

PSCI 1040, American and Texas Government
Department of Political Science, University of North Texas
Syllabus, fall 2014

Lecture (all sections)
Wednesday, 2.00-3.50p
Sage Hall 116

Breakout Meetings		
Section 104 Monday, 2.00-2.50p SAGE 329 Ms. Samantha Pettey	Section 105 Monday, 3.00-3.50p SAGE 329 Ms. Samantha Pettey	Section 106 Friday, 2.00-2.50p BLB 060 Mr. Kevin Kearns

Course Description

This course explores the following topics: the U.S. and Texas constitutions, federalism, the establishment of civil rights and liberties, and the structure of American and Texas government. Pursuant to the Undergraduate Catalog, this course “must be taken to satisfy the requirement of a course emphasizing U.S. and Texas constitutions.” Please note that in instructor may amend this syllabus at her discretion.

Personnel

Instructor Dr. Elizabeth Oldmixon Oldmixon@unt.edu WH 154/6 Office hours: T 2.00-5.00p	Teaching Assistant Ms. Samantha Pettey SamanthaPettey@my.unt.edu WH 158 Office hours: MW12.00-1:30p	Teaching Assistant Mr. Kevin Kearns KevinKearns@my.unt.edu WH 160 Office hours: M 11.00a-2.00p
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Blackboard

A Blackboard conference is maintained for this course at <https://learn.unt.edu/>. Students are responsible for checking Blackboard for announcements and messages. You should check Blackboard every day to ensure that you are up to date on all class-related information. Some course assignments will be submitted in Blackboard and student grades will be posted in Blackboard.

Team 1040

Please contact me if you have substantive questions about the substantive course material. My office hours are listed above, and I am available for appointments should you have a scheduling conflict. Email is an excellent way to reach me. If you write M-F, I should get back to you within 24 hours. If I don't, please feel free to send me a reminder. A note on etiquette: 1) please sign your emails with your name, 2) please include an appropriate salutation, 3) please ask a specific question if you need a response, and 4) please include the course number (PSCI 1040) in the subject line of your message.

You have a teaching assistant assigned to you based upon the section for which you are registered. Any problems you have with administrative or procedural matters such as incorrect grades or problems with homework should be discussed first with your assigned TA. If you have a complaint, contact me after you have spoken to the TA to clarify the problem. If you have trouble with Blackboard, please contact the Student Help Desk at 940.565.2324.

The UNT Learning Center provides Supplemental Instruction for this course. SI Leaders are UNT students that have taken this course before and performed well. Your SI will hold weekly group study sessions and a weekly office hour. All students are welcome to and strongly encouraged to attend SI sessions. Your SI cannot answer questions about your grades but can help with any questions about

course content. Your Supplemental Instruction Leader is Marissa Hines. You may contact Marissa by email at rissarooroo7@yahoo.com. Once Marissa's session schedule is finalized, SI sessions will be added to the course calendar in Blackboard.

Required Text

Central Ideas in American Government, first edition, with 1040 Workbook: Laws and Institutions, first edition. Soomo Publishing, 2014.

Assignments & Grading

Your grade will be based on the following components.

Component	Percent of Course Grade
Exams	55
“Get the Gist” Reading Questions	10
Workbook Assignments	15
Breakout Group Participation and Assignments	20
Total	100

Final letter grades will be assigned according to the following schedule: \geq to 90% is an A, 80-89% is a B, 70-79% is a C, 60-69% is a D, $<$ 60% is an F.

Exams

Three exams will be given—2 unit tests and a cumulative final. Exams will cover material from all lectures and required readings. The exams are closed book and closed notes. The exams will include a combination of multiple choice, multiple answer, true/false, and matching questions. Exams will be administered through Blackboard and taken in the UNT computer testing center (330 Sage Hall) at the designated time. The exams are password protected, so you will not be able to access them from other sites.

Your top two exam scores will be used to calculate your final grade. The final exam will be comprehensive and will be held during our course's assigned final exam period. The final is optional. If you have taken the first two exams and scored to your satisfaction, you may skip the final exam. If you are dissatisfied with your exam scores or missed one of the first two tests, you may take the final exam in an attempt to raise your grade.

