

PSCI 2306.001 US and Texas Constitutions and Institutions Summer 2020 - 5 Week 2

Instructor of Record: Gabriela Okundaye

Instructor

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Teaching Assistants (TAs)

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Supplemental Instructor

Michael Fish

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SI Sessions: Monday-Thursday 2:00 - 3:30 PM

Course Access

Course is conducted online and as a result, the delivery, notes, and all work is to be conducted on a working computer/laptop/tablet.

Canvas: <https://unt.instructure.com/>

Packback: <https://www.packback.co/>

Course Description

An introduction to the institutions of government, with particular emphasis on the U.S. and Texas Constitutions. Focus on the structure and powers of the three branches of government (both national and Texas); the division of power between those branches (separation of powers); the division of power between the national and state governments (federalism); and issues related to civil rights and civil liberties. Satisfies the legislative requirement for a course emphasizing the Texas constitution.

Course Objectives

In this class the main objective for students is to understand the following:

“Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you.”

Pericles

Politics relates to your life in many ways that you may not even be aware of. Your race, ethnicity, age, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, and many other facets of your life are affected by politics. There are government policies that affect your everyday life and it is important to understand how these policies, when applied, affect you and the things you value. Outside of understanding the “why” of politics, it is also important to understand what are the components of government such as the Constitution (both in the United States and Texas), the powers it has, how the branches of government work based on checks and balances, and how this has an effect on your lives.

Required Materials

Soomo. Soomo webtext and workbook is the required webtext for students in this class. Each week you will be assigned course work that is to be completed in Soomo which can be purchased and accessed through the Canvas webpage.

Packback. (\$15) Packback is a discussion board that utilizes artificial intelligence (AI) in order to help students craft questions about the world around them. This tool is useful in helping students craft well-constructed open-ended questions that can be applied to this class and beyond. See below on the syllabus for more information regarding Packback.

Communication

This course is conducted online and as a result if you need to get in touch with a TA or me you can do so by emailing the TAs or sending a message through the Canvas’ messaging system. You should contact your TA first before you contact me. If you do not receive a message from your TA after 48 hours, you can send that message to my email (listed above). Please note that all correspondence **must** be conducted using your UNT system email or through Canvas’ messaging service. When you email either me or the TA’s please be sure to include “PSCI 2306” in the message subject.

Announcements. Be sure to check your MyUNT email as this is how information for this class will be distributed. Announcements will be posted on Canvas and will be sent to the email linked to Canvas which is more likely than not your UNT system email.

Virtual Office Hours. Office hours will be conducted via Zoom. In order to set up office hours please email or message your assigned TA on Canvas to get office hours set up. If you want to contact me and set up a virtual office hour you can do so by emailing me or sending a message to me via Canvas.

Grading

Below is how grades are assigned in this class.

A	90% - 100%
B	80% - 89%
C	70% - 79%
D	60% - 69%
F	Below 60%

Grade Distribution

Exams. 60% of final grade. This class will have four (4) exams total, but only three (3) of the exams will count towards your final grade. Each of the exams will be worth 20% of your grade and will cover the material from each unit. There will be one (1) final exam being a makeup exam in the event you miss an exam or you are unsatisfied with one of the grades you received on an exam. However, the optional final exam is cumulative and will contain material from each of the previous exams. Exams will open at 12:01 AM and will close at 11:59 PM.

Packback Discussion Board. 15% of final grade. The Packback discussion board will require students to ask questions and reply to questions in order to facilitate discussion throughout the course and to connect what is learned in class to current events. For each Packback assignment, I ask you to create one discussion post and reply twice to another student's discussion post.

Workbook Assignments (Soomo). 15% of final grade. The Soomo workbook assignments will require students to answer the chapter questions that are within the Soomo workbook. The workbook questions can be completed multiple times if you are not satisfied with your grade.

Reflection Assignment. 10% of final grade. This portion of the class asks students to apply what they have learned in class to the world around them. I am asking students to simply reflect on a current world event and tie the event back to . This reflection assignment can be during any point in the class at the student's discretion but must be completed before the last exam of the class.

Extra Credit. This class will have limited extra credit opportunities. These extra credit opportunities will be announced via Canvas and will be open for 48 hours to complete. The type of extra credit opportunities that may be given during the course may come from Packback or a current event.

Course Calendar

Week 1 - (July 6th - July 11th)

Subject Matter: Greetings and welcome to PSCI 2306. This is the week to get acquainted with how the course works, the pacing, Canvas, and Packback. Summer classes can be a lot, but you can do it! The topic for this week's activities are the foundations of government. What is in the Constitution? What is the difference between the state and federal government? What exactly is federalism?

