

Course Syllabus

Course Information

Course Number/Section	Govt 2301-003
Course Title	The Constitution and Political Behavior, U.S. & TX
Term	Fall 2008
Days & Times	Mon, Wed, Fri 10:30–11:20

Professor Contact Information

Professor	Carole J. Wilson
Office Phone	972.883.4957
Email Address	cjwilson@utdallas.edu
Office Location	GR 3.230
Office Hours	Mon & Wed 1:30–2:30 or by appointment

I encourage each of you to contact me (in person, by phone, email, or WebCT) if you have any problems. If you use WebCT mail, it will not automatically forward replies to your email inbox unless you set your preferences to do so. If you contact me by email, I will only respond to email originating from your UTD account (per University regulations). If you are unable to meet during my office hours, please email me to setup an alternative meeting time.

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the basics of American and Texas politics. The first section will focus on the founding era of the United States and Texas. Then, we will investigate political culture, political participation, public opinion, campaigning, party dynamics, the role of interest groups and media in politics today. It is my hope that through this course students will be able to engage in current events and politics such that they understand the role that citizens play in a democratic society.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Provide examples and apply important theoretical and scholarly approaches to explaining state and national institutional behavior, citizen involvement, and interaction between citizens and institutions of government.
2. Analyze and appreciate historical trends in the development of government institutions and their constitutional foundations.
3. Identify, describe, and analyze various mechanisms of citizen political involvement.

Required Books

- (TXP) Jillson, Cal. 2007. *Texas Politics: Governing the Lone Star State*. 1st ed. McGraw Hill. [ISBN 9780073387314]
 - (WTP) Patterson, Thomas E. 2007. *We the People: A Concise Introduction to American Politics*. 7th ed. McGraw Hill. [ISBN 9780073403861]
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Assignments & Academic Calendar

Readings: Students are responsible for reading assignments each class. Assignments are to be read before the date beside which they are listed.

Dates	Topics	Readings
Aug 22	Intro	—
Aug 25–29	American & Texas Political Culture	WTP-1 & TXP-1
Sept 1	No Class –Labor Day	—
Sept 3–12	Founding and Constitution	WTP-2 & TXP-2
Sept 15–22	Federalism	WTP-3
Sept 24	Catch-up & Review	—
Sept 26	Exam 1	—
Sept 29	Post–Exam Review	—
Oct 1–10	Civil Liberties	WTP-4
Oct 13–17	Civil Rights	WTP-5
Oct 20–27	Public Opinion	WTP-6
Oct 29	Catch-up & Review	—
Oct 31	Exam 2	—
Nov 3	Post–Exam Review	—
Nov 5–10	Voting	WTP-7 & TXP-3
Nov 12–19	Parties & Elections	WTP-8 & TXP5
Nov 21–24	Interest Groups	WTP-9 & TXP4
Nov 26	Media	WTP-10
Nov 28	No Class –Thanksgiving	—
Dec 1	Media	WTP-10
Dec 3	Catch-up & Review	—
Dec 5	Exam 3	—
Dec 8	Post–Exam Review	—
Dec 12 [8am]	Final Exam	8:00am

Exams

- There will be three midterm exams and one optional cumulative final in this class. Exams will cover material from the readings and from the lectures. Each of the exams will constitute 25% of your grade.
- Exams are scheduled well in advance so that you can plan around these dates. If you miss one of the midterm exams, you must take the final (it is no longer optional). The optional final will also serve as the make-up exam if you must miss a midterm for a university related event. The missed 25% of your grade will be allocated over the other exams so that each exam is worth 33.3% of your exam grade. If you miss more than one exam, you will receive a zero for the additional missed exam. The only exceptions to this will be cases of *extreme* emergency where there is substantial documentation. Medical appointments, viruses, colds, headaches, flat tires, childcare issues, weddings, etc. do not qualify as *extreme* emergencies.
- The final exam is cumulative. If you have taken three midterms and choose to take the final, the grade will be averaged into your course grade, which may raise or lower your course grade. The final is scheduled for December 12th at **8am**.
- Once you sit for any exam, you will receive a grade for that exam.
- Bring picture identification to each exam.

Grading Policy

Grades in this course are based the following formula:

$$\text{Final Grade} = \frac{\sum \text{of exam grades}}{\# \text{ of exams taken}}$$

Grading Scale

100=A+	87-89=B+	77-79=C+	67-69=D+	
93-99=A	83-86=B	73-76=C	63-66=D	Below 60=F
90-92=A-	80-82=B-	70-72=C-	60-62=D-	

Course Policies

Make-up exams: Exams are scheduled well in advance so that you can plan around these dates. If you miss one of the midterm exams, you must take the final (it is no longer optional). The optional final will also serve as the make-up exam if you must miss a midterm for a university related event. The missed 25% of your grade will be allocated over the other exams so that each exam is worth 33.3% of your exam grade. If you miss more than one exam, you will receive a zero for the additional missed exam. The only exceptions to this will be cases of *extreme* emergency where there is substantial documentation. Medical appointments, viruses, colds, headaches, flat tires, childcare issues, weddings, etc. do not qualify as *extreme* emergencies.

Extra Credit: There is no extra credit available in this course.

Class Attendance: There is no attendance policy for this course. However, regular attendance is necessary for successful performance. Under no circumstances will I or the TA provide notes for students.

Classroom Citizenship: I insist that students are polite in all fora so that students are comfortable expressing opinions and discussing material.

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.

Technical Support

If you experience any problems with your UTD account you may send an email to: assist@utdallas.edu or call the UTD Computer Helpdesk at 972-883-2911.

Field Trip Policies / Off-Campus Instruction and Course Activities

Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website address http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm.

Additional information is available from the office of the school dean. Below is a description of any travel and/or risk-related activity associated with this course.

Student Conduct & Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD printed publication, A to Z Guide, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the Rules and Regulations, Series 50000, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's Handbook of Operating Procedures. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391) and online at <http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-HOPV.html>

A student at the university neither loses the rights

nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic Dishonesty, any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials, including music and software. Copying, displaying, reproducing, or distributing copyrighted works may infringe the copyright owner's rights and such infringement is subject to appropriate disciplinary action as well as criminal penalties provided by federal law. Usage of such material is only appropriate when that usage constitutes "fair use" under the Copyright Act. As a UT Dallas student, you are required to follow

the institution's copyright policy (Policy Memorandum 84-I.3-46). For more information about the fair use exemption, see <http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/copypol2.htm>

Email Use

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's Handbook of Operating Procedures.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administra-

tor, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

Incomplete Grade Policy

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of F.

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:

The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22
PO Box 830688

Richardson, Texas 75083-0688
(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)
disabilityservice@utdallas.edu

If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services. The Coordinator is available to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Services to notify them of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. Disability Services can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Religious Holy Days

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from

property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated. The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment. If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee. These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.

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