
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
POLS 2310-013 (24148): Introduction to Politics
Spring 2017

TR 3:00-4:20pm, Undergraduate Learning Center 116

Instructor: Dr. Cigdem V. Sirin
Office Hours: TR 2:00-2:45pm or by appointment
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COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is a general introduction to the study of politics and provides a broad overview of the world's political systems. The primary goals of the course are to introduce you to several key concepts and theories within the scientific method of studying politics, increase your familiarity with different models of government, and help you develop a better understanding of U.S. and Texas political practices and institutions. We will cover topics such as political culture, ideologies, institutional structures, and political economy with comparisons and references to the United States.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

I believe, with adequate effort and willingness, all of you are capable of doing well in this course. By the end of this course, you can expect to accomplish the following learning outcomes:

- To define, understand, and apply the concepts, principles, and practices of politics as background for the study of American and Texas political institutions.
- To recognize the analytical methods and approaches that political scientists use for the scientific study of politics.
- To apply and critique a body of factual knowledge and theories relevant to understanding different domestic and international political structures.
- To comprehend and evaluate the effects of and the relationships among historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the U.S. and other political systems.
- To interpret and analyze factors influencing contemporary political relations within and between political systems around the world.
- To discern alternative explanations for different levels and types of political development among political systems around the world.
- To identify and understand differences and commonalities across political ideologies and cultures.
- To recognize and tolerate alternative points of view on historical and contemporary problems in comparative and international politics.

OBJECTIVES FOR PROFESSIONALISM

It is essential that the utmost respect and professionalism be adhered in all exchanges between class members. This is a political science course and we will be discussing at times sensitive and controversial topics. Avoid any unnecessary arguments with other class members, such as political polemical arguments (e.g., negative partisan talking points targeting those of opposing ideological perspectives or particular political figures) or, even worse, personal attacks on others for having different views.

No inappropriate behavior will be tolerated. Unprofessional conduct will be dealt with swiftly through the university and it is at the professor's full discretion to have a student dropped from the course for any inappropriate behavior.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXT

Garner, Robert, Peter Ferdinand, and Stephanie Lawson. *Introduction to Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

This book is available at the UTEP Bookstore and may also be available at online bookstores. If you choose to order your book via an online provider, please be mindful of the delivery time.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Apart from the required book you purchased, I assigned several additional book chapters and journal articles as listed in the course schedule section of this syllabus. All these items are available on Blackboard in the "Additional Readings" folder.

GRADING POLICY

Your final grade in this class will be based on the following requirements:

| Course Requirement | Due | Weight |
|---------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Exam 1 | 02/09 | Best of two; 25 percent each |
| Exam 2 | 03/07 | |
| Exam 3 | 04/11 | |
| Final Exam | 05/11 | 30 percent |
| Class Participation | All meetings | 20 percent |
| PASS Tutoring Bonus | - | Bonus points |

All grades (including the final grade) are based on the following distribution of points:

| Points | Letter |
|---------------|---------------|
| ≥ 89.50 | A |
| 79.50-89.49 | B |
| 69.50-79.49 | C |
| 59.50-69.49 | D |
| ≤ 59.49 | F |

I do not change grades or give individual-specific extra-credit opportunities to be fair to everyone. If you are concerned about your grade, please come and see me during my office hours. This is particularly important if your grade on the first exam is not what you expected. I will not change the grade, but I can give you feedback and suggestions on how to improve your performance in the class.

EXAMS

There are four exams for the course: three noncumulative exams and a comprehensive final. All exams are closed book/notes and in-class. Questions are based on the readings, lectures, and class discussions. The two best exams out of the first three exams will count toward your final grade (25 percent each). Everyone is required to take the final exam (30 percent).

Make-up exams

Make-up exams will be given *only* in the case of a *documented* emergency (see “excused absences” below). Note that make-up exams may be in a different format than the original exam and may require more intensive preparation. If you miss a test and your absence is not considered excused, you will receive a zero on the test. This policy will be strictly enforced.

PEERS ASSISTING STUDENT SUCCESS (PASS) TUTORING BONUS

The Peers Assisting Student Success (PASS) program is a form of academic support offered by the Miner Learning Center in Prospect Hall, which consists of a model student conducting peer-led study sessions. These sessions are offered weekly and each session is typically 50 minutes to 1 hour and 20 minutes. Sessions are two to three times a week. The sessions are set at the beginning of the semester (once the survey results about the students’ schedules and availability are tallied) and will consistently be offered at the same designated day/time/and location. There is no need for you to sign up for the tutoring sessions, just show up at the designated day/time/location.

