Instructor: Professor Collins
Office: Wooten Hall 133
Office Hours: 1:30-3:00 Mondays and Wednesdays and by appointment
E-mail: pmcollins@unt.edu (do not email the Professor or Teaching Assistants via Blackboard)

Contact information and office hours for the Teaching Assistants and Supplemental Instructor will be posted on the course’s Blackboard page.

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:


Note: The Fiorina book is a composite of two textbooks (Fiorina et al., The New American Democracy and Coleman et al., Understanding American Politics and Government) that is custom printed for this class. This saves you the expense of purchasing the two textbooks separately. Due to this, it is unlikely that you will be able to purchase this book at an online retailer.

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

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Exams (Exam 1 – 25%; Exam 2 – 25%; Final Exam – 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, and workbook 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 electronically on the course’s Blackboard page (http://ecampus.unt.edu).

The workbook assignments are based on the Cox workbook. As such, students must ensure that they procure the 8th Edition of the workbook. Students should first read the entire workbook chapter corresponding to the assignment. Next, students should login to the course’s Blackboard page, which contains the questions for each chapter. On Blackboard, students will find folders corresponding to each workbook assignment. Note that, while the questions also appear in the hardcopy of the workbook, students must complete the workbook assignments online. I recommend first completing the workbook assignments in the hardcopy of the workbook and then submitting your answers online. After completing each section of the assignment, students must save their work before submitting it for grading (this is accomplished by clicking “save all”). After a student has completed the questions in a given section, and saved the questions, the student should submit the assignment by clicking “finish.” After completing a section and submitting your answers, students should move onto the next section of the assignment and repeat these steps.

For example, the first assignment involves Chapter 4 of the workbook. There are four sections to this assignment: 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, and 4-6. After reading Chapter 4 of the workbook and the text corresponding to the questions, students should login to Blackboard to complete the assignment. On Blackboard, there is a folder marked “Workbook Exercises Chapter 4,” which contains all of the workbook assignments for Chapter 4. Once a student has answered the questions involving section 4-1, the student should click “save all” and then “finish,” which submits the questions pertaining to section 4-1. The student should then move onto section 4-2, then to section 4-3, and then to section 4-6 and repeat these steps.

Workbook assignments must be submitted by 12:00PM (noon) on the day the assignments are due. For example, Exercises 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, and 4-6 are due by 12:00PM (noon) on February 4, 2011. Late assignments will be penalized 5 points for each calendar day they are late, starting at 12:01 PM on the day the assignment is due. After 10 days from the due date, students will be ineligible to submit the assignment and receive a zero (0) for the assignment.

Extra Credit
There is one opportunity for extra credit in this class. The extra credit assignment is due in class by April 1, 2011 and may be submitted earlier than this date. 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. This will be the only opportunity for extra credit in this class.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

1/19  General Course Information

1/21  American Government and Politics  
      Fiorina, Chapter 1

1/24  The U.S. Constitution I  
      Fiorina, Chapter 2

1/26  The U.S. Constitution II  
      Cox, Chapter 1

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

1/31  Federalism I  
      Fiorina, Chapter 3

2/2   Federalism II  
      Cox, Chapter 4

2/4   Federalism III  
      Fiorina, Federalist 10 and 51 (pages 620-627)  
      **Workbook assignment due on Blackboard by 12:00PM: Exercises 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, and 4-6.**

2/7   Texas Origins and Constitution  
      Fiorina, Chapter TX-2

2/9   The Presidency I  
      Fiorina, Chapter 13

2/11  The Presidency II

2/14  The Presidency III  
      Cox, Chapter 6  
      **Workbook assignment due on Blackboard by 12:00PM: Exercises 6-1, 6-3, 6-5, and 6-6.**

2/16  Catch Up and Review for Exam 1

2/18  Exam 1

2/21  The Federal Bureaucracy I  
      Fiorina, Chapter 14
2/23 The Federal Bureaucracy II
   Cox, Chapter 7

2/25 The Federal Bureaucracy III

2/28 The Texas Executive and Bureaucracy
   Fiorina, Chapter TX-4
   **Workbook assignment due on Blackboard by 12:00PM: Exercises 7-1, 7-2, 7-3, and 7-4.**

3/2 The U.S. Congress I
   Fiorina, Chapter 12

3/4 The U.S. Congress II
   Cox, Chapter 5

3/7 The U.S. Congress III

3/9 The U.S. Congress IV
   **Workbook assignment due on Blackboard by 12:00PM: Exercises 5-4, 5-5, and 5-6.**

3/11 The Texas Legislature
   Fiorina, Chapter TX-3

3/21 Interest Groups in the Legislature

3/23 Catch Up and Review for Exam 2

3/25 Exam 2

3/28 The Federal Courts I
   Fiorina, Chapter 15

3/30 The Federal Courts II
   Cox, Chapter 8

4/1 The Federal Courts III
   **Extra Credit Papers Due.**

4/4 The Federal Courts IV

4/6 The Texas Judiciary I
   Fiorina, Chapter TX-5

4/8 The Texas Judiciary II

4/11 Civil Liberties I
   Fiorina, Chapter 16
4/13 Civil Liberties II
Cox Chapter 9

Workbook assignment due on Blackboard by 12:00PM: Exercises 9-1, 9-2, 9-3, and 9-4.

4/15 Civil Liberties III
Cox, Chapter 2

4/18 Civil Liberties IV

4/20 Civil Rights I
Fiorina, Chapter 17

4/22 Civil Rights II
Cox, Chapter 10

4/25 Civil Rights III

4/27 Civil Rights IV

4/29 Civil Rights and Liberties in Texas I

5/2 Civil Rights and Liberties in Texas II

5/4 Catch Up and Review for Final Examination

5/6 No Class – Free Study Day

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 Assistants 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 Assistants. 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 Assistants outside of office hours. Please use the email addresses posted on the syllabus. Do not email the Professor or Teaching Assistants 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 Assistants.

**Blackboard:** Students are responsible for all materials posted on Blackboard. Any 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 any 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 grade for the assignment is posted on Blackboard. 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 Assistants 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. In order to be eligible for a makeup exam, students must present the Professor with written documentation verifying a legitimate reason for their absence. Students must present this documentation to the Professor during office hours no later than one week following the missed examination. Failure to present the Professor with documentation within one week following the missed examination makes a student ineligible to take a makeup examination. Students eligible for a makeup examination will have one hour to complete the examination. Makeup examinations will take place during prefinals week. 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 question(s) and format may differ.
Office Hours: Office hours are currently scheduled from 1:30-3:00 Mondays and Wednesdays. 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 advanced 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://policy.unt.edu/). 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.