

PSCI 4952.001, Political Science Capstone: Gun Politics and Policymaking

We start with the premise that gun violence in the United States constitutes a policy problem and consider evidence supporting and undermining that proposition. From there we

*“A well regulated militia
being necessary to the
security of a free state, the
right of the people to keep
and bear arms shall not be
infringed.”*

~ Second Amendment (1791)

investigate and craft gun policy, paying special attention to the institutional, cultural, and mass-level factors that have shaped policy thus far. When we’re done, you will be able to evaluate empirical data; identify and assess policy responses to pressing issues; explain the institutional, cultural, and mass-level factors that shape policymaking; and think critically and communicate effectively about the course topics.



(Militia member, Charlottesville, Reuters)



(The Lexington Minuteman)

Fall 2017

WH 212, MWF 9:00-9:50a

Bb: learn.unt.edu

Instructor

Dr. Elizabeth Oldmixon

Contact via Slack:

psci4952.slack.com

Office hours: BLB MW 1.00-

2.30p

Required Books

Spitzer, Robert J. 2014. *The Politics of Gun Control*, ISBN: 9781612057217 (PGC)

Cook, Philip J. and Kristin A. Goss. 2014. *The Gun Debate: What Everyone Needs to Know*, ISBN: 9780199338993 (GD)

Additional material on Bb.

What will we do in 4952?

This course uses a team-based learning approach that emphasizes your ability to apply course concepts and solve problems.

Readiness assurance tests

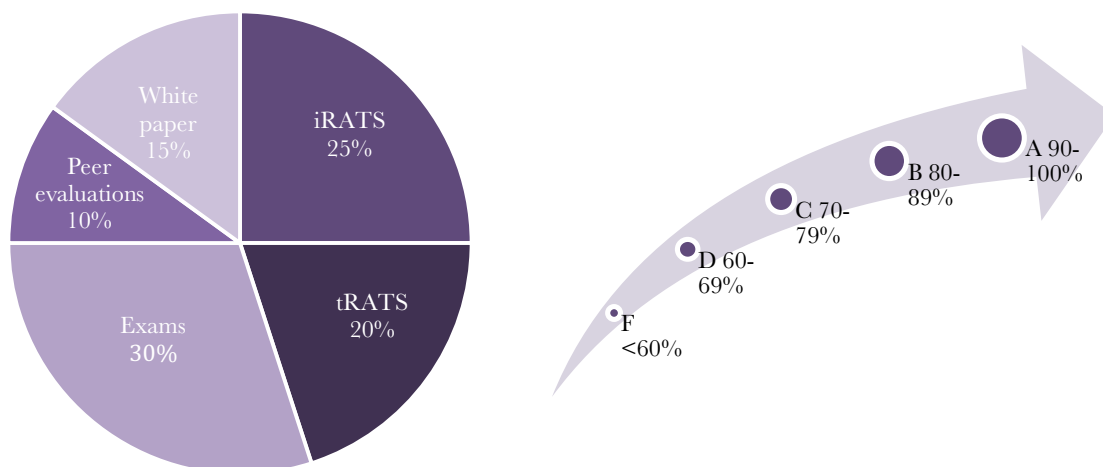
At the beginning of each unit, you will take an individual Readiness Assurance Test (iRAT). You will then take the same Readiness Assurance Test as a team (tRAT). It is thus imperative that you come to class prepared by doing all assigned reading.

	Missed RATs may not be taken late or “made up.” Your lowest iRAT and tRAT scores, however, will be dropped.
Peer evaluations	You will complete peer evaluations of your teammates twice during the course. Differentiation in your allocation of points is required. Evaluations scores will be penalized 10% per day (5% on day one) for those submitting late evaluations.
White paper	You will a white paper, which is a report written to provide guidance to someone in a position of authority. The goal is to identify an issue or problem and make a persuasive argument about how the issue or problem should be addressed. Late papers will be penalized 10% per day (5% on day one).
Exams	There will be three exams in the course—two midterms and a cumulative final. The final is optional and can be used as a make-up exam or replacement for a midterm score. Exams will include a mix of objective, short answer, and essay questions.

Grading

Final grades will be based on the components described above. Components will be weighted as follows and final grades assigned based on the schedule below. Scores will be rounded to the nearest whole number. Extra credit will not be available.

Grade components and final grade weighting



Course Schedule

Course introduction

<i>August 28</i>	No assignment
<i>August 30</i>	No class (Make up at the range)
<i>September 1</i>	No class (Make up at the range)
<i>September 4</i>	No class (Labor Day)

Unit 1: Does America have a gun problem?

