

**University of North Texas at Dallas  
FALL 2018  
SYLLABUS**

<b>PSCI 1040.031: American Government – Law and Institutions 3 Hrs.</b>	
<b>Department of Social Sciences</b>	<b>Division of Liberal Arts and Life Sciences</b>
<b>Instructor Name:</b>	<b>Priscylla Bento</b>
<b>Office Location:</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Email Address:</b>	<a href="mailto:priscylla.bento@untdallas.edu">priscylla.bento@untdallas.edu</a>
<b>**Do not use Blackboard for email communication**</b>	
<b>Office Hours:</b>	<b>By Email</b>
<b>Classroom Location:</b>	<b>ONLINE</b>
<b>Class Meeting Days &amp; Times:</b>	<b>ONLINE</b>
<b>Course Catalog Description:</b>	U.S. and Texas constitutions, federalism, local government, institutions, civil rights and civil liberties. Satisfies legislative requirement of a course emphasizing U.S. and Texas constitutions. PSCI 1040 must be taken to satisfy the requirement of a course emphasizing U.S. and Texas constitutions.
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Co-requisites:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Required Text:</b>	<p><b><i>The American Political System; 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.</i></b> By Kollman, Ken. ISBN: 978-0393283570 Publisher: Norton.</p> <p><b><i>Governing Texas; 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.</i></b> By Anthony Champagne; Edward J. Harpham; Jason P. Casellas. ISBN: 9780393283679 Publisher: Norton.</p>
<b>Recommended Text and References:</b>	<b>None, but additional online readings to keep current on public affairs, broadcast and internet news organizations.</b>
<b>Access to Learning Resources:</b>	<p>UNT Dallas Library: (Founders Hall) phone: (972) 780-1616 web: <a href="http://www.untdallas.edu/library">http://www.untdallas.edu/library</a> e-mail: <a href="mailto:Library@untdallas.edu">Library@untdallas.edu</a></p> <p>UNT Dallas Bookstore: (Building 1) phone: (972) 780-3652 web: <a href="http://www.untdallas.edu/bookstore">http://www.untdallas.edu/bookstore</a> e-mail: <a href="mailto:untdallas@bkstr.com">untdallas@bkstr.com</a></p>
<p><b>Supported Browsers:</b> Chrome Windows 7, 8, 10 MAC OA 10.8, 10.9, 10.10 Android, Windows Mobile</p> <p><b>Supported Devices:</b> iPhone 4S, 5S, 5c, 6 iPad 2, 3, Mini 3, Air 2 Galaxy S4, S5, LG, Galaxy Note Chromebook</p>	<p><b>Getting Help with Blackboard:</b> Student Blackboard Assistance (Distance Learning): Founders Hall, Rm 124 phone: (972) 338-5580 email: <a href="mailto:distancelearning@untdallas.edu">distancelearning@untdallas.edu</a></p> <p><b>Blackboard Help Resources:</b> web: <a href="#">Blackboard Learn Student Resources</a> Blackboard Learn: For Students youtube videos: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLontYaReEU1seUE3ACG3sEc3zR7B_r7URU">https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLontYaReEU1seUE3ACG3sEc3zR7B_r7URU</a></p> <p><i>If you are working with Distance Learning to resolve a technical issue, make sure to keep me updated on the troubleshooting progress.</i></p> <p><i>If you have a course-related issue (course content, assignment troubles, quiz difficulties) please contact me during office hours or by email.</i></p>

**Technologies NOT Supported:** Windows XP, Windows, Mac OS, and Linux systems not running a supported browser, Internet Explorer versions 10 & lower which are no longer supported by Microsoft; Internet Explorer on mobile devices; Firefox versions 30 and lower on desktop; all Firefox versions on mobile devices; Chrome versions 35 and lower (version 34 and lower on mobile devices; Safari versions 5 and lower

