Instructor: Professor Collins  
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Objectives  
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the roles of the U.S. and Texas governments in the American political system. We will consider the institutions, processes, and decisions of political actors that define American and Texas government. In addition, we will focus particular attention on a multitude of issues, including the U.S. and Texas constitutions, civil rights and liberties, federalism, as well as the three branches of government.

Readings  
Please purchase the following books from the UNT bookstore:


In addition, a number of the readings relating to this course are available on the internet. Links to those readings are provided in the course schedule section below.

All readings are required and listed the day they are expected to be read in the course schedule section. I suggest you prepare questions to bring to class if you have any trouble understanding the readings.
**Grades**

Final grades will be computed on the following basis:

- 90-100% = A
- 80-89% = B
- 70-79% = C
- 60-69% = D
- 0.0-59% = F

**Exams** (Exam 1 – 25%; Exam 2 – 25%; Exam 3 – 25%)

There will be three examinations in this class. All exams are closed book. Exams will utilize a multiple choice format. Scantrons will be provided, but students must bring a pencil with them to the examinations. In addition, students must bring their student identification cards with them to the examinations. The final exam will not be cumulative. Rather, it will cover material addressed during the last third of the semester. For the examinations, students are responsible for all lectures, textbook, workbook, and on-line readings. I will make review sheets for each exam available to students on the course’s Blackboard page no later than the Monday preceding each exam.

**Workbook Assignments** (25%)

Students will complete five workbook assignments. The due dates for the workbook assignments are delineated in the course schedule section below. Each workbook assignment will contribute 5% to the student’s grade. Workbook assignments must be completed on the original workbook pages. Thus, photocopies of workbook pages will not be accepted. Students must ensure that they procure the 8th Edition of the workbook. Workbook assignments will be turned into the student’s Teaching Assistant on the day they are due in class. Workbook assignments must be stapled. Failure to staple workbook assignments will result in a 10 point penalty on the grade for the unstapled workbook assignment.

Late assignments will be penalized 5 points for each calendar day they are late, starting at 1:51 PM on the day the assignment is due. If you wish to turn in your workbooks assignments early or late, you will give them to your Teaching Assistant or place them in your Teaching Assistant’s mailbox in the Department of Political Science main office (Wooten Hall 125). If you intend to submit your workbook assignment to your Teaching Assistant’s mailbox, you must have the receptionist in the Department of Political Science time stamp your assignment. If you submit your workbook assignment to your Teaching Assistant’s mailbox and it is not time stamped, your assignment will be considered submitted on the date and time your Teaching Assistant actually receives the assignment (which may be some time after it was submitted).

Due to the size of this class, workbook assignments will not be returned in class. They may be picked up during your Teaching Assistant’s office hours.

**Extra Credit**

There is one opportunity for extra credit in this class. The extra credit assignment is due in class by April 1, 2010 and may be submitted earlier than this date. Extra credit assignments should be turned into the Professor. Extra credit assignments that are late will not be accepted. For the extra credit assignment, students will write a five page (double spaced) paper that discusses four newspaper articles related to one or more of the topics discussed in class. To receive full credit, students should make it clear how the newspaper articles are related to the topic(s) covered in class. The extra credit
assignment is worth up to 3 points on the student’s final grade in this class. Full details on the extra credit assignment are available on the course’s Blackboard page.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

1/19   General Course Information

1/21   American Government and Politics
       Fiorina, Chapter 1

       The U.S. Constitution I

1/26   The U.S. Constitution II
       Fiorina, Chapter 2

1/28   The U.S. Constitution III
       Cox, Chapters 1 and 3

2/2    Federalism I
       Fiorina, Chapter 3
       Fiorina, Federalist 10 and 51 (pages 620-627)

2/4    Federalism II
       Cox, Chapter 4

       Texas Origins and Constitution
       [http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/7_1_0.html](http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/7_1_0.html) (Read “Introduction” through “Conclusion” sections).

