

University of North Texas at Dallas
Summer 2 2015
SYLLABUS

PSCI 1060: 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:	<i>Founders Hall, 249</i>	
Office Phone:	361-455-3754 (Please communicate by official university email if you want a prompt reply or if you want to make an appointment to call me.)	
Email Address:	ronald.hy@untdallas.edu	
Office Hours:	Please communicate by official university to set up a time to call me..	
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. All the materials are online in an electronic format, including the text. You will need access to a computer. Also, it is recommended that you use the latest version of either Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome as your browser. You can download them for free.	
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.
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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
Chapter 1: Texas Culture & Diversity (Introduction to Texas State Government	July 13-17
Chapter 2: Texas in the Federal System	July 13-17
Chapter 3: Texas Constitution	July 20-24
Chapter 7: The Legislature (Structure & Organization)	July 20-24
Chapter 8: The Executive Branch (Bureaucracy)	July 27-31
Chapter 9: Judiciary	July 27-31
Chapter 11: Local Government	Aug 3-7
Chapter 12: Public Policy (Taxes, Budgeting Spending, & Services)	Aug 3-7
Chapter 6: Interest Groups	Aug 10-14
Chapter 4: Voting & Elections	Aug 10-14

Course Requirements

The course uses an online format. The second semester begins on July 13, 2015 and ends on August 14, 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.

Being a 5-week summer session, the pace of this course will be intense. Each week, you will need to read and finish the readings and assignments/quizzes for two chapters. Access to each set of two chapters 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.

Grading Matrix:

Assignment/Quizzes	410 points
Class Participation	30 points
Total	440 points

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.

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

Chapter 1: Texas Culture & Diversity (50 points)

- Tutorial 3
- Focus Activities Quiz 16
- Wrap Up Quiz 25
- Quiz-Texas Texas Culture & Politics 2
- Simulation Quiz 4

Due July 16

Chapter 2: Texas in the Federal System (43 points)

- Tutorial 3
- Focus Activities Quiz 8
- Wrap Up Quiz 25
- Quiz- Federal System 2
- Video Quiz 5

Due July 16

Chapter 3: Texas Constitution (46 points)	
• Tutorial	2
• Focus Activities Quiz	12
• Wrap Up Quiz	25
• Quiz- Constitution	2
• Video Quiz	5
Due	July 23

Chapter 7: The Legislature (46 points)	
• Tutorial	3
• Focus Activities Quiz	15
• Wrap Up Quiz	25
• Simulation Quiz	3
Due	July 23

Chapter 8: The Executive Branch (42 points)	
• Focus Activities Quiz	15
• Wrap Up Quiz	25
• Quiz- Texas Executive	2
Due	July 30

Chapter 9: Judiciary (34 points)	
• Tutorial	3
• Wrap Up Quiz	25
• Quiz- Texas Judiciary	2
• Simulation Quiz	4
Due	July 30

Chapter 11: Local Government (36 points)	
• Tutorial	4
• Wrap Up Quiz	25
• Quiz- Texas Local Govt	2
• Video Quiz	5
Due	August 6

Chapter 12: Public Policy (30 points)	
• Wrap Up Quiz	25
• Quiz- Finance/Fiscal Policy	2
• Simulation Quiz	3
Due	August 6

Chapter 6: Interest Groups (35 points)	
• Tutorial	3
• Wrap Up Quiz	25
• Quiz- Interest Groups	2
• Video Quiz	5
Due	August 13

Chapter 4: Voting & Elections (48 points)	
• Tutorial	3
• Focus Activities Quiz	18
• Wrap Up Quiz	25
• Quiz- Voting & Elections	2
Due	August 13

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 respond to the discussion question asked and must reply to the responses of the other students. **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. Postings will be due on July 20, July 27, and August 8.

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
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 972-780-3632.

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"