**Course Goals or Overview:**

- 1. American politics is in flux, moving from traditional party politics to media politics. At the same time, an emerging tidal wave of third party campaign spending by corporations, unions, alleged charitable and educational foundations, and wealthy individuals are distorting American electoral campaigns and legislative agendas into contests that clearly do not center on the common interests of a majority of Americans. To make matters worse, the American presidential election of 2016 offers what some observers are calling a historically poor choice. Other observers note that the political world, both in the United States and abroad, seems to be entering an era of “post-truth” politics. This course seeks to give students tools and associated knowledge to allow them to function effectively in the new political environment.**
- 2. American political outcomes are shaped not just by constitutions, systems of laws, and government institutions, but also by universal human behaviors. In democracies, the preferences of the majority are supposed to determine the agenda and course of policy. But do they? To what extent are these preferences manifested accurately, and to what extent are they influenced by public and private institutions? This course explores the opinions, agenda setting and electoral behaviors of American citizens, three major models of American democracy (elitism, pluralism, and hyperpluralism), and the private interests and institutions that seek to structure both the American political agenda and the direct use of power to achieve policy goals.**
- 3. The final section of the course introduces students to the formal policy processes that involve interest groups, political parties, elected officials and unelected bureaucrats in the effort to promote national and state policy.**

**Learning Objectives/Outcomes:** At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1  
Effectively communicate about US and Texas politics using appropriate terminology for political science, political philosophy and policy studies. (Communication skills.)

2  
Demonstrate critical thinking by comparing, contrasting and critiquing foundational concepts of democracy and mixed government, such as confederation, unitary government and federalism, and the parliamentary and presidential forms of democratic government. Demonstrate critical thinking by comparing and contrasting the Texas and US constitutions in both in terms of historical context and the impacts the two constitutions had on state and federal approaches to institutional design and policy; (Critical Thinking and Communications Skills)

3  
Analyze, compare and evaluate competing theories and research relating to elections and institutions such as legislatures, judiciaries and the selection of officeholders in all three branches. (Critical Thinking)

4  
Coherently analyze and discuss concepts of federalism and the tensions and solutions it creates for government problem-solving. (Critical Thinking)

5  
Analyze and write about the importance ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, religion and class in American political society and how demographic differences, constitutional and civil rights have both shaped the American political system and been shaped by it. (Social Responsibility, Cultural Diversity, and Communications Skills)

## Course Evaluation Methods

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

**Exams:** - Written tests include multiple choice, short answer and essay questions, and are designed to measure knowledge of presented course material

**Assignments:** - Written assignments designed to supplement and reinforce course material. Regular attendance, speaking in class discussions or asking relevant questions count towards class participation.

### Grading Matrix:

Instrument	Measures SLO	Weight (%)	Aggregate
Discussions	1,2,3,4,5	20 percent	20%
Weekly Participation	1,2,3,4,5	20 percent	40%
Exam 1	2,3,4,5	20 percent	60%
Exam 2	2,3,4,5	20 percent	80%
Final Exam	2,3,4,5	20 percent	100%
<b>TOTAL:</b>			

### Grade Determination:

A = 90% or better

B = 80 – 89%

C = 70 – 79%

D = 60 – 69%

F = less than 60%

## Course Outline (Next Page)

Reading assignments should be completed by the date listed. While there is no penalty for not doing so: the failure to read the book will catch up with you at the end of the course.

This schedule is subject to change by the instructor. Any changes to this schedule will be communicated in class or via class email or Blackboard announcement. Additional readings and activities may be added; these will be noted in the Announcements sections.