- Tasks
 - Read the syllabus.
 - Get familiar with the course structure.
 - Get acquainted with the class Packback website.

- Read and complete by July 10th:
 - Chapter 1: Founding and the Constitution
 - Chapter 2: The Texas Constitution
 - Chapter 4: Federalism
 - Chapter 3: Constitution
 - Chapter 5: Federalism

- Assignments
 - Packback Discussion 1.
 - DUE - July 10th
 - Packback Discussion 2.
 - DUE - July 10th
 - Syllabus Quiz.
 - DUE - July 11th

Week 2 (July 12th - July 18th)

Subject Matter: After we have built on the foundations of government, we will take a look into institutions. What are the institutions that make government function? Who are the actors? What do they do? How does Congress conduct themselves?

- Read and complete by July 17th:
 - Chapter 6: Congress
 - Chapter 8: The Presidency
 - Chapter 7: The Legislative Branch
 - Chapter 9: The Presidency

- Assignments
 - Packback Discussion 3.
 - DUE - July 17th
 - Exam 1.
 - DUE - July 18th

Week 3 (July 19th - July 25th)

Subject Matter: The focus for this week is the bureaucracy and the court system in the U.S. and Texas. Who is in the bureaucracy? How did they get there? What do they do? For the court system in the state and federal government we can ask the following: What are the unique characteristics between the U.S. and state court? Can one override the other?

- Read and complete by July 24th:
 - Chapter 10: The Bureaucracy
 - Chapter 12: The Judiciary
 - Chapter 11: The Bureaucracy
 - Chapter 13: The Courts

- Assignments:
 - Packback Discussion 4.
 - DUE - July 24th
 - Exam 2.
 - DUE - July 25th

Week 4 (July 26th - August 1st)

Subject Matter: This week's topics are civil liberties and civil rights. This is the final unit in this class. What are civil liberties and civil rights? How are they different? How were they established? Who are they meant for? How are they applied?

- Read and complete by July 31st:
 - Chapter 14: Civil Liberties
 - Chapter 15: Civil Rights
 - Chapter 15: Civil Liberties
 - Chapter 17: Civil Rights

- Assignments:
 - Packback Discussion 5.
 - DUE - July 31st
 - Exam 3.
 - DUE - August 1st

Week 5 (August 2nd - August 7th)

Subject Matter: Congratulations! Finish strong as this is the final stretch. This week there is only one task and that is the final exam. If you wish to boost your final grade for this class you should take the cumulative final. If you are happy with your grade you do not need to take the final.

- Assignments:
 - Exam 4
 - DUE - August 5th

Packback Questions

Participation is a requirement for this course, and the Packback Questions platform will be used for online discussion about class topics. Packback Questions is an online community where you can be fearlessly curious and ask open-ended questions to build on top of what we are covering in class and relate topics to real-world applications.

Packback Requirements:

Your participation on Packback will count toward **15%** of the overall course grade. There will be a **Weekly Saturday at 12:00AM CST** deadline for submissions. In order to receive your points per week, you should submit the following per each deadline period:

- One post on the discussion board.
- Two replies to one post on the discussion board.

How to Register on Packback:

An email invitation will be sent to you from help@packback.co prompting you to finish registration. If you don't receive an email (be sure to check your spam), you may register by following the instructions below:

1. Create an account by navigating to <https://questions.packback.co/login> and clicking "Sign up for an Account" Note: If you already have an account on Packback you can login with your credentials.
2. Then enter our class community's lookup key into the "Join a Community" module in Packback.
Community Lookup Key: **c747662a-4263-4b39-8c8f-2ec2a144bb86**
3. Follow the instructions on your screen to finish your registration.

Packback may require a paid subscription. Refer to www.packback.co/product/pricing for more information.

How to Get Help from the Packback Team:

If you have ANY questions or concerns about Packback throughout the semester, please contact their customer support team directly at help@packback.co.

For a brief introduction to Packback Questions and why we are using it in class, watch this video: vimeo.com/packback/Welcome-to-Packback-Questions

Class Policies

ADA Statement: The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable 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 reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable 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 the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an “unsatisfactory” for that particular assignment or exam. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, which may impose a further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term “cheating” includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or 5 resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

Acceptable Student Behavior: Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Disruptive/abusive online comments will be deleted, and the student will receive a warning about inappropriate behavior. After receiving a warning about inappropriate behavior (or in the case of behavior deemed harmful or threatening to any member of the UNT community), the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr

Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

Federal Regulation To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations website at <http://www.ecfr.gov/>. The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G).

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is ordered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

University of North Texas Compliance

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course. If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

1. Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.
2. Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.