WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Introduction to Political Science
POLS 101
Section 002/#11830
Fall 2015

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Class: T/TH 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
Morgan Hall 316
Office Hours: T/TH 8:30-9:30 a.m. and
W 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Course Description and Objectives

This 3-credit course provides an introduction to the field of political science and its major topics of study. It is divided into five sections. The first section focuses on establishing a definition for politics and examines the goals and methods of the political science discipline. In the second section, the course reviews the various political systems and ideologies that have been the basis for the political organization of human communities. The third section considers the similarities and differences in national political systems by examining countries’ constitutions and political institutions. The final section of the class considers some of approaches political scientists have taken towards topics in international politics such as terrorism, war, the global political economy, human rights promotion, and the environment.

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to describe, analyze and interpret domestic and international political developments using the concepts, theories, and methods of political science. The course assignments are also designed to help students develop the writing and research skills that are essential for further study in political science as well as in future academic courses and professional endeavors.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Course Structure

Individual course sessions will be a combination of traditional lecture and seminar – style discussion, with some classes reserved for small group activities. Student questions and comments are strongly encouraged. All opinions should be expressed in a manner that is respectful of other students in the class. Students should also expect to receive frequent emails from the professor containing information relevant to the material in the lectures and readings such as news articles on current political events.
Required Text (available at WIU Bookstore)


Supplemental readings will be posted on either the library e-course reserves or Westernonline. You will need a valid ECOM user name and password to access the supplemental readings on westernonline.wiu.edu. If you have any problems in accessing Westernonline, please contact University Technology Support Center at 298 – 2704.

Students should also make a habit of keeping up with current domestic and international political developments by reading daily or weekly news sources such as The New York Times, The Financial Times, and The Economist.

The instructor reserves the right to alter and/or add readings wherever appropriate, and to modify course requirements.

Assessment

Attendance and participation (15 percent)

Students are expected to attend each session and come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. A range of participation assignments may be given in class, such as requests for written summaries of lectures, films, and readings, as well as take home assignments. Except in cases of documented illness, family emergency, and institutionally recognized obligations, no make-ups will be allowed. Please note that the use of portable electronic devices is not permitted. Students who use such devices in class will not be eligible for attendance and participation points for that class.

Two Midterm Examinations (15 percent each)

There are two midterm exams in this course. The first midterm will be an in class exam while the second will consist of an essay exam that students will complete outside of class. Students will be permitted to rewrite the second midterm and submit it for regrading. Revised second midterms may receive an increase of up to one letter grade.

Online Discussion Posts (30 percent)

Students will be required to provide responses to questions posted five times during the semester via the Westernonline discussion board function. Details of individual posting assignments will be provided in class.

Final Exam (25 percent)

The final exam will be comprehensive in nature, covering material from across the entire semester.

Extra Credit

There will be one unannounced extra credit quiz covering the lectures and assigned readings. Students who are absent from class on the day of the quiz will not be permitted to retake it without an official excuse. Students will also be eligible for extra credit for participation in the 2015 WIU Mock Presidential Election. Details will be announced in class.
Grading Scale

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

**Academic Honesty and Student Rights**

Academic honesty is expected of all WIU students; cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please take time to review the University’s academic integrity policy, which is outlined at [http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php](http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php). A more complete catalog of student rights and responsibilities can be found at [http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php](http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php).

Students who violate the academic integrity policy will fail the assignment in question with no opportunity for make-ups and will be reported to the Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards.

**Campus Resources for Student Support**

Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

The University Writing Center is available to assist students with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The one – on – one assistance available at the Writing Center is valuable for generating ideas, talking about global – level issues such as organization, and even working through grammatical problems. The University Writing Center is located in Simpkins Hall 341. Call for an appointment (309-298-2815) and be sure to take a copy of an assignment.

**COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

August 25: Introduction and Course Overview
PART I: POWER and POLITICAL SCIENCE

August 27: Why Do We Need Politics?
*Challenge of Politics*, pp. 7 – 60

September 1: A Science of Politics?
*Challenge of Politics*, pp. 62 – 85

PART II: THE POLITICAL ORDER

September 3: Political Philosophy
*Challenge of Politics*, pp. 119 – 142

September 8-10: Liberalism and Democracy
*Challenge of Politics*, pp. 145 – 166

September 15-17: Socialism and Communism
*Challenge of Politics*, pp. 170 – 196

September 22-24: Fascism and Authoritarianism
*Challenge of Politics*, pp. 199 – 213

September 29 – Midterm Exam I

PART III: COMPARATIVE POLITICS

October 1-6: Values and Politics
*Challenge of Politics*, pp. 216 – 240

October 8-13: Designing the Political System
*Challenge of Politics*, pp. 244-275

October 15-20: Political Institutions
*Challenge of Politics*, pp. 277-306

October 20 – Midterm Exam II (Take Home Essay Questions Provided)

PART IV: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

October 22-29: States, Power, and Security
*Challenge of Politics*: pp. 309-337
November 3-5: War and Peace  
*Challenge of Politics*: pp. 343-365  
In Class Film: *The Fog of War*

November 10-12: The Global Economy  
*Challenge of Politics*, pp. 398-421

November 17-19: The Politics of the Environment  
*Challenge of Politics*, pp. 424-447

November 23-27: Thanksgiving Break -- No Classes

December 1-8: Human Rights  
*Challenge of Politics*, pp. 368-396

December 10: Concluding Lecture and Final Exam Review

**Final Exam**: Thursday, December 17, 10:00 AM