       **Workbook assignment due: Exercises 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, and 4-6.**

2/9    The Presidency I
       Fiorina, Chapter 13

2/11   The Presidency II
       Cox, Chapter 6

       **Workbook assignment due: Exercises 6-2 through 6-5.**

2/16   Catch Up and Review for Exam 1

2/18   Exam #1

2/23   The Federal Bureaucracy I
       Fiorina, Chapter 14

2/25   The Federal Bureaucracy II
       Cox, Chapter 7
3/2  The Texas Executive and Bureaucracy
http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/1_1_0.html (Read “Introduction” through “The Plural Executive” sections).
Workbook assignment due: Exercises 7-1 through 7-4.

3/4  The U.S. Congress I
Fiorina, Chapter 12

3/9  The U.S. Congress II
Cox, Chapter 5

3/11 The U.S. Congress III

3/16 No Class (Spring Break)

3/18 No Class (Spring Break)

3/23 The U.S. Congress IV

3/25 The Texas Legislature
http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/2_1_0.html (Read “Introduction” through Conclusions” sections).

3/30 Catch Up and Review for Exam 2

4/1  Exam #2

4/6  The Federal Courts I
Fiorina, Chapter 15

4/8  The Federal Courts II
Cox, Chapter 8

4/13 The Texas Judiciary I
http://texaspolitics.laits.utexas.edu/3_1_0.html (Read “Introduction” through “Conclusions” sections).

4/15 Civil Liberties I
Fiorina, Chapter 16

4/20 Civil Liberties II
Cox Chapter 9
Workbook assignment due: Exercises 9-1 through 9-4.

4/22 Civil Liberties III

Civil Rights I
4/27  Civil Rights II
   Fiorina, Chapter 17

4/29  Civil Rights III
   Cox, Chapter 10
   **Workbook assignment due: Exercises 10-1, 10-4, 10-5.**

5/4    Civil Rights and Liberties in Texas

5/6    Catch up and Review for Final Examination

5/11   Final Examination (10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)

**MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

**Cell Phones:** Cellular telephones are ubiquitous on college campuses. While there are a myriad of appropriate times and places to use one’s cell phone, during a class period is not one of them. Therefore, students are prohibited from using their cell phones during class, regardless of whether they are used for calling or for text messaging purposes. Cell phones should be turned off and stowed away at all times in the classroom.

**Laptop Computers:** Students are free to use laptop computers for note taking purposes during class. If a student is discovered using his or her laptop for any other purposes, such as surfing the internet, that student will forfeit the opportunity to use his or her laptop for the remainder of the semester. Note that the Teaching Assistant will periodically observe students’ use of laptop computers to ensure compliance with this policy.

**Classroom Decorum:** A university setting is a fertile ground for the exchange of ideas. I certainly encourage students to express their thoughts relevant to this class. However, students must do so in a respectful manner. If a student is unable to conduct him or herself in a means that is conducive to a learning atmosphere, that student will be removed from class. This includes demonstrating respect for your fellow students, as well as for the Professor and Teaching Assistant. For example, it is unacceptable to come to class late, leave class early, sleep during class, or surf the internet during class.

**Email Etiquette:** Email is the preferred means of communication for the Professor and Teaching Assistant outside of office hours. Please use the email addresses posted on the syllabus. Do not email the Professor or Teaching Assistant via Blackboard. When you email the Professor or your Teaching Assistant, you need to follow some basic rules. First, insert the course title and number into the subject line of your message. Second, plainly identify yourself and articulate the content of your message clearly. This means you should not use text message or instant message speak. Finally, before you email the Professor or your Teaching Assistant, you should review the syllabus and the course’s Blackboard page. It is very likely that you can find an answer to your question(s) by examining this syllabus or the Blackboard page. Failure to follow these simple rules will generally result in a non-response from the target of your email communication.

**Attendance and PowerPoint Presentations:** While attendance in this class is not required, because I will cover material in class that is not discussed in the texts, I strongly encourage you to
attend each class session. If a student is absent from a class session, it is that student’s responsibility to obtain lecture notes from a classmate. I will not make the PowerPoint presentations or notes available to students under any circumstances, nor will the Teaching Assistant.

**Blackboard:** Student’s are responsible for all materials posted on Blackboard (e.g., workbook assignment policies, details on the extra credit assignment, etc.). All handouts distributed in class will be made available on the course’s Blackboard page (http://ecampus.unt.edu). I bring this to your attention because handouts distributed in class will not be made available at subsequent meetings. Also, a student’s grades will be available for viewing on the course’s Blackboard page.

