Definition: Personal Responsibility is the concept that individuals develop and make choices, take actions, and accept consequences to enhance lifelong skills necessary for physical, social, mental, emotional, and/or economic health. Student's ethical self identify evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on personal ethical issues.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

Specific Outcomes	Exceeds Expectation (3)	Meets Expectation (2)	Does Not Meet Expectation (1)
: Commitment to instruction. Student demonstrates commitment to receive and benefit from instruction.	Student demonstrates exemplary commitment to instruction as evidenced by attendance, punctuality, engagement, or other measures.	Student demonstrates sufficient commitment to instruction as evidenced by attendance, punctuality, engagement, or other measures.	Student demonstrates insufficient commitment to instruction as evidenced by attendance, punctuality, engagement, or other measures.
Commitment to learning. Student demonstrates commitment to learning by preparation for and completion of coursework.	Student demonstrates exemplary commitment to learning by completing all assignments by the deadlines and always coming to class prepared.	Student demonstrates sufficient commitment to learning by completing most assignments, usually by the deadlines, and usually coming to class prepared.	Student demonstrates insufficient commitment to learning by not completing several assignments, not meeting the required deadlines, and/or not coming to class prepared.
Commitment to positive learning environment. Student demonstrates commitment to promote a positive learning environment.	Student demonstrates exemplary commitment to a positive learning environment by always following instructions and participating in class activities, and/or other measures.	Student demonstrates sufficient commitment to a positive learning environment by usually following instructions and participating in class activities, and/or other measures.	Student demonstrates insufficient commitment to a positive learning environment by not following instructions and seldom participating in class activities, or fostering a negative learning environment.
Outcome #4: Commitment to academic integrity. Student demonstrates commitment to academic integrity in regards to plagiarism and/or cheating within a formal academic exercise.	Student demonstrates exemplary commitment to academic integrity as evidenced by appropriately documenting original sources and illustrating fulfillment of assignment guidelines.	Student demonstrates sufficient commitment to academic integrity by attempting to use appropriately documented original sources and illustrating a partial fulfillment of assignment guidelines.	Student demonstrates insufficient commitment to academic integrity by lacking documentation of original sources and not fulfilling assignment guidelines.
Outcome #5: Commitment to reflective, personal decision making. Student demonstrates commitment to reflective, personal decision making.	Student demonstrates exemplary commitment to reflective, personal decision making as evidenced by clearly illustrating an examination of divergent ethical viewpoints.	Student demonstrates sufficient commitment to reflective, personal decision making by attempting to examine divergent ethical viewpoints.	Student demonstrates insufficient commitment to reflective, personal decision making by ignoring the complexity of ethical debate.