

# ACTIVE LEARNING IN A REQUIRED LOWER- DIVISION COURSE

Dr. Rachel Bzostek Walker  
Professor of Political Science  
Collin College  
[rbzostekwalker@collin.edu](mailto:rbzostekwalker@collin.edu)

# What is “Active Learning”

Most commonly cited definition



Prince (2004): “active learning requires students to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing”

# Characteristics of Active Learning



Students are involved in more than listening



Less emphasis is placed on transmitting information and more on developing students' skills



Students are involved in higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation)



Students are engaged in activities (e.g., reading, discussing, writing)



Greater emphasis is placed on students' exploration of their own attitudes and values

# Challenge of Required Lower-Division Classes

Students may take the class at the beginning of their coursework

- Before courses such as ENGL 1301 & 1302

Since all students must take the course, there are varying levels of interest in the material

- Some may view course as roadblock or impediment to degree

# Why “Active Learning” in These Classes?



Breaks up monotony of lecture-based class



Allows students to engage with material



Helps students approach material in a different way



Can make the material more relevant and interesting to students



Way to emphasize [core competencies](#), such as communication and critical thinking

# Examples



Amending the  
Constitution



Creating a  
Government



Creating a Party



# Amending the Constitution

# Amending the Constitution



Hold a  
“Convention of  
the States”



Divide students  
randomly into  
states



Each group has to  
come up with at  
least 5  
amendments

Select “best”  
amendment to present  
to the group



Class votes on  
those  
amendments

Each “state” gets one  
vote



### Proposed Amendments

Describe your proposed amendments in the spaces below

Article {

Article {

Article {

Article {

Article {

Article {

Article {

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Section: \_\_\_\_\_

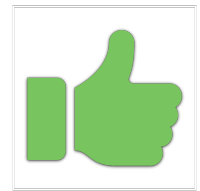
GOVT 2305

Dr Walker

Of your proposed amendments, which ONE amendment do you wish to present for a vote?

Article {

State number \_\_\_\_\_



## Amending the Constitution (2)



# Creating a Government

# Creating a Government



Works well at the end of Unit 1: wrap up for American political culture, the Constitution, and Federalism



Think about **why** we have government and **what** government does (or should do)



All forms of government are on the table, but must create a government for a **large & diverse country**

# Creating a Government (2)

## Creating a Government

We often take our system of government for granted, without giving much thought into how it was created.

Thinking back to our discussions and the readings on American Democracy, the founding and Constitution, and federalism, put yourself in the position of "framer." You have been asked to form/create a governmental system for a large (both in terms of area and population) and diverse country.

When creating your government, you will need to address the following questions:

- What kind of governmental system would you create? (answer on page 2)
- What types of institutions would it have? (answer on page 2)
- What powers would it be given? (answer on page 3)
- Why would this government be the best option for a large and diverse country? (answer on page 3)

Use the following questions to help you design your government.

- **What kind of governmental system would you adopt?** Remember, regime type and structure are not the same thing. Pick **ONE** type of regime and **ONE** structure of government.

Regime Type		Structure of Government
Authoritarian	Democracy	
• Autocracy	• Direct Democracy	• Confederation
• Oligarchy	• Representative Democracy (Republic)	• Federal
• Totalitarian		• Unitary

- **What types of institutions should carry out different activities?** When we think about institutions, we are generally thinking about parts of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches in the US government. But, you do not need to limit yourself to the structure used by the US.
  - What are the institutions?
  - What can these institutions do?
  - How are people selected to serve in these institutions?
  - Are there specific qualifications needed to serve in office?
  - How long are their terms in office?
  - Would you limit the number of times someone can serve in office?
- **What powers would your government have?** When thinking about the powers given to the government, consider two different parts:
  - What should be the role of government? (Think back to the discussions about *why* we have government—this is more of a theoretical description of *why* we have government)
  - What are the most important functions of government? (This is more of a policy question—a concrete description of *what* government should do)

Please make sure that you are carefully reading all the information provided (there are some helpful tips listed above). Additionally, please make sure that you are clearly explaining your answers **using complete sentences** and that you are directly addressing the specific questions asked.

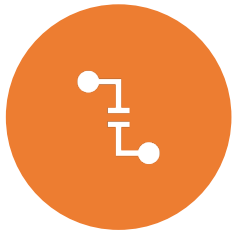
**When you are creating your government, please remember the following:**

- All of your writing should be clear and legible. **Submissions that are illegible will not be graded and will be scored 0.**
- Please make sure that you are directly address the specific questions asked and following all instructions listed above. **Assignments that are not on topic or do not follow the instructions will not be graded and will be scored 0.**

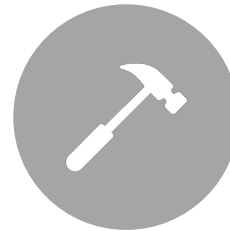


# Creating a Party

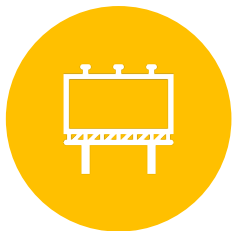
# Creating a Party



Separate **what** parties do from the **labels** of today's parties



Create a party from the ground up



Create a name, logo, slogan, target demographic



Designate party's ideology and describe top 3 issues and party's solutions for those issues

You are responsible for the creation of a new political party. In order to accomplish this, you will need to do several things:

Legal Requirement

What is the **name** of your party (must be 3 words or less)?

Beliefs & Values

**Using complete sentences**, how would you classify the **ideology** of your party?

Marketing

What is your party's **slogan**?

What is your party's **logo**?

Since all elections are conducted at the state level, **using complete sentences**, describe which **areas** or which **voters of Texas** will your party target? (Which demographic groups would your party target? Who you think would be most likely to vote for you party?)

Please list the names of the other students that you worked with to create your party. You **must** work with other students to create your party, and **you will not get credit for the assignment if you do not create your party and platform without working with other students.** Please make sure that the names written below are clear and legible, with both first and last names included.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

# Creating a Party (2)

Using complete sentences, what solutions does your party propose for each of these issues?

Party Platform

Using complete sentences, describe the top 3 issues for your party.

Party Platform

# Creating a Party (3)



# TX Core Curriculum Competencies

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## **Critical Thinking Skills (CT)**

creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information

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## **Communication Skills (COM)**

effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication

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## **Empirical and Quantitative Skills (EQS)**

manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions

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## **Teamwork (TW)**

ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal

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## **Social Responsibility (SR)**

intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

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## **Personal Responsibility (PR)**

ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