**Grade Disputes:** A great deal of time is invested in grading student assignments. If a student wishes to dispute a grade, he or she must do so in writing. Students must articulate a clear explanation as to why they feel a different grade is in order, as well as what grade they believe to be more representative of their work. Merely “wanting” or “needing” a higher grade is not a sufficient reason. Students should also note that if work is reviewed for a grade dispute, the entire work is reviewed, not simply the specific aspect being disputed by the student. All grade disputes are due in writing to the student’s Teaching Assistant within two calendar weeks after the graded work is returned in class. Grade disputes will not be considered if submitted past the two week statute of limitations. Note that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits the Professor and the Teaching Assistant from discussing grades via email. Accordingly, grade disputes should be handled during office hours.

**Make Up Policies:** Students are expected to complete all assignments by the due date and take all examinations at the scheduled times. Make up exams will be permitted only under the severest of circumstances. As a general rule, make up exams will not be offered. Failure to appear for a scheduled exam without prior notification and an acceptable reason will result in a score of zero (0) for that exam. Students should be aware that the makeup exam, if allowed, may not be the same as the original examination. While the material to be tested will stay the same, the exact questions and format may differ.

**Office Hours:** Office hours are currently scheduled from 11:00-12:30 Tuesdays and Thursdays. If these times prove to be inconvenient, special appointments are available. Students should contact me via email to schedule special appointments.

**Accommodations:** If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please notify me by the second week of class. You are also encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Accommodation at (940) 565-4323. The ODA makes formal recommendations regarding necessary and appropriate accommodations based on specifically diagnosed disabilities. Information regarding disabilities is treated in a confidential manner.

**Statement of ADA Compliance:** The Political Science Department cooperates with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please present your written accommodation request on or before the sixth class day (beginning of the second week of classes).

**Religious Holidays:** In accordance with University policy, I will excuse any absences that result from religious observances, provided that you notify me in advance of your planned absence.
Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Incidents of plagiarism and/or cheating will result in a failing grade for the class and further penalties per the University’s judicial process. Students are advised to review the policies established by UNT regarding academic integrity (http://www.unt.edu/policy/UNT_Policy/volume3/18_1_16.pdf). If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, see the Professor or your Teaching Assistant. Finally, students agree that, by taking this course, all required assignments may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to www.turnitin.com or a similar plagiarism prevention system.

The UNT Department of Political Science Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism:

I. Categories of Academic Dishonesty.

A. Cheating. The use of unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise, including but not limited to:
   1. use of any unauthorized assistance to take exams, tests, quizzes or other assessments;
   2. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems or carrying out other assignments;
   3. acquisition, without permission, of tests, notes or other academic materials belonging to a faculty or staff member of the University;
   4. dual submission of a paper or project, or re-submission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor;
   5. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage on an academic assignment.

B. Plagiarism. Use of another’s thoughts or words without proper attribution in any academic exercise, regardless of the student's intent, including but not limited to:
   1. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement or citation.
   2. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in selling term papers or other academic materials.

C. Forgery. Altering a score, grade or official academic university record or forging the signature of an instructor or other student.

D. Fabrication. Falsifying or inventing any information, data or research as part of an academic exercise.

E. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty. Helping or assisting another in the commission of academic dishonesty.

F. Sabotage. Acting to prevent others from completing their work or willfully disrupting the academic work of others.
II. Available Academic Penalties

The following academic penalties may be assessed at the instructor’s discretion upon determination that academic dishonesty has occurred. Admonitions and educational assignments are not appealable.

A. **Admonition.** The student may be issued a verbal or written warning.

B. **Assignment of Educational Coursework.** The student may be required to perform additional coursework not required of other students in the specific course.

C. **Partial or no credit for an assignment or assessment.** The instructor may award partial or no credit for the assignment or assessment on which the student engaged in academic dishonesty, to be calculated into the final course grade.

D. **Course Failure.** The instructor may assign a failing grade for the course.

**Stipulation:** I reserve the right to change this syllabus as I see fit at any point in the semester.