To encourage your participation in this program that is offered to help increase your success in this course, I will add 1 bonus point to your final grade point average if you participate in at least 1 tutoring session. 2 bonus points will be added for those attending 2 sessions, and 3 bonus points will be earned for participating in 3 or more sessions.

CLASS PARTICIPATION (ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT)

I expect everyone to attend class on the scheduled dates and times. Keep in mind that class participation is more than just attending the class meetings—you should come to class alert, be willing to ask and answer questions, and contribute intellectually to class discussions. To do so, you should complete the assigned readings before each class meeting. Exams will cover material from the readings and the lectures, so doing just one or the other will leave you at a disadvantage. If I consistently detect a pattern of only a few students reading, there will be graded pop-quizzes.

You will be asked to sign an attendance sheet at each class meeting and it is your responsibility to make sure to sign-in. In addition to circulating a hard copy of the attendance sheet, I will also

take attendance electronically at each class meeting using a technology called REEF Polling - a cost-free tool that is used for tracking participation and attendance, conducting polls, as well as facilitating discussions and interaction in the classroom. On the first day of class, I will show you how to register for and use this tool. You can access the Quick Start Guide for this tool on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to make sure to register for the service in a timely manner and to use this tool as instructed (*forgetting to subscribe for this tool, missing the attendance by arriving late, etc. are not acceptable excuses*).

Attendance will also be taken at each class meeting using UTEP student ID cards via card readers located at the entrance of the classroom. When you enter class, simply hold your student ID card against the reader. It may not be necessary to remove the card from your wallet or purse. If the light on the device turns green or blue, your card has been read properly and your attendance has been recorded. If the light remains red, the device was unable to read your card; please present it again gently until the green or blue light appears. If you do not see the green or blue light, you may need to remove your card from your wallet or purse in order to ensure that it is detected. Your attendance will be recorded up to 15 minutes before and 15 after your class is scheduled to start (keep in mind this technology provides data on who is early, who is on time and who is late).

In-class attendance and participation will count for 20% of the final grade such that one must attend and participate in class to earn an A. Only those students who attend class regularly and actively participate in class discussions will receive full credit (100) for their class participation grade. *After two absences, I will begin to deduct 10 points from your participation grade for each absence thereafter. If you arrive late and request to sign-in at the end of the class meeting, I will deduct 5 points from your participation grade for each incident of tardiness after two late arrivals. The same policy will apply to incidents of leaving class early (Note that if you leave the class early, teaching assistants will record the time of your departure).* The class participation portion of the grade is non-negotiable and left solely to the discretion of the instructor.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

I will excuse absences and late work *only* when a student participates in an official university-recognized activity, observes a recognized religious holiday of her/his faith that happens to coincide with a class session, is called to and participates in active military service for a reasonably brief period, or confronts a medical emergency. To be excused, you must notify me *in writing* prior to the date of absence. That said, in cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. a medical emergency), you must provide notification as soon as possible following your absence. Such notification must include an explanation of why notice could not be sent in advance. You must also provide satisfactory documentation verifying the reason for the absence. In case of an illness, a doctor's note is the proper documentation required. *For my records, you should e-mail me a scanned copy of the documentation that verifies the reason for your absence (if you don't have access to a scanner, you can take a photo of the documentation).* *Documentation that is not provided in a timely manner will not be accepted.* Please do not ask me to excuse absences for minor illnesses or scheduling conflicts. I am aware that students have other interests and obligations, but you should nevertheless make this class a priority. If you are likely to have recurring conflicts, please take another course that better fits your schedule.

See academic regulations in UTEP Undergraduate Catalogue for a list of excused absences: <http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=54418>. According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, “When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of “W” before the course drop deadline and with a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.”

CLASSROOM AND E-MAIL PROTOCOL

Chatting, e-mailing, internet browsing, or any activity not related to official class activity is prohibited. The best way to contact me is via UTEP e-mail. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24 hours of receipt during weekdays. I will respond to weekend messages by Monday at the latest. When e-mailing me, please put the course number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AND DISHONESTY

Academic misconduct and dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. This includes, but is not limited to cheating, collusion, and plagiarism. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student and possessing unauthorized materials during a test. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. *One example of collusion is signing in for another person (or having someone sign for you) on the class attendance sheet.* Plagiarism is commonly defined as passing off the ideas, works, writing, etc., of another person as your own. Accordingly, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own work, even if you have the permission of that person. I encourage students to study together and work collectively; however, working together to write any part of a written assignment, research paper, and/or exam is plagiarism. Here is an informative webcast on plagiarism: <http://www.plagiarism.org/resources/webcasts>.