	Week	Date	Topics	SLOs	Readings	Assignments Due
<b>Module 1</b>	1	August 27 - 31	Introduction to the Class	1,2,3,4,5		Assignment specifications found in Course Requirements on next page.  <b>No Assignments due on Exam Weeks.</b>
			Review Syllabus & Introduce Yourself			
	2	September 03 - 07	Political Participation	1,2,3,4,5		
			Intro to American Govt			
	3	September 10 - 14	Intro to Texas Politics	1,2,3,4,5		
			US Constitution			
	4	September 17 - 21	Texas Constitution	1,2,3,4,5		
			Federalism			
	5	September 24 - 28	Texas & Federalism	1,2,3,4,5		
			Civil Rights and Liberties			
6	October 01 - 05	Public Opinion	1,2,3,4,5			
		Exam Review				
		<b>October 05 EXAM 1 DUE</b>	<b>1,2,3,4,5</b>			
<b>Module 2</b>	7	October 08 - 12	Congress	1,2,3,4,5		
			The Texas Legislature			
	8	October 15 - 19	The Presidency	1,2,3,4,5		
			The Texas Executive Branch			
	9	October 22 - 26	The Judiciary	1,2,3,4,5		
			The Texas Judiciary			
10	October 29 - November 02	The Bureaucracy	1,2,3,4,5			
		Local Government in Texas				
11	November 5 - 9	Exam Review	1,2,3,4,5			
		<b>November 9 EXAM 2 DUE</b>			<b>1,2,3,4,5</b>	
<b>Module 3</b>	12	November 12 - 16	Political Parties	1,2,3,4,5		
			Political Parties in Texas			
	13	November 19 - 23	Elections and Campaigns	1,2,3,4,5		
			Elections			
	14	November 26 - 30	Interest Groups & Social Movements	1,2,3,4,5		
			Mass Media and the Press			
15	December 3 - 7	Exam Review	2,3,4,5			
16	December 10	<b>FINAL EXAM DUE</b>	<b>2,3,4,5</b>			

Additional readings and assignments may be added

**\*\*Exam Dates and Structures are Tentative\*\***

## Course Requirements:

1. **Readings:** Each student should read the week's assigned chapters from required textbook. **Due: Weekly**
2. **Weekly Participation:** Students will be required to read and complete the following below in each Kollman and Champagne & Harpham (C&H) chapter assigned for the week in the Module # folder. **Due: Midnight every Friday.**
  - i. CH# - Outline/Summary (Kollman and C&H)
  - ii. CH# - Flashcards (Kollman and C&H)
  - iii. CH# - Puzzle Video (Kollman Chapter)
    1. You must watch the Puzzle Video to complete the Weekly Discussion
  - iv. CH# - Video Exercise & Video Quiz (Kollman and C&H)
    1. You must click the link & watch the video prior to completing the video quiz.
  - *Open answer questions **must** be answered with 5 or more sentences. Points will be taken for less than 5 sentences.*
3. **Weekly Discussion:** Write a two-paragraph (10 sentences total) double-spaced statement with 2 or more takeaways obtained after reading the week's chapter and watching the CH# - Puzzle Video (in Course Materials folder). Due every Friday on BlackBoard. This discussion should contain takeaways and opinions written in the student's own words. Quotations should be used sparingly and when used, the text should be included in quotes followed by the author, publication date and page (example: "Text quoted" (Schmid 2002, p. 17)). **Due: Weekly discussions should be posted no later than midnight every Friday.**

In addition, a 5-sentence response must be posted to 2 other weekly discussions. Therefore, respond to 2 classmate discussions, not your own. If you would like to respond to comments made on your own thread, feel free to do so in a respectable manner.
4. **Exam 1:** An exam consisting of 25 multiple-choice will be administered (worth 4points each)  
**Due: Week 6 of class, October 05.**
5. **Exam 2:** An exam consisting of 25 multiple-choice will be administered (worth 4points each)  
**Due: Week 11 of class, November 09.**
6. **Final Exam:** An exam consisting of 25 multiple-choice will be administered (worth 4points each)  
**Due: Monday Finals Week, December 10.**

*All exams are open book; however, review of materials is expected on student's own time. In addition, each exam & assignment is ready to be taken at the student's leisure, but must be submitted the latest by the listed due date. All exams are timed. No exams are comprehensive.*

**\*\*Technology:** Assignments are DUE as outlined in the course calendar. Waiting until the last minute can be problematic as issues *may* arise with computers. **Experiencing technological difficulties or not having access to a computer is not acceptable reasons for missing assignment deadlines.** Students should plan in advance to complete assignments utilizing resources available to them; for example, a local library or the University library and computer lab.\*\*

## University Policies and Procedures

### **Students with Disabilities (ADA Compliance):**

#### **Chapter 7(7.004) Disability Accommodations for Students:**

The University of North Texas at Dallas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodations must first register with the Disability Services Office (DSO) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the DSO 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, DSO 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/communicate with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see [Disability Services Office](#). You may also contact them by phone at 972-338-1777; by email at [UNTDdisability@untdallas.edu](mailto:UNTDdisability@untdallas.edu) or at Building 2, room 204.