No make-up exams will be given unless you have a university-excused absence or a family or medical emergency, which is documented and verifiable. Since you may drop your lowest exam grade, if you miss an exam due to illness, lack of preparation, oversleeping, etc., then you may miss that exam and use it as your lowest grade (i.e. the “drop”). If you miss a second exam, you will receive a zero for that exam grade. If you will miss an exam because of a university-approved absence, you should make arrangements to take the exam early if you know about your absence ahead of time. Students that will miss an exam due to travel with UNT athletic teams or performance groups, or for observance of a religious holiday, for example, should make arrangements to take their exams prior to their absences.

On exams days, students may not 1) wear hats, sunglasses, or headphones; 2) eat or drink anything; 3) leave the exam room – even to use the lavatory; 4) answer a phone call; 5) touch, use, or keep in view any electronic devices or class related materials; 6) take the exam after the first person has left.

Get the Gist Reading Questions & Workbook Assignments

The web-text includes two types of chapters: textbook chapters and workbook chapters. Every page of each textbook chapter includes a set of “Get the Gist” questions that are designed to help students check their comprehension of the page’s content. Ten percent of your grade will be based on your responses to these questions. Note: If you miss the Get the Gist questions, you can clear your answers and attempt them again! Each chapter’s Get the Gist questions are due prior to the lecture in which the chapter’s subject will be introduced. There are nine textbook chapters; their associated Get the Gist question due dates are listed on the schedule.

There are eight workbook chapters. Each chapter is organized around the four learning objectives adopted by Texas’s Higher Education Coordinating Board: (1) critical thinking skills, (2) social responsibility, (3) communication skills, and (4) personal responsibility. Workbook chapters provide an opportunity to apply the material covered in the textbook and lecture. Assignments include multiple choice questions, polls, short answer questions, and response board entries (similar to discussion board posts). Workbook assignments are denoted WB on the schedule. Due dates are listed on the schedule.

Breakout Meeting Assignments and Participation

This course is comprised of a weekly lecture and a weekly breakout session. The breakout sessions are smaller meetings where the material can be covered in greater depth. They will include a mix of focused lecture, discussion, and activities. Attendance at lecture is encouraged in the strongest possible terms. Attendance at the breakout sessions is mandatory. If you are absent from a class session, you should obtain notes from a classmate.

Note the following:

- 1. You must attend the breakout meeting for which you are formally registered.*
- 2. Students who miss 4 or more breakout sessions will receive a zero for this portion of their grade!*

Other Class Policies

Laptops Students using laptops must sit in one of the last ten rows of the classroom. The reason for this is as follows: recent literature suggests that using laptops in class is negatively associated with student success. I advise against using laptops, but it is up to you. The larger problem is that laptop use negatively affects student success for the people sitting around laptop users. In order to ensure that laptop users do not create distractions, laptop users must sit in the back of the room.

Late Assignments If for some substantial reason you cannot turn in your assignments at the scheduled time, you should contact me prior to the due date to request an extension. Assignments turned in late but before the next exam will be eligible for 50% of the total points. Late assignments received after the next exam will not receive credit for the assignment. Please note that assignments may be turned in early.

Classroom Conduct Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>. The short version is that we must all practice the Golden Rule – treat others as you would like to be treated. Specifically, this means that all students must treat the instructor, the other students, the teaching assistants, and the classroom setting with respect. The same is true for the instructor. Therefore:

- All potentially disruptive electronic devices must be silenced.
- Students should not send text messages, have side conversations, fall asleep, or read irrelevant materials during class. It's impolite and distracting.
- Students should be on time and stay for the entire period.
- Please show respect for alternative opinions and points of view.
- Please note that expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums.

Extra Credit Students should not expect or ask for extra credit. If extra credit is offered, it will be offered to the entire class. Note the grading criteria, and plan accordingly for your success. If you need a particular grade to graduate, keep a scholarship, etc., then exert the effort necessary to earn such a grade. If problems arise, address them early before they become unresolvable!

Religious Holidays In accordance with UNT Policy 15.2.5, students will be excused from class or other activities for the observance of religious holidays, for religions whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20 of the Tax Code. The student is encouraged to notify the instructor as soon as possible regarding the absence.

Departmental Statement of ADA Compliance The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation.

Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Cheating, plagiarism, and academic integrity The UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline defines cheating and plagiarism as the use of unauthorized books, notes, or otherwise securing help in a test; copying others' tests, assignments, reports, or term papers; representing the work of another as one's own; collaborating without authority with another student during an examination or in preparing academic work; or otherwise practicing scholastic dishonesty.

Normally, the minimum penalty for cheating or plagiarism is a grade of "F" in the course. In the case of graduate departmental exams, the minimum penalty shall be failure of all fields of the exam. Determination of cheating or plagiarism shall be made by the instructor in the course, or by the field faculty in the case of departmental exams.

Cases of cheating or plagiarism on graduate departmental exams, theses, or dissertations shall automatically be referred to the departmental Graduate Studies Committee. Cases of cheating or plagiarism in ordinary coursework may, at the discretion of the instructor, be referred to the Undergraduate Studies Committee in the case of undergraduate students, or the Graduate Studies Committee in the case of graduate students. These committees, acting as agents of the department Chair, shall impose further penalties, or recommend further penalties to the Dean of Students, if they determine that the case warrants it. In all cases, the Dean of Students shall be informed in writing of the case.

Students may appeal any decision under this policy by following the procedures laid down in the UNT

Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

The Political Science Department adheres to and enforces UNT's policy on academic integrity (cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and sabotage). Students in this class should review the policy (UNT Policy Manual Section 18.1.16), which may be located at http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf.

Violations of academic integrity in this course will be addressed in compliance with the penalties and procedures laid out in this policy. Students may appeal any decision under this policy by following the procedures laid down in the UNT Policy Manual Section 18.1.16 "Student Standards of Academic Integrity."

Policies on academic dishonesty: <http://www.vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>

Course Drop Information See schedule at <http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/scheduleclass.html>

Course Outline, section 106

With due allowance for delays, here is the tentative schedule:

Week	Dates	Breakout Topic and Reading Assignment	Lecture Topic and Reading Assignment	Chapter Assignment Due Dates
1	August 24-30	Introduction Syllabus		
2	August 31-September 6	<i>No Breakout Meeting - Labor Day</i>	Constitutions Chapters 1, 2	RQ Ch. 1, Wednesday, 2.00p RQ Ch. 2, Wednesday, 2.00p
3	September 7-13	Constitutions Chapter 3	Federalism Chapter 4	WB Ch. 3, Sunday, 11.59p RQ Ch. 4, Wednesday, 2.00p
4	September 14-20	Federalism Chapter 5		WB Ch. 5, Sunday 11.59p
5	September 21-27	Civil Liberties		WB Ch. 7, Sunday, 11.59p RQ Ch. 6, Wednesday 2.00p
		Chapter 7	Chapter 6	
6	September 28-October 4	Civil Rights Chapter 8	Civil Liberties	RQ Ch. 8, Wednesday, 2.00p
7	October 5-11	Civil Rights Chapter 9	Review	WB Ch. 9, Sunday, 11.59 p

8	October 12-18	Texas Legislature and Executive Branches	Exam 1: may be taken in the classroom on your personal laptop OR in the Sage 330 computer lab	
9	October 19-25	Congress Chapter 10		RQ Ch. 10, Wednesday, 2.00p
10	October 26-November 1	Congress Chapter 11		WB Ch. 11, Sunday, 11.59p
11	November 2-8	Presidency		WB Ch. 13, Sunday, 11.59p RQ Ch 12, Wednesday, 2.00p
		Chapter 13	Chapter 12	
12	November 9-15	Bureaucracy		WB Ch. 15, Sunday, 11.59p RQ Ch. 14, Wednesday, 2.00p
		Chapter 15	Chapter 14	
13	November 16-22	Courts Chapter 16		RQ Ch. 16, Wednesday, 2.00p
14	November 23-29	<i>No Breakout Meeting - Thanksgiving</i>	Courts Chapter 17	WB Ch. 17, Sunday, 11.59p
15	November 30-December 6	<i>No Breakout Meeting - Reading Day</i>	Exam 2: must be taken in the 330 Sage Hall computer lab	
16	December 10	Final Exam: may be taken from 10.00a-12.00p in 330 Sage Hall computer lab OR 1.30-3.30p in Sage 116 on your personal laptop		