Any act of academic misconduct and dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Refer to <http://studentaffairs.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=4386> for further information.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT FOR COURSE MATERIALS

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further retained or disseminated.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that

provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you require specific accommodations and support services, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Please keep in mind that accommodations need to be requested at least two weeks (or a month if advance planning, such as the acquisition of books-on-tape, is required) prior to the beginning of the semester. Here is the contact information for CASS: web: <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>; phone: (915) 747-5148; fax: (915) 747-8712; e-mail: cass@utep.edu; location: UTEP Union Building East Room 106.

UTEP TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The University of Texas at El Paso offers complete technical information and Help Desk support at: <http://issweb.utep.edu/techsupport/>.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS*

| SECTION I: POLITICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE | |
|---|--|
| 01/17 | Course Introduction |
| 01/19 | Introduction to the Study of Politics Reading: Garner, Ferdinand, and Lawson (GFL) Introduction |
| 01/24 | Scientific Study of Politics Reading: Eagles, M. 2008. <i>Politics: An Introduction to Democratic Government</i> . (3 rd ed.) Canada: Broadview Press. Chapter 2. |
| 01/26 | States & Nations I Reading: GFL Chapter 1 |
| 01/31 | States & Nations II Reading: GFL Chapter 2 |
| 02/02 | Political Violence Readings: Zimbardo, P. 2008. <i>The Lucifer Effect</i> . New York: Random House. Chapter 1. Danziger, J. N. 2005. <i>Understanding the Political World</i> . (7 th ed.) New York: Pearson Longman. Chapter 12 |
| 02/07 | Exam Review |
| 02/09 | EXAM 1 |
| SECTION II: POLITICAL CULTURE, IDEOLOGIES, AND REGIMES | |
| 02/14 | Political Culture, Attitudes, and Behavior Reading: GFL Chapter 13 |
| 02/16 | Ideologies Readings: GFL Chapter 5 & Chapter 6 |
| 02/21 | Democracies: A General Overview Reading: GFL Chapter 3 |
| 02/23 | Types of Democracies: Presidential versus Parliamentary Regimes Reading: Eagles, M. 2008. <i>Politics: An Introduction to Democratic Government</i> . (3 rd ed.) Canada: Broadview Press. Chapter 7. |
| 02/28 | Authoritarian Regimes Reading: Hague, R., and M. Harrop. 2004. <i>Political Science: A Comparative Introduction</i> . (5 th ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 4. |
| 03/02 | Exam Review |
| 03/07 | EXAM 2 |
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| SECTION III: COMPARATIVE POLITICS | |
|--|--|
| 03/09 | Domestic Political Institutions: Law, Constitutions, and Judiciaries Readings: GFL Chapter 7 & Chapter 8 |
| 03/14-03/16 | Spring Break – no classes |
| 03/21 | Domestic Political Institutions: Legislative and Executive Institutions Readings: GFL Chapter 9 |
| 03/23 | Domestic Political Institutions: Bureaucracies Readings: GFL Chapter 10 |
| 03/28 | Elections and Political Parties Reading: GFL Chapter 11 |
| 03/30 | Documentary and Discussion Session |
| 04/04 | Civil Society, Interest Groups, and the Media Reading: GFL Chapter 12 |
| 04/06 | Exam Review |
| 04/11 | EXAM 3 |
| SECTION IV: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS | |
| 04/13 | International Politics: General Overview Readings: GFL Chapter 14 |
| 04/18 | International Order, Security, and Foreign Policy Readings: GFL Chapter 17 & Chapter 18 |
| 04/20 | Documentary and Discussion Session Women, War & Peace |
| 04/25 | Theories of International Relations Reading: GFL Chapters 15 & 16 |
| 04/27 | International Organizations Reading: GFL Chapter 19 |
| 05/02 | International Political Economy; Conclusion Readings: GFL Chapter 20 & Chapter 21 |
| 05/04 | Exam Review |
| 05/11 | FINAL EXAM @ 4:00-6:45pm |

*Note: This is a provisional schedule of our course. With advanced notice, I may introduce specific changes based on progress in class.