#### Blackboard Learn Accessibility Statement:

University of North Texas at Dallas is committed to ensuring its online and hybrid courses are usable by all students and faculty including those with disabilities. If you encounter any difficulties with technologies, please contact our ITSS Department. To better assist them, you would want to have the operating system, web browser and information on any assistive technology being used. [Blackboard Learn Accessibility Statement](#) is also provided.

NOTE: Additional instructional technology tools, such as Turnitin, Respondus, Panopto, and publisher cartridge content (i.e. MyLab, Pearson, etc.) may NOT be fully ADA compliant. Please contact our Disability Office should you require additional assistance utilizing any of these tools.

#### **Course Evaluation Policy:**

Student's evaluations of teaching effectiveness is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT Dallas. 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 students' evaluations to be an important part of your participation in this class.

#### **Assignment Policy:**

(According to the instructor's discretion while working in concert with the division/program's guidelines).

#### **Exam Policy:**

(Online exams and the ability to retake is solely at the instructor's discretion). NOTE: Online exams may be proctored on campus per instructor's discretion.

#### **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 [UNT Dallas' Student Code of Academic Integrity](#) for complete provisions of this code.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabrication of information or citations, facilitating acts of dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of

another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.

#### Web-based Plagiarism Detection:

Please be aware in some online or hybrid courses, students may be required to submit written assignments to Turnitin, a web-based plagiarism detection service, or another method. If submitting to Turnitin, please remove your title page and other personal information.

#### Classroom Policies

##### **Online Attendance and Participation:**

The University attendance policy is in effect for this course. Class attendance in the Blackboard classroom 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 the discussion board. Online presence and participation in all class discussions is essential to the integration of course material and your ability to demonstrate proficiency.

Attendance for this online or hybrid course is considered when you are logged in and active in Blackboard, i.e., posting assignments, taking quizzes, or completing Discussion Boards. To maintain financial aid award eligibility, activity must occur before the census date of the session or term of the course. Refer to [UNT Dallas' Registrar](#) for specific dates. If you are absent/not active in the course shell, it is YOUR responsibility to let the instructor know immediately, upon your return, the reason for your absence if it is to be excused. All instructors must follow university policy 7.005 covering excused absences; however, it is the instructor's discretion, as outlined in the course syllabus, of how unexcused absences may or may not count against successful completion of the course.

##### **Inclement Weather and Online Classes:**

Online classes may or may not be effected by campus closures due to inclement weather. Unless otherwise notified by your instructor via e-mail, online messaging, or online announcement, students should assume that assignments are due as scheduled.

##### **Online "Netiquette":**

In any social interaction, certain rules of etiquette are expected and contribute to more enjoyable and productive communication. Emails, Discussion Board messages and/or any other forms of written communication in the online environment should use proper "netiquette" (i.e., no writing in all caps (usually denotes yelling), no curse words, and no "flaming" messages (angry, personal attacks).

Racial, ethnic, or gender slurs will not be tolerated, nor will pornography of any kind.

Any violation of online netiquette may result in a loss of points or removal from the course and referral to the Dean of Students, including warnings and other sanctions in accordance with the University's policies and procedures. Refer to [UNT Dallas Student Code of Conduct](#). Respect is a given principle in all online communication. Therefore, please be sure to proofread all of your written communication prior to submission.

##### **Diversity/Tolerance Policy:**

*Students are encouraged to contribute their perspectives and insights to class discussions in the online environment. 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 Dean of Students as the instructor deems appropriate.*

**Technology Assistance:** In order to successfully access the materials in an online or hybrid course, UNT Dallas

advises that your computer be equipped with the minimum system requirements listed on the first page of the syllabus.

If you experience difficulty accessing or using components of the course, try using Google Chrome browser. If you still experience technical difficulties, first, notify your instructor.

If the problem is still not resolved, call Student Blackboard Assistance (Distance Learning) at the phone number listed on the first page of the syllabus. Also, no matter what browser you use, always enable pop-ups. For more information see:

- [UNT Dallas Blackboard Technical Requirements](#)
- [Blackboard Learn Supported & Unsupported Operating Systems](#)