


Course Syllabus

	Course	PSCI 4396.007
	Course Title	State and Local Government Policymaking
	Professor	Dr. Amanda D. Clark
	Term	Spring 2025
	Meetings	M/W 8:30am to 9:45am, AD 3.218

Professor's Contact Information

Office Location	GR 2.812A
Email Address	amanda.clark@utdallas.edu
Office Hours	M & W 10:00 to 11:00 or by appointment

General Course Information

Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, & other restrictions	None
Course Description	This course examines the constitutional foundations, historical development, and evolving relationship between state and local governments in the United States. The course will also survey and evaluate various policy approaches to issue domains central to state and local governments. The course will pay particular attention to developments in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex and the State of Texas. This course is part of the Initiative for Civic Leadership.
Learning Outcomes	<p>Upon completing this course, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLO1 Identify how issues become public problems and compare the effect of public policies on various stakeholders. • CLO2 Describe the types of evidence used in policymaking, their strengths and weaknesses, and approaches to making policy in the face of uncertainty. • CLO3 Describe state and local political systems and their ever-changing relationship with the federal government with an emphasis on both Dallas-Fort Worth and the state of Texas. • CLO4 Analyze issues, public policies, and political culture from an evidence-based frame with an emphasis on both Dallas-Fort Worth and the state of Texas.
Required Texts & Materials	All materials will be posted to the eLearning shell or course reserves in the UT Dallas Library. No textbook is required.

**Grading (credit)
Criteria**

Grades will be based on the following assignments:

1. Discussion Leader

Each student will be expected to lead two class discussions. A class discussion lasts the entirety of the 75-minute class. Students will select their preferred discussion weeks during the first week of classes. Students will provide an outline for the rest of the class to follow by 5:00 pm the day before their scheduled discussion. This will constitute 20% of your course grade (10% for each class).

2. Policy Memo

Each student will complete a memo on a policy topic related to local government. Students will identify a policy problem within the domain of local government. Students will identify and describe the policy problem and propose solutions to solve the problem. A complete draft will be turned in halfway through the semester. The draft will be graded and include feedback which students are expected to incorporate into their final paper. A detailed assignment description will be reviewed in class and posted to eLearning. The policy memo will count for 50% of your grade (20% for the draft and 30% for the final paper and presentation).

3. Class Participation

The course is designed with student engagement and discussion at the forefront of the classroom experience. Students are expected to arrive at class with the readings for the upcoming week completed and prepared to engage in class discussion. **This includes having read the assignments, taken notes, and generated questions about the text or potential areas of discussion for class.** Students will be assessed on the quality of participation in class discussions during the course. Assessment is at the instructor’s discretion and will be based on whether the comments make meaningful contributions to the topics being discussed and demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the assigned readings. Class participation is worth 30% of your grade.

Assignments	Number of Items	Points for each	Total Points	Percent Grade
Discussion Leader	2	75	150	20%
Policy Memo Draft	1	100	100	20%
Policy Memo Final and Presentation	1	100	100	30%
Class Participation	1	75	75	30%
Total			425	100%

Grading Schema and Grading Criteria: The grading scale is the standard undergraduate scale, with the point scale outlined below:

A+	97 and above	C	74-76
A	94-96	C-	70-73
A-	90-93	D+	67-69
B+	87-89	D	64-66

	B	84-86		D-	60-63
	B-	80-83		F	below 60
	C+	77-79			

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Posted in eLearning

Course Policies

Class Materials	<p>Everything will be posted in the eLearning shell or in course reserves via the Library.</p> <p>Technical Requirements: Besides a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable a successful learning experience. Please review the important technical requirements on the Getting Started with eLearning webpage.</p> <p>The instructor may provide class materials that will be made available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. These materials may be downloaded during the course; however, these materials are for registered students' use only. Classroom materials may not be reproduced or shared with those not in class or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved AccessAbility Resource Center accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.</p>
Class Attendance	<p>The University's attendance policy requirement is that individual faculty set their course attendance requirements. Regular and punctual class attendance is expected. Students who fail to attend class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty.</p>
Class Participation	<p>Regular class participation is expected. A portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class. It also includes engaging in group or other activities during class that solicit your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures (and/or labs). Class participation is documented by faculty. Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to University requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Texas Senate Bill 17, the recent law that prohibits diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and activities at public universities in Texas, does not in any way apply to academic course instruction. Students should not feel the need to self-censor or limit their participation in academic courses pertaining to topics of race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion, and related topics.</p>
Extra Credit	None
Class Recordings	Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the AccessAbility

	<p>Resource Center has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved AccessAbility Resource Center accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.</p>
Late Work	<p>Late submissions will not be allowed or graded except under special circumstances, per approval by the instructor. Tentative due dates are provided in the syllabus. Any revisions to this schedule will be communicated in class, as an eLearning announcement, and an updated syllabus will be posted to eLearning. Students should not anticipate extra credit opportunities. For more information regarding classroom policies and procedures, please see the following link: http://provost.utdallas.edu/home/syllabus-policies</p> <p>NO extra credit or make-up work will be given for missed participation points.</p>
Classroom Citizenship	<p>Students should not attend class when they are sick with any contagious illness. If you miss class due to illness, you must email within 24 hours of the missed class. Appropriate accommodations will be made at that time. Students should provide documentation if they will be absent due to a university activity.</p>
Communication	<p>Students will be responsible for all information communicated in class. Information will also be transmitted via email, eLearning announcements, and other information posted on eLearning. To succeed, students must regularly attend class, check email, and stay current on eLearning information. Please remember that I can only respond to UTD email accounts. All official student email correspondence will be sent only to a student's UTD email address and UTD will only consider email requests originating from an official UTD student email account.</p>
Academic Dishonesty	<p>UT Dallas 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 demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. Students are expected to work independently in this course. For more information on the university's academic dishonesty policies, please go to https://conduct.utdallas.edu/dishonesty/.</p>
Generative AI	<p>In this course, students shall give credit to AI tools whenever used, even if only to generate ideas rather than usable text or illustrations. See https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt for an example.</p> <p>When using AI tools on assignments, add an appendix showing (a) the entire exchange, highlighting the most relevant sections; (b) a description of precisely which generative AI tools were used, (c) an explanation of how the AI tools were used (e.g. to generate ideas, turns of phrase, elements of text, long stretches of text, lines of argument, pieces of evidence, maps of the conceptual territory, illustrations of key concepts, etc.); (d) an account of why AI tools were used (e.g. to save time, to surmount writer's block, to stimulate thinking, to handle mounting stress, to clarify prose, to translate text, to experiment for fun, etc.).</p>

	Please review the Student Code of Conduct https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdsp5003 as it pertains to plagiarism, cheating, and fabrication. Overall, AI tools should be used wisely and reflectively with an aim to deepen understanding of subject matter.
Comet Creed	<i>This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same: "As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."</i>
Accommodations for Students with Disabilities	Please review the section within the UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures webpage.
Academic Support Resources	Please visit the Academic Support Resources page to view the University's academic support resources for all students.
UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures	Please visit the Syllabus Policies page to view the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please review the catalog sections regarding the credit/no credit or pass/fail grading option and withdrawal from class.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.