<i>September 6</i>	RATs
<i>September 8</i>	GD, chapter 1 Hartman, “What makes a gun an assault rifle?”
<i>September 11</i>	Ehrenfreund, “We’ve had a massive decline in gun violence in the United States. Here’s why.” GD, chapter 3
<i>September 13</i>	PGC, chapter 3
<i>September 15</i>	PGC, chapter 1
<i>September 18</i>	CPRC, “Comparing Murder Rates and Gun Ownership Across Countries” CPRC, “Murders in the US Very Concentrated”
<i>September 20</i>	Watch “After Newtown: Guns in America”

Unit 2: Armed self-defense

<i>September 22</i>	RATs
<i>September 25</i>	GD, chapter 2, pp. 16-27
<i>September 27</i>	Grossman, “On Sheep, Wolves and Sheepdogs” Watch “If I only had a gun”
<i>September 29</i>	Graham, “Do African Americans have a right to bear arms?” Izadi, “Ohio Wal-Mart surveillance video shows police shooting and killing John Crawford III”
<i>October 2</i>	Belonsky, “Pink Pistols: LGBT Gun Owners Unite in Arming Gay Community”
<i>October 4</i>	Charles, “Feminists and Firearms”
<i>October 6</i>	Carlson, “From Gun Politics to Self-Defense Politics”

Unit 3: Insurrection and the public square

<i>October 9</i>	RATs
<i>October 11</i>	Horwitz and Anderson, “What is the insurrectionist idea?”
<i>October 13</i>	Polesky, “The Rise of Private Militia: A First and Second Amendment Analysis of the Right to Organize and to Train,” pp. 1593-1605
<i>October 16</i>	Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet”
<i>October 18</i>	Houck and Tucker, “Armed Militias Won’t Stop After Charlottesville, and That Worries Law Enforcement” Duggan, “Militiamen came to Charlottesville as neutral First Amendment protectors, commander says”
<i>October 20</i>	Valentine, “Tallying the Costs of Open Carry” Ingraham, “New evidence confirms what gun rights advocates have said for a long time about crime”

October 21 **Saturday, 10am, Gun safety lecture at Eagle Gun Range, Lewisville**

October 23 **Midterm exam 1**

Unit 4: The constraints and parameters of policymaking

<i>October 25</i>	RATs
<i>October 27</i>	Hemenway, “Off the cuff: What don’t we know about the causes of gun violence? Almost everything.” GD, chapter 4

<i>October 30</i>	PGC, chapter 2
<i>November 1</i>	GD, chapter 6
<i>November 3</i>	PGC, chapter 4
<i>November 6</i>	Haider-Markel and Joslyn, “Gun Policy, Opinion, Tragedy, and Blame Attribution: The Conditional Influence of Issue Frames”
<i>November 8</i>	PGC, chapter 5
Unit 5: Current and future policy developments	
<i>November 10</i>	RATs
<i>November 13</i>	GD, chapter 7
<i>November 15</i>	GD, chapter 12
<i>November 17</i>	PGC, chapter 6
Unit 6: Guns on campus and school shootings	
<i>November 20</i>	Guest lecture, UNT Police Chief Ed Reynolds Watch “Surviving an Active Shooter,” Ohio State University Watkins, “With Texas Now a Campus Carry State, Here’s What You Need to Know” UNT Policy 04.001, “Carrying of Concealed Handguns on Campus”
<i>November 21</i>	White paper due by 11.59p via Bb upload
<i>November 22</i>	No class (Thanksgiving)
<i>November 24</i>	No class (Thanksgiving)
<i>November 27</i>	RATs
<i>November 29</i>	Watkins, “The Armed Civilian Who Helped Stop UT’s Tower Sniper” Wofford, “How a group of students teamed up with the gun lobby to get firearms in the classroom at over 200 colleges – and counting”
<i>December 1</i>	Langman, “Why Kids Kill” (excerpt TBA) Klebold, “I Will Never Know Why”
<i>December 4</i>	Overflow Day
<i>December 6</i>	Midterm exam 2
<i>December 13</i>	Final exam, 8.00-10.00am

What are some tips for success?

Getting Help: I want to you succeed in this class. In part, success requires taking personal responsibility for your grade. If you are having difficulty with the material, be proactive and get help! Ensure that you get the most out of the time and effort you put into the course.

Laptops: Laptops in class are negatively associated with user success. The larger problem is that their use negatively affects the people sitting around laptop users. Laptop users should take care not to distract their

Making It Stick: Recent research on the science of learning and memory suggests that the following practices facilitate durable learning.

1. Test yourself early and often. The more you practice retrieving newly-learned information from your brain, the easier it will be to recall it when you want later. Creating flashcards is a great way to test yourself.
2. Mix it up. Shift your study back and forth between topics instead of studying topics one at a time.

peers.

What are some other policies of which I should be aware?

For course drop information, see schedule at: essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/scheduleclass.html.

Dr. Oldmixon reserves the right to amend this syllabus at her discretion.

Americans with Disabilities Act 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.

Academic Misconduct: Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University Policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of “F” in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. You will find the policy and procedures at: <http://facultysuccess.unt.edu/academic-integrity>.

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. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and 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: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment & Assault: UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

UNT’s Dean of Students’ website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their needs: http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0. Renee McNamara is UNT’s Student Advocate and she can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students’ office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.